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# *Homo Loquens* from a Biological Standpoint

Curtis A. Wilson

The words *homo loquens*, in the title I announced for this lecture, mean *speaking man*, *man the speaking one*. As a designation for the human species, *homo loquens* perhaps has an advantage over the official zoological designation, *homo sapiens*, man the sapient, wise, discerning one, the one who savours the essences of things. The human capacity for loquaciousness is somewhat more obviously verifiable. But what has that capacity to do with things biological? This is a complicated and problematic topic. Forgive me if I first approach it by slow stages, then attempt a gingerly step when the going becomes treacherous. I wish to begin with a small technical matter, an aspect of the physiology of speech-production.

Respiratory patterns in different species of air-breathing vertebrates differ in many details. Different species have special regulatory systems, adapted to special behavior patterns. There is the panting of dogs, specially adapted for cooling; birds, during flight, have the unique ability to increase their intake of oxygen a hundredfold; the sperm whale can go without breathing or dive for 90 minutes, the beaver for 15, man for about 2 1/2; and so on. All these differences are species-specific.

In a human being, the respiratory patterns during quiet breathing and during speech are remarkably different (see Table I). The volume of air inhaled, as shown in the first item of the table, increases by a factor of 3 or 4 during speech. The time of inspiration, as compared with the

time for a complete cycle of inspiration plus expiration, decreases by a factor of 3. The number of breaths per minute tends to decrease drastically. Expiration, which is smooth during speechless breathing, is periodically interrupted during speech, with a build-up of pressure under the glottis; it is during expiration that all normal human vocalization occurs. The patterns of electrical activity in expiratory and inspiratory muscles differ radically during quiet breathing and during speech. Both chest and abdominal musculature are utilized in breathing, but during speech the abdominal musculature is less involved, and its contractions are no longer fully synchronized with those of the chest musculature. In quiet breathing, one breathes primarily through the nose; during speech, primarily through the mouth.

More than you wanted to know, I'm sure. My point was to show that breathing undergoes marked changes during speech. And remarkably, humans can tolerate these modifications for almost unlimited periods of time without experiencing respiratory distress; witness filibusters in the U.S. Senate. Think now of other voluntary departures from normal breathing patterns. If we deliberately decide to breathe at some arbitrary rate, say, faster than ordinary—please do not try it here—we quickly experience the symptoms of hyperventilation: light-headedness, giddiness, and so on. Similar phenomena may occur when one is learning to play a wind instrument or during singing instruction; training in proper breathing is requisite for these undertakings. By contrast, talking a blue streak for hours on end comes naturally to many a three-year-old. The conclusion must be that there are sensitive controlling mechanisms that regulate ventilation in an autonomous way during speech. More generally, it is evident that

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A lecture delivered at Annapolis in September 1975.

In forthcoming issues the *Review* intends to publish Mr. Wilson's lectures, *The Archimedean Point and the Liberal Arts* (September 1958) and *Groups, Rings and Lattices* (September 1959).

we are endowed with special anatomical and physiological adaptations that enable us to sustain speech for hours, on exhaled air.

Do we speak the way we do because we *happen* to possess these special adaptations, or did these adaptations develop during evolution in response to the pressures of natural selection or the charms of sexual selection? I think there is no way of answering these questions; it is difficult enough when one can refer to skeletons, which fossilize; behavioral traits do not. But whatever the answer, there is still this further question, whether the genetic programming for speech extends beyond the mere provision of vocal apparatus? Might it not, in addition, determine the make-up and structure of language in a more detailed and intimate fashion?

Such a question runs counter to views that are widely held. Is not language, after you have the voice to pronounce it with, fundamentally a *psychological* and *cultural* fact, to which biological explanations would be largely irrelevant? Do not languages consist of *arbitrary* conventions, made up in the way we make up the rules of games? Wittgenstein speaks of language as a word-game, thereby likening it to tennis or poker. Is it not apparent that the conventions of any particular language, like the rules of tennis or poker, are transmitted from generation to generation by means of imitation, training, teaching, and learning? Are not these the important facts about language, the facts that reveal to us its nature?

Until recently, students of linguistics and psychology have tended uniformly to answer these questions in the affirmative. To many, the extraordinary diversity of human tongues has seemed argument enough against any assumption of linguistic universals, that is, characteristics of language imagined to be rooted in human nature. The *reductio ad absurdum* often mentioned is the attempt of the Egyptian king Psammetichos to determine the original human language. As reported by Herodotus, Psammetichos caused two children to be raised in such a way that they would neither hear nor overhear human speech, the attendants being instructed meanwhile to listen out for their first word. The report was, that it was Persian. The experiment is said to have been repeated in the 13th century by Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, and again around 1500 by James IV of Scotland, who was hoping that the children would speak Hebrew, and thereby establish a biblical lineage for Scotland. No result was reported.

Stress on the arbitrariness of language has been enhanced by a coalition between linguistics and behaviorist psychology. Behaviorist psychology is led, by its premises, to the view that language is merely an arbitrary use to which the human constitution, anatomical and physiological, can be put, just as a tool can be put to many arbitrary uses by its manipulator. A recent account that views language in this way is the book *Verbal Behavior* by B. F. Skinner. Along with other behaviorist scientists, Skinner holds that all learning can be explained by a few principles

which operate in all vertebrates and many invertebrates. The process is called operant conditioning. Learning the meaning of a word, Skinner holds, is like a rat's learning to press a bar which will cause a buzzer to sound, announcing "food pellets soon to come". Learning grammar, likewise, is supposed to be like learning that event A is followed by event B, which is in turn followed by event C. Many an animal can be trained to acquire associations of this kind. Skinner would hold that there is nothing involved in the acquisition of language that is not involved in learning of this kind.

Unquestionably, we would be mistaken to deny the importance or the power of the conditioned reflex, either in language acquisition or in other learning. The experimental psychologists have recently announced that even the visceral organs can be taught to do various things, on given signals, with rewards provided immediately afterward to reinforce the action. We are told that rats, with the reward held out of another shot of electrical juice in a certain center of the brain, have been taught to alter their blood pressures or brain waves, or dilate the blood vessels in one ear more than those in the other. Similar achievements in operant conditioning are held out as a bright future hope for humans. What rich experiences in self-operation are not in store for us?

On the other hand, the successes of this technology do not necessarily tell us much about the character of what it is that is being conditioned. The behaviorist treats the organism as a black box; he controls the inputs and records the outputs; what goes on in the box is not, as he claims, an appropriate concern of his. He cites the similar situation in quantum physics. In the case of quantum phenomena, the physicist cannot successfully describe what is there when he is not looking, not using probes that interact with whatever it is. But, between the situation in quantum physics and the situation in the study of animal behavior, there is this difference. Animal behavior goes on, observably so, even when the animals are not being experimented on. May it not be important to try to observe this behavior, before we set out to change it, as we can, so frighteningly, do?

Those who study the behavior of animals in their natural habitats nowadays have a special name for their study, Ethology. Long hours of patient observation, much of it during the last 50 years, have demonstrated how intricate, how unexpectedly adaptive, how downright peculiar, are the patterns of behavior specific to particular species of animals. Many of the patterns function as communication: the elaborate courtship rituals of birds, the less elaborate ones of butterflies and certain fish; the way in which two dabbling ducks, on meeting, lower their bills into the water and pretend to drink, as an indication of nonaggressiveness; and so on. Among these behaviors, there is one that has been called truly symbolic. That is the dance of the honeybee, the symbolism of which was first recognized and deciphered by Karl von Frisch in the 1940's. Let me describe it briefly (see Figure 1).

The dance that a forager bee performs in the dark hive gives, by a special symbolism, the distance and direction of the food source she has found. If, for the Austrian variety of bee, the food source is less than 80 meters away, she performs a *round dance*, running rapidly around in a circle, first to the left, then to the right. This in effect says to the hive bees: "Fly out from the hive; close by in the neighborhood is food to be fetched."

If, on the other hand, the food source is more than 80 meters away, the forager will use the *tail-wagging dance*. The rhythm of the dance tells the distance: the closer the source, the more figure-of-eight cycles of the dance per minute. The tail-wagging part of the dance, shown by the middle wavy line in the diagram, tells the direction, in accordance with a curious rule. On the vertical honeycomb in the hive, the direction *up* means *towards the sun*, and the direction *down* means *away from the sun*. If the tail-wagging run points 60° left of straight up, the food source is 60° to the left of the sun, and so on. Directions with respect to the sun have been transposed into directions with respect to gravity, the directions are reported with errors of less than 3°.

This same dance is used in the springtime when half the bees move out of the hive and form a swarm, seeking a new nesting place. Scout bees fly out in all directions, then return and dance to announce the location they have hit on. It is important, of course, that the selected spot be protected from winter, winds, and rough weather, and that there be abundant feeding nearby. The surprising thing is that not just one nesting place is announced, but several at the same time. The dancing and the coming and going can continue for days. By their dances the bees engage in mutual persuasion, inciting one another to inspect this site or that site. The better the site, the longer and more vigorously the returning bee dances. The process continues until all the scout bees are dancing in the same direction and at the same rate. Then the swarm arises and departs for the homesite it has thus decided upon. Mistaken decisions are few.

The dance of the honeybee is symbolic in a genetically determined way. That human language is not genetically determined in the same way is easy to show: the language a child learns, whether Swahili, Cantonese, Urdu, or any other, depends solely on the language of those by whom he is brought up.

The vocabulary of a human language is not genetically fixed. I do not believe, however, that the discussion of the biological foundations of language can properly end at this point.

My reasons for saying this are two. In the first place, there are certain features of human speech which are not found in the natural communication systems of animals, but which are found universally in all known human languages, present or past. The existence of these features is, at the very least, consonant with the possibility that there is a genetic foundation underlying human speech. The

facts appear to be most easily accounted for by assuming that there is such a foundation, forcing human speech to be of a certain basic type.

Secondly, this same assumption receives support from the study of primary language acquisition in children. It is not that Psammetichos was right, or that children if left to themselves would commence to speak proto-Indo-European or any language resembling an adult human language. All genetically determined traits depend for their appearance, to a greater or lesser degree, on features of the environment. The genes or genetic factors do not of themselves determine body parts or physiological or behavioral traits. Rather, they determine developmental processes, which normally succeed one another in a determinate way, but can be profoundly affected by environmental influence. These facts point to the possibility that genetically determined traits might appear only in the course of maturation, and then only in response to specific influences from outside the organism. Ethologists inform us of many instances of species-specific, genetically based behavior that emerge only in this way. An example is imprinting. Thomas More described it in his *Utopia*. Chicks or ducklings or goslings, a few hours or days after hatching, enter a critical period. Whatever object they first encounter during this period, within certain limits of size, and moving within appropriate limits of speed, they begin to follow, and continue to follow through childhood. The object followed can be, and usually is, the mother; but it can also be an ethologist like Konrad Lorenz on his hands and knees, or something stuffed at the end of a stick. Failure to develop imprinted responses during infancy may cause behavioral abnormalities in the adult bird—abnormalities that cannot be corrected by later training. Imprinting is only one of many known species-specific characteristics or behaviors that appear in the course of development, in response to what are sometimes called "releasers", environmental stimuli of specified kinds. It will be my contention that important features of human linguistic capacity are of this kind.

After discussing these two points, I shall conclude with certain reflections on what they might mean.

I begin, then, with three features of human speech that do not appear to be found in the natural communication systems of animals (see Table II):

1. Phonematization
2. Concatenation
3. Grammar

What is meant by phonematization? The vocalizations heard in the human languages of the world are always within fairly narrow limits of the total range of sounds that humans can produce. We are able to imitate, for instance, the vocalizations of mammals and birds with considerable accuracy, given a little training, but such direct imitations never seem to be incorporated in the vocabularies of human languages. In all human languages, the meaningful units, words, or more strictly speaking, *morphemes*, are di-

visible into successive, shorter, meaningless sounds called *phonemes*. *Morphemes* are the smallest meaningful units into which an utterance can be divided. A morpheme can be a single word such as "water"; it can be more than one word as in "spick and span"; and it can be less than a single word, as in the "er" in "whiter", which turns the adjective "white" into a comparative. *Phonemes* are the meaningless sounds into which morphemes can be divided. A phoneme is not, strictly speaking, a single sound, but rather a small class of sounds; it can be defined as the smallest distinctive unit functioning within the sound system of a language to make a difference. Refinements aside, the central fact I wish to convey is this: in all languages, morphemes are constituted by sequences of phonemes. This is a fact that the inventors of the alphabet were probably about the first to come to understand.

The fact could have been different. One can imagine a language in which the symbol for a cat was a sound resembling a miaow; in which size was represented by loudness, color by vowel quality, and hunger by a strident roar. Morphemes in such a language would not be analyzable into phonemes.

All human languages are phonematized, but each language uses a somewhat different set of phonemes, in each case a small set.

Parrots and mynah birds excel other animals in the imitation of human speech, but it is doubtful that they speak in phonemes. The matter could be put to a test. A parrot that had heard only Portuguese, and had acquired a good repertory of Portuguese words and phrases, could be transferred into an environment where he would hear only English, and have the opportunity of repeating English exclamatory remarks. If these remarks emerged with a Portuguese accent, then it would be clear that the parrot had learned Portuguese phonemes, which he proceeded to use in the vocalization of English words. In the opposite case, we would conclude that the parrot had the capacity to imitate sounds accurately, but had not acquired the habit of using phonemes for the production of speech.

In the human child, speech by the same test would turn out to be phonematized.

The second general characteristic of human speech I have listed is concatenation. Human utterances seldom consist of single morphemes in isolation; in no human speech-community are utterances restricted to single morphemes; in all languages, morphemes are ordinarily strung together into sequences. To be sure, the peoples of many, perhaps most cultures, are less garrulous than we; they use language only in certain circumstances and only somewhat sparingly, while we talk a good deal of the time. It is nevertheless true that humans in all speech-communities concatenate morphemes.

The third property presupposes concatenation; it is the property of grammatical or syntactical structure. By "structure" I am going to mean a set of relations that can be diagrammed. In no language are morphemes strung to-

gether in purely random order. Native speakers of a language normally agree in rejecting certain utterances as ungrammatical, and in recognizing certain other utterances as grammatical. According to Noam Chomsky, for instance, the sentence "colorless green ideas sleep furiously" is grammatical, though meaningless or nearly so; the concatenation "furiously sleep ideas green colorless", the same words in reverse order, is ungrammatical. The one concatenation admits of a syntactical diagram, the other does not.

It is generally assumed in linguistics that the grammar of a language is completely describable by means of a finite and in fact small set of formal rules. For no natural language has such a description been achieved as yet, otherwise one could program a computer to utter the grammatical sentences in the language. Apparently the mechanism involved in the grammar of a natural language is complex. I shall return to this topic again; the point now is just the *universality* of grammar—a relatively complex kind of system—as a feature of human languages.

All three properties I have described are, so far as the available evidence indicates, without cultural histories. Phonematization, concatenation, grammatical structure, are features of all known human language, past or present. And although languages are always in process of change, it is not the case that these changes follow a general pattern from a stage that can be called primitive to one that can be called advanced. No known classification or analysis of human languages provides any basis for a theory of the development of language from aphonemic, non-grammatical, or simple imitative beginnings.

These facts are consonant with the hypothesis that there is a genetic foundation underlying human speech, forcing it to be of a certain basic type, and in particular, to have the features I have just described. In support of this hypothesis, I take up now the development of language in the child.

The first sound a child makes is to cry. Immanuel Kant says the birth cry

has not the tone of lamentation, but of indignation and of aroused wrath; presumably because [the child] wants to move, and feels his inability to do so as a fetter that deprives him of his freedom.

More recently a psychoanalyst has written of the birthcry:

It is an expression of the infant's overwhelming sense of inferiority on thus suddenly being confronted by reality, without ever having had to deal with its problems.

In view of the anatomical immaturity of the human brain at birth, these adult interpretations are rather surprising. No doubt the infant in being born undergoes a rude shock. But crying is a mechanism with a number of important functions; one of the earliest is clearing fluid out of the



middle ear, so that the child can begin to hear. The mechanism is ready to operate at birth, and the infant puts it to work. The sound made in crying changes slightly during childhood, but otherwise does not mature or change during one's life. Crying is not a first step in the development that leads to articulate speech; it involves no articulation; the infant simply blows his horn without operating the keys.

A quite distinct sort of vocalization begins at about the 6th or 8th week after birth: little cooing sounds that appear to be elicited by a specific stimulus, a nodding object resembling a face in the baby's visual field. A clown's face painted on cardboard, laughing or crying, will do for a while. The response is first smiling, then cooing. After about 13 weeks it is necessary that the face be a familiar one to elicit the smiling and cooing. During cooing, some articulatory organs are moving, in particular the tongue. The cooing sounds, although tending to be vowel-like, are not identical with any actual speech sounds. Gradually they become differentiated. At 6 months they include vocalic and consonantal components, like /p/ and /b/. Cooing develops into babbling resembling one-syllable utterances, for instance /ma/, /mu/, /da/, /di/. However, the babbling sounds are still not those of adult speech.

The first strictly linguistic feature to emerge in a child's vocalizations is *contour of intonation*. Before the sound sequences have determinable meaning or definite phonemic structure, they come out with the recognizable intonation of questions, exclamations, or affirmations. Linguistic development begins not with the putting together of individual components, but rather with a whole tonal pattern. Later, this whole becomes differentiated into component parts. Differentiation of phonemes is only approximate at first and has to be progressively refined. The child is gradually gaining control of the dozen or so adjustments in the vocal organs that are required for adult speech. By 12 months he is replicating syllables, as in "mamma" and "dada". By 18 months he will normally have a repertory of three to 50 recognizable words.

I have described this development as though mothers were not trying to teach, but of course they normally are. It is nevertheless a striking fact that these stages emerge in different cultures in the same sequence and at very nearly the same ages, and in fairly strict correlation with other motor achievements. Detailed studies have been made of speech acquisition among the Zuni of New Mexico, the Dani of Dutch New Guinea, the Bororo in central Brazil, and children in urban U.S.A.; in all cases, intonation patterns become distinct at about the time that grasping between thumb and fingers develops; the first words appear at about the time that walking is accomplished; and by the time the child is able to jump, tiptoe, and walk backward, he is talking a blue streak. Among children born deaf, the development from cooing through spontaneous babbling to well-articulated speech-sounds occurs as with normal children, but of course the development cannot continue

onward into the stage at which adult words are learned through hearing. Among the mentally retarded, these developments are chronologically delayed, but take place with the same correlation between various motor achievements. Given the variety of environmental conditions in these several cases, it seems plausible to attribute the emergence of linguistic habits largely to maturational changes within the growing child, rather than to particular training procedures.

The specific neurophysiological correlates of speech are little known, but that there are such correlates and that they mature as speech develops is supported by much evidence. The human brain at birth has only 24% of its adult weight; by contrast, the chimpanzee starts life with a brain that already weighs 60% of its adult value. The human brain takes longer to mature, and more happens as it matures, including principally a large increase in the number of neuronal connections. A large part of the discernible anatomical maturation takes place in the first two years; the process appears to be complete by about 14 years of age. By this time the neurophysical basis of linguistic capacity has become localized in one of the two cerebral hemispheres, usually the left. If by this time a first language has not been learned, no language will ever be learned. Speech defects due to injuries to the brain that occur *before* the final lateralization of the speech-function are usually overcome; but if the injury comes *after* lateralization, the speech defect will be permanent.

Capacity for speech does not correlate uniformly with size of brain. There is a condition known as nanocephalic dwarfism, in which humans appear reduced to fairy-tale size; adult individuals attain a maximum height of between two and three feet (see Table III). Nanocephalic dwarfs differ from other dwarfs in preserving the skeletal and other bodily proportions of normal adults. Brain weight in these dwarfs barely exceeds that of a normal newborn infant. The brain weight of the nanocephalic dwarf, given in the middle row, is only a little over a third of that of a 2 1/2 year old boy, but the ratio of body weight to brain weight is equal to that of a 13 1/2 year old boy. These dwarfs show some retardation in intellectual growth, and often do not surpass a mental age-level of 5 or 6 years. But all of them acquire the rudiments of language, including speaking and understanding; they speak grammatically, and can manufacture sentences which are not mere repetitions of sentences they have heard. The appropriate conclusion appears to be that the ability to acquire language depends, not on any purely quantitative factor, but on specific modes of organization of human neurophysiology.

One further point concerning the neurophysiological basis of language. The main evidence here is provided by aphasia (*aphasia* =  $\alpha$  +  $\phi\alpha\nu\alpha\iota$ , not + to speak). These are failures in production or comprehension of language, resulting from injuries to the brain. And this evidence argues, for one thing, against regarding language ability as

being encoded simply in a spatial layout of some kind, say a network of associations in the cerebral cortex. Subcortical areas are involved, as well as cortex. The aphasias most frequently involve, not disruption of associations, but rather disruption of temporal order, affecting either phonemes in the production of words, as in spoonerisms, or words and phrases in the production of sentences. The patient is unable to control properly the temporal ordering of these units, and as a consequence they tumble into the production line uninhibited by higher syntactic principles. In general, the symptom is lack of availability of the right thing at the right time.

Language is through-and-through an affair of temporal patterns and sequences. The neurophysiological organization required for this cannot be simply that of associations. In the making of speech-sounds, for instance, certain muscles have to contract, the efferent nerve fibers innervating these muscles are of different lengths and diameters, and as a consequence the times required for a nerve impulse to go from brain to muscle differ for different muscles. Hence the nerve impulses for the production of a single phoneme must be fired off from the brain at different times, and the sequences of impulses for successive phonemes must overlap in complex ways. In the simplest sequential order of events, it thus appears that events are selected, not in response to immediately prior events, but in accordance with a hierarchic plan that integrates the requirements for periods of time of several seconds' duration. All this patterning in time is thought to depend on a physiological rhythm of about 6 cycles per second, in relation to which other events are timed. Arrangements of this complexity do not come about by learning. The evidence here, as well as the observations I have already described as to the way voice-sounds develop in children, points to the existence of an innate mechanism for the production of phonemes, one which is activated by a specific input, the appearance of the human face, and which matures in stages.

Could anything similar be argued for competence in syntax, the ability to understand and produce grammatical sentences? Here you will undoubtedly be more doubtful, for surely the grammars of different languages are different. Please recall that the sets of phonemes used in different languages are also somewhat different. The universality of phonematization is compatible with different languages employing different subsets of the humanly possible phonemes. The claim for universality of grammar must be of similar kind. The grammars of human languages are not of just any imaginable kind of ordered concatenation of morphemes. Rather, they derive from a certain subclass of the imaginable orders, a subclass involving phrase structure and what has been called "deep structure". The production of grammatical sentences turns out to pose requirements similar to those necessary for the temporal ordering of phonemes; a serial order in which one element determines the next is insufficient; there has to be hierarchical organiza-

tion, in which elements connected with one another are separated temporally in the production line.

Let me return now to the description of stages in the primary acquisition of language by a child.

At about the end of the first year of life, the child normally utters his first unmistakable word. For a number of months, while the child is building up a repertory of about 50 words, he utters only single-word utterances. He frequently hears sentences like "Here is your milk", "Shall daddy take you by-by?", and so on, but he will neither join together any two words he knows nor can he be induced to do so on request. Does he lack the memory or the vocalizing power to produce a two-word utterance? The evidence is against these suppositions. Then, roughly between 18 and 24 months, he suddenly and spontaneously begins to join words into two-element phrases: "up baby", "baby highchair", "push car", and so on. What explains the shift?

An important observation at the one-word stage is that these single words are given the intonations or pitch-contours of declarative, interrogative, or hortatory sentences. The single-word utterances seem to function in meaning in the same way as sentences will function later on: "Doggie" might mean, for instance, "There is a dog". When the two-word construction "push car" appears, it is not just two single-word utterances spoken in a certain order. As single-word utterances, both "push" and "car" would have primary stresses and terminal intonation contours. But when they are two words programmed as a *single utterance*, the primary stress and higher pitch come on "car"; and the unity of the whole is indicated by the *absence* of a terminal pitch contour *between* the words and the *presence* of such a contour at the end of the sequence.

What appears to be happening is that the child is by stages increasing his span, his ability to plan or program longer utterances. Grammar is already present in embryo. Further development will be a process of successive increases in span or integration, on the one hand, and progressive differentiation of the parts of utterances on the other.

Imitation plays a role in this process, but it is seldom mere parroting. In Table IV I have listed some imitations actually produced by two children, whom I shall call Adam and Eve; both were about two years old.

First note that the imitations preserve the word order of the model, even when not preserving all the words. This is not a logical necessity; it is conceivable that the child might reverse or scramble the order; that he does not suggest that he is processing the utterance as a whole. A second fact to notice is that, when the models increase in length, the child's imitation is a reduction, and that the selection of words is not random. The words retained are generally nouns, verbs, and less often adjectives: words sometimes called "contentives", because they have semantic content; their main grammatical function lies in their capacity to *refer* to things. The forms omitted are what linguists call "functors", their *grammatical functions*

being more obvious than their semantic content. The omission of the functors leads to a kind of telegraphic language, such as one uses in wiring home: "Car broken down; wallet stolen; send money American Express Baghdad". In the child's telegraphic utterances, how will the appropriate functors come to be introduced?

While the child engages in imitating, with reductions, the utterances of the mother, the mother frequently imitates, with expansion, the utterances of the child (see Table V). The mother's expansions, you will note, preserve the word order of the child's sentences, she acts as if the child meant everything he said, and more, and it is the "more" that her additions articulate. She adds functors. The functors have meaning, but it is meaning that accrues to them in context rather than in isolation. The functors tell the time of the action, whether it is ongoing or completed; they inform us of possession, and of relations such as are indicated by prepositions like *in*, *on*, *up*, *down*; they distinguish between a particular instance of a class as in "the highchair", and an arbitrary instance of a class, as in "a sandwich"; and so on.

How or to what extent these adult expansions of the child's utterances help the child to learn grammatical usage is uncertain. It has been found that immediate imitations by the child of just uttered adult sentences are less frequently well-formed than spontaneously produced utterances. The view that progress toward adult norms arises *merely* from practice in overt imitation of adult sentences is clearly wrong. The child rather appears to be elaborating his own grammar, making use of adult models, but constantly analogizing to produce new and often mistaken words or forms.

Take pluralization (see Table VI). In English there are a few irregular plurals, as of *mouse*, *foot*, *man*. The child normally regularizes these plurals: *mouses*, *foots*, *mans*. Instead of *foot* vs. *foots*, some children give *feet* for the singular, *feets* for the plural. One does not get an initial fluctuation between *foot* and *feet*, such as one would expect if only imitation of adult forms were at work.

Most English plurals are regular and follow certain formal rules. Thus we have *mat* vs. *mats*, but *match* vs. *matches*. Words ending in sibilants, such as *match*, *horse*, *box*, add a vowel before the *s* of the plural. Children have difficulty with pluralizing these words, and tend at first to use the singular form for both singular and plural. Sometimes a child will analogize in such a way as to remove the sibilant, substituting for instance, for *box* vs. *boxes*, the singular-plural pair *bok* vs. *boks*. Then at some point the child produces the regular plural of a sibilant word, say, *boxes*. Frequently when this happens he may abandon temporarily the regular plural for non-sibilant words, so that one gets *foot* vs. *footses*. What is happening? Overlaid on the child's systematic analogic forms, there is a gradual accumulation of successful imitations which do not fit the child's system. Eventually these result in a change in the system, often with errors due to over-generalizing.

Consider also the past tense inflection, which in English bears considerable similarity to the plural inflection (see Table VI again). There are regular forms like *walk-walked*, and irregular ones like *go-went*. Among the regular verbs, the form of the past depends on the final phoneme of the simple verb: so we have *pack-packed* and *pat-patted*. In the case of past-tense inflection in contrast with pluralization, however, the most frequently used forms are irregular, and the curious fact is that the child often starts regularizing these forms before having been heard to produce any other past-tense forms. Thus *goed*, *doed*, *comed* appear among the first past-tense forms produced. The analogizing tendency is evidently very strong.

The occurrence of certain kinds of errors on the level of word construction thus reveals the child's effort to induce regularities from the speech he is exposed to. When a child says, "I bought a fire car for a grillion dollars," he is not imitating in any strict sense of the term; he is constructing in accordance with rules, rules which, in adult English, are in part mistaken. At every stage, the child's linguistic competence extends beyond the sum total of the sentences he has heard. He is able to understand and construct sentences which he cannot have heard before, but which are well-formed in terms of general rules that are implicit in the sentences he *has* heard. Somehow, genius that he is, he induces from the speech to which he is exposed a latent structure of rules. For the rest of his life, he will be spinning out the implications of this latent structure.

By way of illustration of this inductive process, and of a further stage in the achievement of grammatical competence, let me indicate some aspects of the development of the noun phrase in children's speech (see Table VII). A noun phrase consists of a noun plus modifiers of some kind, which together can be used in all the syntactic positions in which a single noun can be used: alone to name or request something, or in a sentence as subject, object, or predicate nominative. The table at the top gives a number of noun phrases uttered by Adam or Eve at about two years of age. Each noun phrase consists of one word from a small class of modifiers, M, followed by one word from the large class of nouns, N. The rule for generating these noun phrases is given below in symbols: NP is generated by M plus N.

The class M does not correspond to any single syntactic class in adult English; it includes indefinite and definite articles, a possessive pronoun, a demonstrative adjective, a quantifier, a cardinal number, and some descriptive adjectives. In adult English these words are of different syntactic classes because they have very different privileges of occurrence in sentences. For the children, the words appear to belong to a single class because of their common privilege of occurrence before nouns; the lack of distinction leads to ungrammatical combinations, which are marked in the table by an asterisk. Thus the indefinite article should be used only with a common count noun in the singular, as in "a coat"; we do not say "a celery", "a

Becky", "a hands". The numeral two we use only with count nouns in the plural; hence we do not say "two sock". The word "more" we use before mass nouns in the singular, as in "more coffee", and before count nouns in the plural, as in "more nuts"; we would not say "more nut". To avoid the errors, it is necessary not only that the privileges of occurrence of words of the class M be differentiated, but also that nouns be subdivided into singular and plural, common and proper, count nouns and mass nouns.

Sixteen weeks after Time I, at Time II, Adam and Eve were beginning to make some of these differentiations; articles and demonstrative pronouns were now distinguished from other members of the class M. Articles now always appeared before descriptive or possessive adjectives, and demonstrative pronouns before articles or other modifiers.

Twenty-six weeks after Time I, the privileges of occurrence had become much more finely differentiated. Adam was distinguishing descriptive adjectives and possessive pronouns, as well as articles and demonstrative pronouns, from the residual class M; Eve's classification was even more complicated, though she was a bit younger. Also, nouns were being differentiated by both children: proper nouns were clearly distinct from common nouns; for Eve, count nouns were distinct from mass nouns.

Simultaneously with these differentiations, further integrations were occurring: the noun phrases were beginning to occur as constituents in longer sentences; the permissible combinations of modifiers and nouns were assuming the combination privileges enjoyed by nouns in isolation. Thus the noun phrase, for Adam and Eve, was coming to have a psychological unity such as it has for adults. This was indicated by instances in which a noun phrase was fitted between parts of a separable verb, as in "put the red hat on". It was also indicated by substitution of pronouns for noun phrases in sentences, often at first with the pronoun being followed by the noun phrase for which it was to substitute, as in "mommy get it my ladder", or "I miss it cowboy boot".

Whether any theory of learning at present known can account for this sequence of differentiations and integrations is doubtful. The process is more reminiscent of the development of an embryo than it is of the simple acquisition of conditioned reflexes or associations. What is achieved is an open-ended competence to comprehend sentences never before heard, in terms of a hierarchical structure, that embeds structures within structures.

To illustrate, let me use, not a child's sentence, but an example that Chomsky excerpts from the Port Royal Grammar of 1660 (see Figure 2). The sentence is: "Invisible God created the visible world". The sentence may be diagrammed as shown in the figure; Chomsky calls these diagrams *phrase markers*. There is a phrase marker for what he calls *surface* structure; this has the function of determining the phonetic shape and intonational contour of the sentence. And there is a phrase marker for what he calls *deep structure*; this shows how prior predications are embedded in the sentence, and determine its meaning.

Are formal structures like the one indicated by this diagram really operative when linguistic competence is being exercised? There are a number of indications that this is so. One indication is the extent to which the understanding of language involves resolution of ambiguities, or *disambiguation* as it is sometimes massively put. Consider the sentence "They are boring students" (see Figure 3). This has two different interpretations, which are represented by the diagrams of Figure 3. In interpretation A, the word "boring" is linked with the word "students"; the students are thus characterized as boring. In interpretation B, the word "boring" is linked with the word "are", which thus becomes the auxiliary verb in the present progressive tense of the verb "to bore", it is the students who are being bored, by certain other persons designated by the pronoun "they", but otherwise mercifully unidentified. In an actual conversation, the context of meaning would have led us to apply, as quick as a thought or perhaps more quickly, the correct phrase marker to the interpretation of the sequence of uttered sounds.

Other examples show how *deep structures* are essential to understanding (see Table VIII). Consider the two sentences:

John is eager to please.  
John is easy to please.

These sentences have the same surface structure. But a moment's thought shows that the word "John" has two very different roles to play in the two sentences. John in the first sentence is the person who is doing the pleasing; in the second sentence he is the person who is being pleased. John is the underlying *subject* in the first case, and the underlying *object* in the second case. Deep structure or grammar is involved in understanding the difference in meaning of the two sentences.

An opposite sort of case occurs when the surface grammars of two sentences are different, although the meaning is essentially the same. Consider this sentence in the active mode: "Recently seventeen elephants trampled on my summer home". Now consider the following sentence in the passive mode: "My summer home was trampled on recently by seventeen elephants." A native speaker of English feels that these sentences are related, that they have the same or very similar meanings. Yet their surface structures are very different. Recognition that both sentences are describing the same event presupposes that speaker and hearer refer them both to a single deep structure embodying the single meaning. Something similar happens in recognition of similarity between visual patterns, where there is no point-to-point correspondence between them.

Now all of this is unlikely to seem astonishing, for it is very familiar. You and I, like the *bourgeois gentilhomme*, have been speaking and listening to more or less grammatical prose for a long time now. People living at the seashore are said to grow so accustomed to the murmur of the

waves that they never hear it. Aspects of things that could be important to us may be hidden by their familiarity. The point I have been seeking to make is one that is due to Noam Chomsky, a linguist I have been depending on more than once this evening. The grammaticality of human languages involves properties that are in no sense *necessary* properties of a system that would fulfill the functions of human communication. A grammar, for instance, in which statements would be generated word-by-word, from left to right, so to speak, so that any given morpheme would determine the possible classes of morphemes that might follow it, is a kind of grammar that might have been used, but was not. Instead, human speech involves dependencies between non-adjacent elements, as in the sentence "Anyone who says that is lying", where there is a dependency between the subject noun "anyone" and the predicate phrase "is lying". All operations in human languages, transforming, for instance, an active into a passive sentence, or a declarative into an interrogative sentence, operate on and take account of phrase structure. Example: we form the interrogative of the English sentence, "Little Mary lived in Princeton", by introducing an auxiliary to the verb ("Little Mary *did* live in Princeton"), then inverting the order of the auxiliary and the noun-phrase which is the subject, to get "Did Little Mary live in Princeton?" It would be entirely possible to form interrogatives in a different way independently of phrase structure. There is no a priori reason why human languages should make use exclusively of structure-dependent operations. It is Chomsky's conclusion that such reliance on structure-dependent operations must be predetermined for the language learner by a restrictive initial schematism of some sort, given genetically, and directing the child's attempts to acquire linguistic competence. Put differently, one does not so much teach a first language, as provide a thread along which linguistic competence develops of its own accord, by processes more like maturation than learning.

The Chomskian analysis requires that we take one more step. The fact that deep structures figure in the understanding and use of language shows that grammar and meaning necessarily interpenetrate. The child's grammatical competence matures only along with semantic competence, the organization of what can be talked about in nameable categories and hierarchies of categories. This process, like the development of grammatical competence, involves successive differentiations. Sensory data are first grouped into as yet global classes of gross patterns, and then subsequently differentiated into more specific patterns. The infant who is given a word such as "daddy", and has the task of finding the category labelled by this word, does not start out with the working hypothesis that a specific, concrete object, say his father, uniquely bears this name. Rather, the word initially appears to be used as the label of a general and open category, corresponding to the adult category of *people* or *men*. Infra-human animals are taught with difficulty, if at all, to make the generalizations involved in naming, whereas children fall in with the ways

of names automatically. Names, other than proper names, refer to open and flexible classes, which are subject to extension and differentiation in the course of language usage. Categorization and naming involve relations between categories; nothing ever resides in a single term; *a* means nothing without *b* and probably *c* and *d*; *b* means nothing without *a* and *c* and *d*. Children go about assimilating the relations that are embodied in language, not merely imitatively, but in an active, inventive, and critical way. They are full of impossible questions:

"How did the sky happen? How did the sun happen? Why is the moon so much like a lamp? Who makes bugs?"

At first, they are ultra-literal in their reactions to idioms and metaphors. When grandmother said that winter was coming soon, the grandchildren laughed and wanted to know: "Do you mean that winter has legs?" And when a lady said "I'm dying to hear that concert", the child's sarcastic response was, "Then why don't you die?" Sometimes reconciliation of adult requirements requires genius. Chukovsky reports that a four-year-old Muscovite, influenced both by an atheist father and by a grandmother of orthodox faith, was overheard to tell her playmate: "There is a god, but, of course, I do not believe in him." The active analogizing and generalizing of 4- and 5-year olds is discernible in the odd questions they can put:

"What is a knife—the fork's husband?"

"Isn't it wonderful? I drink milk, water, tea, and cocoa, but out of me pours only tea."

"What does blue look like from behind?"

For a certain period, there is a special, heightened sensitivity to the strangeness of words and their meanings; by age 5 or 6 this talent begins to fade, and by 7 or 8 all traces of it have disappeared. The need has passed; the basic principles of the child's native language have been mastered.

What is it that has in fact been gained? We say, knowledge of a language. But what is a language, *my* language? Thoughtfully considered, this is a well-nigh impossible question, because a language is not a simple object, existing by itself and capable of being grasped in its totality. It exists in the linguistic competence of its users; it is what Aristotle would call an actuality of the second kind, like the soul, or like knowing how to swim when you are not swimming. Through it I constitute myself a first-person singular subject, by using this short word "I", which everyone uses, and which in each seems to refer to something different, yet the same. And through it I am brought into relation with others—the ubiquitous "you"—and with the public thing that is there for both you and me, a treasury of knowledge and value transmitted through and embedded in language.

We hear language spoken of as "living language", and there is evidence enough to make it more than a metaphor. Language reproduces itself from generation to generation, remaining relatively constant, yet with small mutations, enough in fact to account for its growing and evolving, leaving vestiges and fossils behind, and undergoing speciation as a result of migrations, like Darwin's finches on the Galapagos Islands. A change here provokes an adjustment there, for the whole is a complex of relations, mediating between a world and human organisms that are a part of it. The way a word is used this year is, in biological lingo, its *phenotype*; the deep and more abiding sense in it is its *genotype*.

It is we, of course, who are accomplishing all this; but we do not know how we accomplish it. It is mostly a collective, autonomic kind of doing, like the building activities of ants and termites, or the decision-making of bees. It takes generation after generation, but we are part of it whenever and however we utter words or follow them in the sentences that we hear or read, whether lazily or intently, whether with habitual acceptance or active inquiry. Always the words are found for us, and fitted with meanings for us, by agents in the brain over which we exercise no direct control. We can either float with the stream, sometimes a muddy tide of slang and jargon and cliché, or struggle cross stream or upstream. Sometimes we can, sensing the possible presence of a meaning, attempt a raid on the inarticulate; we can launch ourselves into speech, discovering what it is that we mean as we proceed. We "articulate"; the word once meant division into small joints, then, by an effortless transition, the speaking of sentences. There are unexpected outcomes. We may find that our utterance is ungrammatical or illogical; or we may discover that the connection of ideas leads in directions we had not previously considered. In any case, phonetic, syntactical, and semantic structures are being actualized in time, without our quite knowing how. Yet we can strive after that lucidity and precision which, when achieved, make language seem transparent to what there is.

I have already been carried beyond the two propositions I set out to defend, and in doing so, I have moved into a region of ambiguity. The question as to what is determined by nature, independently of us, and what is man-made, is an ancient and disturbing question, embedded in old etymologies and myths.

(See Table IX). In more than one language, the word "man" is derived from "earth". So it is in Hebrew: *Adam*, "man", comes from the word for "ground". As shown in the upper diagram, the IndoEuropean root for "earth" gives us "man" and "human" as well as "humus". The notion here is that of the autochthonous origin of humans, their origination from the earth itself; it is a notion found in early cultures all over the world. An implication would seem to be that man is like a plant in his naturalness. On the other hand, as shown in the lower diagram, the IndoEuropean root "wiros", "man" or "the strong one", leads not only to

*virile* but, staggeringly, to *world*, suggesting that man makes himself and his world.

The dichotomy, the tension, emerges in the Theban cycle of myths (see Table X). Following a suggestion of Levi-Strauss, I am listing elements of it in chronological order from left to right and from the top downward, but in columns, to show the repetition of similar elements. Cadmus is sent off to seek his sister; he kills a dragon, a chthonic monster, that will not permit men to live, and sows the teeth of the dragon in the earth; from the teeth sprout up armed men who kill one another, all except five who become the ancestors of the Thebans. In column I are listed events of the myth in which blood relations seem to be given too much importance. In column II are listed murders of brothers by brother, of a father by a son: here blood relations are brutally disregarded. Column I is thus opposed to column II. In column III, chthonic monsters that were killing off humans are themselves killed by men; we can interpret this as a *denial* of the autochthonous origin of man, an assertion that man has now become self-sufficient, himself responsible for his continued existence. In column IV are listed the meanings of the names of the Labdacidae, including Oedipus; the etymologies all indicate difficulty in walking or in standing upright. In myths throughout the world, this difficulty in walking or standing is characteristic of the creature that has just emerged out of the earth; the names given in column IV thus constitute an *assertion* of the autochthonous origin of man. Column IV contradicts column III, just as column I contradicts column II. The myth deals with a difficulty of one sort, not by resolving it, but by juxtaposing it to another, parallel type of opposition. Neither man's rootedness in nature nor his transcendence of nature is unproblematic.

The study of language and its acquisition by children indicates that our language has genetic foundations or roots. These, however, have their fruition only under appropriate conditions, only through culture. Man is *by nature* a cultural animal. He does not fabricate his linguistic culture out of whole cloth.

On the one hand, it becomes conceivable that a universal grammar and semantics might be formulated, describing the species-specific features and presuppositions that characterize human linguistic behavior universally. On the other hand, nature's gift of language brings with it an apparent freedom from deterministic necessity not previously present. Most of our sentences are quite new; it is uncommon for one sentence to come out the same as another, though the thoughts be the same. Our utterances are free of the control of detectable stimuli. The number of patterns underlying the normal use of language, according to Chomsky, is orders of magnitude greater than the seconds in a lifetime, and so cannot have been acquired simply by conditioning. While the laws of generation of sentences remain fixed and invariant, the specific manner in which they are applied remains unspecified, open to choice. The application can be appropriate. Articulate,

structurally organized signals can be raised to an expression of thought.

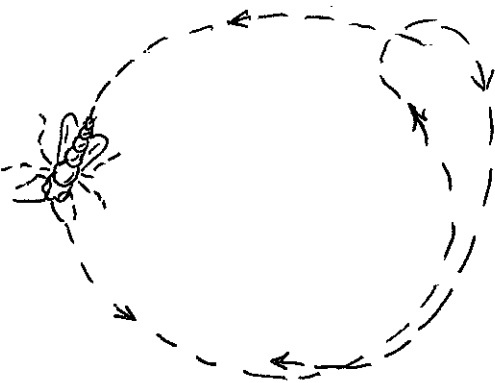
Achievement here is subject to change and old laws, and it depends on a sensitivity to old meanings as well as new possibilities. It requires both strength and submission.

TABLE I

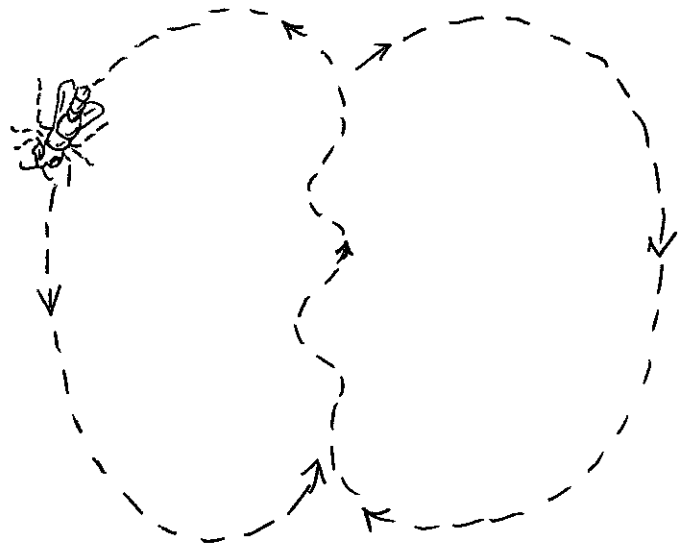
*Respiratory Adaptation in Speech*

	<i>Quietly</i>	<i>Breathing</i>	<i>During Speech</i>
Tidal volume	500-600cm <sup>3</sup>		1500-2400cm <sup>3</sup>
<u>Time of inspiration</u> Time of inspiration + expiration	about 0.4		about 0.13
Breaths per minute	18-20		4-20
Expiration	Continuous & unimpeded		Periodically interrupted, with increase in subglottal pressure
Electrical activity in expiratory muscles	Nil or very low		Nil or very low at start of phonation; then increases rapidly and continues active to end of expiration
Electrical activity in inspiratory muscles	Active in inspiration & nil during expiration		Active in inspiration & in expiration till expiratory muscles become active
Musculatures involved	Chest & abdominal, closely synchronized		Mainly chest; slight desynchronization between chest and abdominal muscles
Airways	Primarily nasal		Primarily oral

FIGURE 1



ROUND DANCE



TAIL-WAGGING DANCE

TABLE II

*Species-specific Features of Human Speech*

1. *Phonematization*

"Morphemes": the smallest meaningful units into which an utterance can be divided.  
Examples:  
water  
spick and span  
"er" in "whiter", "taller", etc.

"Phoneme": the smallest distinctive unit of sound functioning within the sound system of a language to make a difference.  
Examples:  
/p/ vs. /b/  
/t/ vs. /d/

Phonematization: all morphemes in all natural human languages are divisible into phonemes.

2. *Concatenation*: single morphemes are strung together into sequences, rather than being used in isolation.

3. *Grammar or Syntactical Structure*: in no human language are morphemes strung together in purely random order.  
Examples (Chomsky):  
Grammatical: "colorless green ideas sleep furiously"  
Ungrammatical: "furiously sleep ideas green colorless"

TABLE III

Comparative Weights of Brain and Body in Humans, Including Nanocephalic Dwarf, Chimpanzees, and Monkeys

	Age	Body Wt. (kg)	Brain Wt. (kg)	Ratio (Body: Brain)	Speech Acquisition
Human (male)	2-1/2	13-1/2	1.100	12.3	yes
Human (male)	13-1/2	45	1.350	34	yes
Human (male)	18	64	1.350	47	yes
Nanocephalic dwarf	12	13-1/2	0.400	34	yes
Chimp (male)	3	12-1/2	0.400	34	no
Chimp (female)	adult	47	0.450	104	no
Rhesus monkey	adult	3-1/2	0.090	40	no

TABLE IV

Imitations by Adam and Eve, Two Years of Age

Model Utterance (parent)	Child's Imitation
Tank car	Tank car
Wait a minute	Wait a minute
Daddy's brief case	Daddy brief case
Fraser will be unhappy	Fraser unhappy
He's going out	He go out
That's an old-time train	Old-time train
It's not the same dog as Pepper	Dog Pepper
No, you can't write on Mr. Cromer's shoe	Write Cromer shoe

**Contentives**  
 Nouns: Daddy, Fraser, Pepper, Cromer; tank car, minute, brief case, train, dog, shoe  
 Verbs: wait, go, write  
 Adjectives: unhappy, old-time

**Functionors:**  
 the possessive inflection 's  
 the modal auxiliary will  
 the progressive inflection -ing  
 the contraction of the auxiliary verb is  
 the preposition on  
 the articles the and an  
 the modal auxiliary can

TABLE V

Adult Expansions of Child Pronouncements

Utterances of Child	Mother's Expansions (Additions circled)
Baby highchair	Baby <u>is in the</u> highchair
Mommy eggnog	Mommy <u>had her</u> eggnog
Eve lunch	Eve <u>is having</u> lunch
Mommy sandwich	Mommy <u>'ll have a</u> sandwich
Sat wall	<u>He</u> sat <u>on the</u> wall
Throw Daddy	Throw <u>it to</u> Daddy
Pick glove	Pick <u>the</u> glove <u>up</u>

TABLE VI

Plural Inflection

Regularization of irregular forms:

Singular vs. Plural  
 mouse vs. mouses  
 foot vs. foots

or:

feet vs. feets  
 man vs. mans

Words ending in sibilants

- First Stage: box (as well as horse, match, judge, etc.) treated as both singular and plural
- Possible
- Second Stage: bok vs. boks, in analogy with normal "s" pluralization, replaces box vs. boxes
- Third Stage: after box vs. boxes is produced, then we also get foot vs. footses, hand vs. handses

Past Tense Inflection

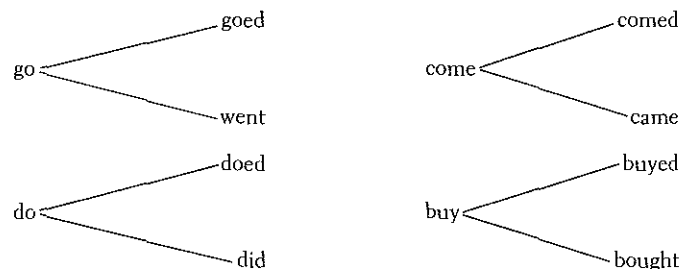




TABLE VII

TIME I: Noun Phrases with Generative Rule

A coat	That Adam	Big boot
*A celery	That knee	Poor man
*A Becky	More coffee	Little top
*A hands	*More nut	Dirty knee
The top	*Two sock	
My Mommy	Two shoes	
My stool	*Two tinker toy	

$NP \rightarrow M + N$

M a, big, dirty, little, more, my, poor, that, the, two  
 N Adam, Becky, boot, coat, coffee, knee, man, Mommy, nut, sock, stool, tinker toy, top, etc.

TIME II: Subdivision of Modifier class with Generative Rules

A. Privileges peculiar to articles

<i>Obtained</i>	<i>Not obtained</i>
A blue flower	*Blue a flower
A nice cap	*Nice a nap
*A your car	*Your a car
*A my pencil	*My a pencil

Rule:  $NP \rightarrow Art + M + N$  (Not:  $NP \rightarrow M + art + N$ )

B. Privileges peculiar to demonstrative pronouns

<i>Obtained</i>	<i>Not Obtained</i>
*That a horse	*A that horse
*That a blue flower	*A that blue flower
	*Blue a that flower

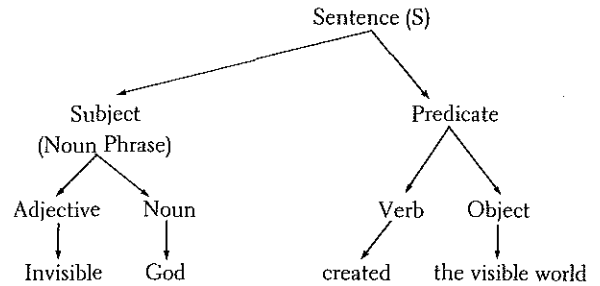
Rule:  $NP \rightarrow Dem + Art + M + N$

\*Ungrammatical in adult English

FIGURE 2

Chomskian Phrase Markers

SURFACE STRUCTURE



DEEP STRUCTURE

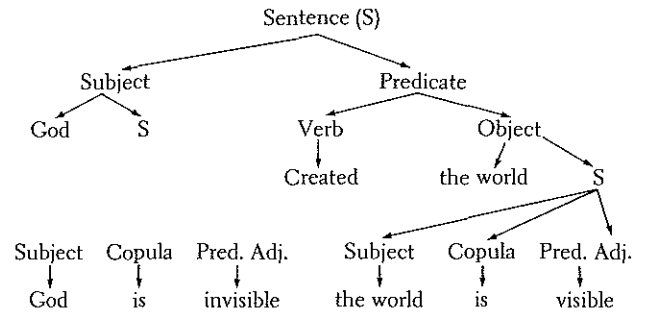
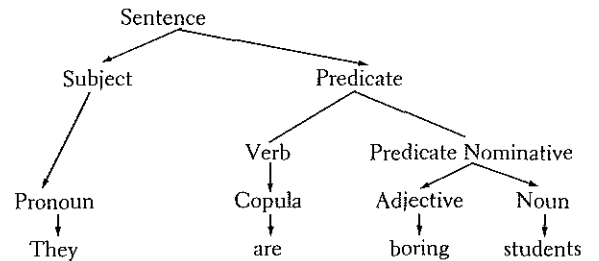


FIGURE 3

"They are boring Students": Two Interpretations

INTERPRETATION A



INTERPRETATION B

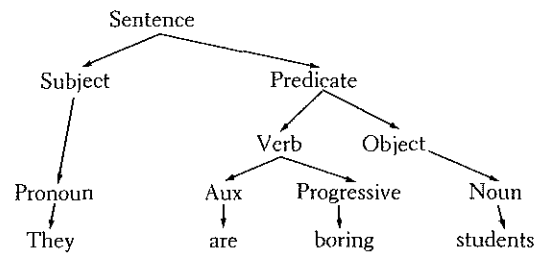


TABLE VIII

Evidence for "Deep" Structure

Surface structures the same,  
 deep structure different: { John is eager to please.  
 John is easy to please.

Surface structures different,  
 deep structures the same: { Recently seventeen elephants  
 trampled on my summer house.  
 My summer home was recently  
 trampled on by seventeen  
 elephants.

Visual patterns recognized as similar,  
 although no point-to-point correspondence exists between them.

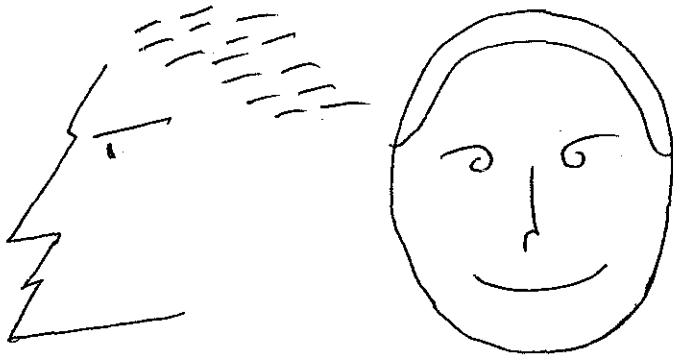


TABLE IX

Some Etymologies

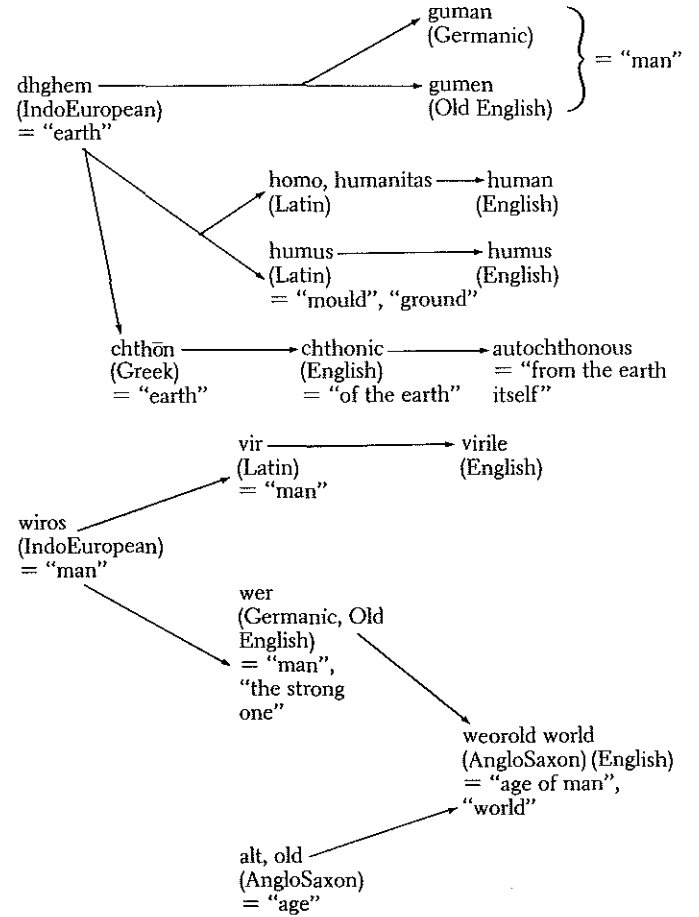


TABLE X

I Blood rela- tions overem- phasized	II Blood rela- tions under- emphasized	III Chthonic monsters that would not permit men to live are slain by men	IV Difficulties in walking straight and standing up- right
Cadmus seeks his sister Europa, rav- ished by Zeus	The Sparti (the sown dragon's teeth) kill one another	Cadmus kills the dragon	Labdacus (Laius' father) = "lame"
Oedipus mar- ries his mother, Jocasta	Oedipus kills his father, Laius	Oedipus kills the Sphinx	Laius (Oedipus' father) = "left- sided"
Antigone buries her brother, Polyneices, de- spite prohibi- tion	Eteocles and Polyneices, brothers, kill one another		Oedipus = "swollen-foot"

Column I : Column II : : Column IV : Column III

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## SOLSTICE ON THE FIRST WATCH

There is no magic. What we perceive  
as lightning wending its electric way  
along the surface of the skin  
is only the silent, whispered dance  
of chemicals and electric fields  
that move like ocean waves through us  
in our private sea.

Then those lights in the sky,  
translucent curtains of fire  
ice-green and red, resolve themselves  
when we focus as abstractions  
of the abstract impulse of nerve  
on nerve in mindless dark.

Yet these movements sometimes  
overwhelm our doubts with a heat,  
shimmering in the way that light  
walks on the surface of water  
like the original solstice did,

When the doubting soldiers saw  
something move with the dim hours  
of the first watch along the edge  
of the sea, then out on it, a figure  
of a singular man walking, the image

Of water touching the feet. Rumours  
floated lightly on the tongue and words  
took root that something happened.  
What they held as true was true,  
But the nets of words cast along  
some shore of meaning circumscribed,

And the road from there  
leading into the endless stars  
and the mountains  
cast us into a land  
not quite our own.

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# The Ground of Nature: Shakespeare, Language, and Politics

Paul A. Cantor

## I

In recent years, several critics, myself included, have been trying to call attention to the importance of politics as a subject in Shakespeare's plays.<sup>1</sup> This attempt to expand the scope of Shakespeare criticism has met with considerable resistance. Sceptics have argued that Shakespeare was not at all interested in politics, he was interested only in character or psychology, or in presenting certain religious beliefs, or in developing a tragic worldview, and so on. Generally the counterarguments have taken the form: "Shakespeare was not interested in politics, he was interested in X," where X is some subject thought of as excluding political concerns. But most recently a new challenge to a political approach to Shakespeare has begun to loom on the horizon. Instead of offering an alternative subject as the focus of Shakespeare's interest, this approach denies that his plays are *about* anything at all, that is, about anything other than themselves. Remaking Shakespeare on the model of twentieth-century literature, this approach views his works as fundamentally self-reflexive, not attempting to represent anything in the real world but instead calling attention to their own fictiveness as works of art. According to this view, any attempt to study politics as a subject in Shakespeare would be hopelessly naive, based as it is on an antiquated and outmoded mimetic theory of art.

I am referring of course to the most fashionable of current schools of literary criticism, deconstruction. Origin-

nally applied primarily to nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature, this form of analysis is gradually being extended to the interpretation of all historical periods, including the Renaissance. According to this view, Shakespeare's plays are written in language, and language is a self-contained system, an endless play of signifiers. Hence if Shakespeare's plays are about anything, they are about language itself. As J. Hillis Miller writes of literature in general:

If meaning in language rises not from the reference of signs to something outside words but from differential relations among words themselves, . . . then the notion of a literary text which is validated by its one-to-one correspondence to some social, historical, or psychological reality can no longer be taken for granted. No language is purely mimetic or referential, not even the most utilitarian speech. The specifically literary form of language, however, may be defined as a structure of words which in one way or another calls attention to this fact, while at the same time allowing for its own inevitable misreading as a "mirroring of reality."<sup>2</sup>

From the point of view of deconstruction, then, a political reading of Shakespeare can only be a misreading. The plays have no political meaning; indeed they have no determinate meaning at all. All the details that might cause us to wonder—inconsistencies, contradictions, seeming errors that call out for analysis to uncover some deeper significance—all these puzzling aspects of the plays merely work to keep us from coming up with a coherent and univocal interpretation and thereby to preserve the work's indeterminacy of meaning.

Miller, for example, has written an elaborate analysis of what most scholars have been content to dismiss as a printer's error in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*: the

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appearance of the name *Ariachne* in one of Troilus' speeches, which seems to be a conflation of two names from Greek mythology, Ariadne and Arachne. The intrusive *i* provokes Miller into a frenzied fantasia of epistemological speculation:

Slip of the tongue or of the pen? Ignorance on Shakespeare's part? Error of the scribe or of the typesetter who has put in one letter too many? The extra *i* . . . produce[s] a gap in the meaning and call[s] attention to the material base of signs, marks on the page which the eye interprets. . . . The little *i* in "Ariachnes" has the effect of a bit of sand in a salad or of a random sound in a symphony, the flautist dropping his flute, the snap of a breaking violin string. . . . The conflation in "Ariachnes" of two myths which are and are not congruent is precisely in agreement with what happens in Troilus' speech, namely, an anguished confrontation with the subversive possibility of dialogue, reason divided hopelessly against itself. . . . The principle of identity is the basic assumption of monological metaphysics. . . . The "whole shebang" of Occidental metaphysics is, the reader can see, brought into question in Troilus' experience and in his speech.<sup>3</sup>

By the time Miller has finished deconstructing, the unity of Shakespeare himself has disintegrated:

One of the certainties which dissolves with the undecidability of context . . . is the concept of authorizing authorship, or indeed of selfhood generally in the sense of an ultimate generative source for any act of language. There is not any "Shakespeare himself." "Shakespeare" is an effect of the text, which depersonalizes, disunifies. . . . The works of Shakespeare are so comprehensive and so profound an exploration of the possibilities inherent in the English language as it inherits the concepts, figures, and stories of Occidental culture, that it seems they must have been written by a committee of geniuses.<sup>4</sup>

Faced with the dissolution of Shakespeare himself, we can hardly find time to mourn the loss of the mere meaning of his plays.

One hopes that Miller is being playful in this particular essay, turning in a virtuoso performance as he makes an epistemological mountain out of a textual molehill. But however playful the deconstructive approach to Shakespeare may be, it will have serious and lasting consequences if it succeeds in diverting us from the genuinely challenging task of thinking through the authentic problems in Shakespeare's texts. We have not yet been flooded with articles and books deconstructing Shakespeare, but one senses that it is only a matter of time. To try to ward off the damage that might be done we might consider whether Shakespeare himself offers any thoughts on the nature of language, thoughts which might well prove to be a better guide to his plays than those of contemporary critics. Unfortunately, we have no theoretical writings of Shakespeare to which we might refer to establish his own view of language or of literary meaning. When one turns to the plays for a clue, one finds statements of precisely the

mimetic theory of art which contemporary critics despise. Consider, for example, Hamlet's famous advice to the players:

Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.<sup>5</sup>

Hamlet's invocation of nature as a standard, his naive faith that theatre has a purpose, his conventional use of the mirror metaphor for art, above all his idea that art must serve a moral function, all of these attitudes would suggest to contemporary critics that Hamlet should have dropped out of school at Wittenberg and headed off immediately with Laertes to study in Paris. But we can never simply identify Shakespeare with any of his characters, and thus even if Hamlet may be an unreconstructed realist, we can say nothing about the epistemology of his author.

Does language itself ever become thematic in Shakespeare? Normally his language seems transparent: we look through the characters' words to what they are talking about. But is there any place in which Shakespeare's language calls attention to itself, not as all great poetic language does through its beauty, but simply as language as such? For language itself to become an object of our attention, it must get in our way, we must stumble over it on our way to the things it normally represents. I will argue that the most self-conscious use of language in Shakespeare is to be found in one of his most political plays, *Henry V*. What I have in mind is Act III, scene iv, of this play, the central scene of its central act, a conversation between the French princess Katherine and an old gentlewoman named Alice. In one of the most peculiar scenes in all of Shakespeare, we suddenly bump into the brute fact of language. The scene is almost entirely in French. As such, it violates one of the most basic linguistic conventions of drama. When portraying foreigners on stage, dramatists take the liberty of having them speak, not their native language, but the language of the play's audience. There are, of course, variations of this convention. Sometimes more or less awkward devices are used to supply translations. But basically, even in today's science fiction films, Americans can timewarp to distant galaxies and still find two-headed green insects speaking fluent twentieth-century English. Even within *Henry V*, Shakespeare normally follows this convention of having aliens speak our language. Act III, scene vii, takes place entirely among Frenchmen and yet the conversation is conducted solely in flawless English. We are in fact so accustomed to this dramatic convention that we are hardly aware of its oddness.

If there is any scene in all of Shakespeare which calls attention to the artificiality of dramatic representation, it is, then, Act III, scene iv, of *Henry V*. By violating one of

the basic conventions of drama, it reminds us of how conventional drama is. Suddenly shocked by hearing the French people we see on stage actually speaking French, we ought to reflect on how all our lives we have unthinkingly accepted foreigners speaking English in the theatre. If that is not enough to qualify as a self-conscious use of language, this scene is itself a little language lesson. Katherine is trying to learn English from Alice, who has been in England and can instruct the French princess in a vocabulary she may soon need to know. In fact, this is the only reason Shakespeare can get away with presenting an entire scene in French. Katherine keeps pointing to various parts of her body and asking Alice what they are called in English. It should take an audience only a few moments to catch on to what is transpiring, and indeed this scene plays quite well in the theatre. The basic trick is fairly obvious and the fact that Alice does manage to get out the names for the various body parts in her broken English ensures that even the densest audience will not get lost.

Still, it is worth noting that in the one scene in which Shakespeare most clearly calls attention to language as such, he specifically calls attention to its referential aspect. Act III, scene iv, works only because language is *not* a self-contained system, but makes reference to an external world. The naively mimetic act of pointing is at the center of this scene. Shakespeare even seems to dwell on the one quality of language most disputed by contemporary theorists: its translatability. His characters make an easy transition from French to English because both languages refer to the same world of nature. The entire language lesson revolves around something quite ordinary and natural: the parts of the human body. The point seems to be that the body provides a natural common ground for human understanding. All human beings have basically the same bodies: thus on the level of the body they can discourse with one another smoothly, even moving from one set of conventional names to another without misunderstanding.

But Katherine's English lesson does not come off completely without a hitch. When she goes to learn the English word *chin*, she mispronounces it *sin*, and when she hears Alice say the English words *foot* and *gown*, she mistakes them for two indecent words in French, in fact the French equivalents of the two prime four-letter words in English. Shakespeare evidently has no illusions about the complete translatability of one language into another. When one moves beyond the basic level of the body to moral significances, things very quickly become more complicated. *Chin* becomes *sin*: what is perfectly ordinary and natural in one language can become distorted into something objectionable in another. One language's propriety can become another language's profanity, as happens with Katherine's misunderstanding of the word *gown*. Here what does the covering in English becomes in French what is supposed to be covered up. The seen becomes the obscene.

## II

If my reading is correct, one may still wonder: what is a scene about language doing in the middle of one of Shakespeare's history plays? *Henry V* is a play about a great English monarch who tried to conquer France. With Act III, scene iv, Shakespeare subtly suggests that the problem of conquering France is ultimately a problem of language. Henry wishes to unite the English and the French nations, but considering the fact that they do not speak the same language, that is not going to be an easy task. On a very low level—the level of the body—English and French do translate easily into each other. That suggests that the English and the French could be united only on the basis of the material concerns which all human beings share, the concerns they all have by virtue of having the same bodies. In Act III, scene iv, Katherine terminates her language lesson by saying (in French): "That's enough for one time; let's go to dinner" (III.iv.61–62). She turns quickly from the strain of her intellectual pursuits to an activity which can satisfy her body's needs rather than her mind's. As we see, when Katherine tries to learn another language, her enquiries center around the body and its basic needs: food, clothing, sex. Languages translate easily into one another only when they remain on the level of the lowest common denominator of human needs. When Katherine moves beyond purely material concerns, and touches upon issues like the profanity of language, blunders start to creep into her translations. Human beings evidently are not as easily united in their spiritual concerns as they are in their material.

Thus Act III, scene iv, portrays comically a very serious problem facing Henry V. In many respects, all men do categorize the world the same way, and the different names they attach to things do not lead to misunderstandings. But when men divide the world into categories which embody evaluations, such as the decent and the indecent or the sacred and the profane, they often differ fundamentally as to where they draw the line. When Ancient Pistol has a French soldier at his mercy, the frightened man calls upon his deity: "O *Seigneur Dieu!*" But Pistol thinks that his opponent has merely introduced himself: "O Signieur Dew should be a gentleman" (IV.iv.6–7). Pistol unintentionally secularizes the French *Dieu* into the English *Dew*. Once again, this seems to be merely a comic error, but it does point to a deeper problem: the French and English worship different gods. To be sure, on the surface they share a common Christianity, but Shakespeare has gone out of his way to differentiate the two regimes, even in terms of their beliefs. The god of Henry V turns out to be a "God of battles" (IV.i.289), providing him with the basis for leading his citizen army into war. Judging by Act III, scene vii, what the French worship is their horses and their mistresses, and in precisely that order (III.vii.39–44). The French in *Henry V* put their faith in chivalry, which helps to explain why they are defeated by the more practi-

cal and down-to-earth English. The misunderstandings which occur when the French and English try to speak to each other in *Henry V* are not merely the result of ignorance of each others' languages, for their languages embody basic disagreements in their values and beliefs.

These disagreements may well be what makes one people distinct from another, what gives them their national character, and as such they are political disagreements. To unite the French and the English, Henry V would thus have to disregard everything that makes the French French and the English English, in short everything that makes either nation interesting as a people. When Shakespeare finally shows Henry trying to unite the two kingdoms in Act V, he presents the task concretely as a problem of language. Henry must woo Katherine to be his queen, and that requires learning her language: "It is as easy for me, Kate, to conquer the kingdom as to speak so much more French. I shall never move thee in French, unless it be to laugh at me" (V.ii.184-87). The dialogue between the English king and the French princess does take many comic turns because of the potential for misunderstanding as they grope for a linguistic common ground:

*K. Hen.* Fair Katherine, and most fair,  
Will you vouchsafe to teach a soldier terms,  
Such as will enter at a lady's ear,  
And plead his love-suit to her gentle heart?  
*Kath.* Your Majesty shall mock at me, I cannot speak your  
England.  
*K. Hen.* O fair Katherine, if you will love me soundly with  
your French heart, I will be glad to hear you confess it brokenly  
with your English tongue. Do you like me, Kate?  
*Kath.* *Pardonnez-moi*, I cannot tell what is "like me."  
*K. Hen.* An angel is like you, Kate, and you are like an angel.  
[V.ii.98-110]

The result of this effort to span the two nations is a kind of pidgin English and a pidgin French. Two of the richest and most complex of languages must be radically reduced and simplified for communication to take place between Henry and Katherine. It is certainly unusual for Shakespeare to present a romantic dialogue between a king and a future queen entirely in prose. And yet Shakespeare evidently realized that it is precisely the poetry of love that would not survive the effort to move between two languages. Henry is a very prosaic suitor:

I' faith, Kate, my wooing is fit for thy understanding. I am glad thou canst speak no better English, for if thou couldst, thou wouldst find me such a plain king that thou wouldst think I had sold my farm to buy my crown. I know no ways to mince it in love, but directly to say "I love you" . . . Marry, if you would put me to verses . . . Kate, why you undid me. . . . I speak to thee plain soldier. If thou canst love me for this, take me! if not, to say to thee that I shall die, is true; but for thy love, by the Lord, no; yet I love thee too.  
[V.ii.122-27, 132-33, 149-52]

Henry is obviously no Romeo, and in wooing his Juliet his linguistic resources seem meager indeed. And his love suit ultimately elicits a kind of bastardized blend of English and French:

*K. Hen.* Come, your answer in broken music; for thy voice is music and thy English is broken; therefore, queen of all, Katherine, break thy mind to me in broken English—wilt thou have me?  
*Kath.* Dat is as it shall please de *roi mon père*.  
[V.ii.243-47]

We see here in linguistic terms the futility of Henry's effort to bring France and England together. Henry is overreaching himself. He hopes for some kind of grand synthesis of England and France that will enable his dynasty to conquer the world:

Shall not thou and I, between Saint Denis and Saint George,  
compound a boy, half French, half English, that shall go to  
Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard?  
[V.ii.206-209]

But the practical result of Henry's efforts would be a bland mixture of French and English characteristics, reduced to the lowest common denominator and hence losing sight of all the higher ideals of either nation. Even if Henry's early death had not destroyed his hopes, Shakespeare suggests that there was a basic flaw in Henry's plan for producing a superkingdom out of two linguistically distinct nations.

Henry's experience in his own country should have taught him the difficulties of spanning a linguistic gulf. One measure of Henry's legitimate achievement is that Shakespeare presents him as the king, not just of England, but of Great Britain. One of the keys to his military success is that he is able to lead not just Englishmen against the French, but Irish, Welsh, and Scottish troops as well, soldiers from remote corners of his realm who seem to have an almost pagan fierceness that gives the British army its strength in battle. But the mixture of men Henry leads is not wholly harmonious. They do not always speak the same language, or at least they do not always speak it with the same accent. This often leads to tension among the troops. In *Henry IV, Part One*, Shakespeare suggests the potential for disharmony among the nationalities that go to make up Great Britain, and presents the problem in terms of language. The rebel conspiracy almost falls apart as the Englishman Hotspur and the Welshman Glendower question each other's linguistic competence:

*Hot.* Let me understand you then,  
Speak it in Welsh.  
*Glend.* I can speak English, lord, as well as you,  
For I was train'd up in the English court,  
Where being but young I framed to the harp  
Many an English ditty lovely well,  
And gave the tongue a helpful ornament,  
A virtue that was never seen in you.  
[III.i.117-124]



As Glendower shows, the non-English members of the British nation are very sensitive to the charge that they do not know the English language, and feel constrained to point out that they can in fact use it better than a native speaker.

The same issue comes up in *Henry V*, in a scene in which an Irishman, a Welshman, and a Scotsman quarrel over the conduct of the wars in France. The Irishman will not abide any ethnic slurs from a Welshman:

*Fluellen.* Captain Macmorris, I think, look you, under your correction, there is not many of your nation—

*Macmorris.* Of my nation? What ish my nation? Ish a villain, and a basterd, and a knave, and a rascal. What ish my nation? Who talks of my nation?

[III.ii.120–24]

One of the political lessons of *Henry V* is that all the nationalities that go to make up Great Britain must learn to put aside their linguistic differences and to recognize their common interest. This is certainly the point of the humiliation of the Englishman, Ancient Pistol, at the hands of the Welshman, Fluellen:

You thought, because he could not speak English in the native garb, he could not therefore handle an English cudgel. You find it otherwise, and henceforth let a Welsh correction teach you a good English condition.

[V.i.75–79]

Henry encourages this kind of linguistic peace among his subjects. One aspect of his genius as a monarch is the way he generally understands the connection between language and politics. He has made sure that he can speak the language of all his people, and this ability stands him in good stead when he needs to lead them in wartime. He can deal with his troops on a man-to-man basis:

For forth he goes, and visits all his host,  
Bids them good morrow with a modest smile,  
And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen.

[IV.Cho.32–34]

Even as Prince Hal, Henry understood the importance of language to a king. One of the reasons he offers for his truancy from court is his desire to get out among his people and learn how they speak:

I have sounded the very base-string of humility. Sirrah, I am sworn brother to a leash of drawers, and can call them all by their christen names, as Tom, Dick, and Francis. . . . They call drinking deep, dyeing scarlet, and when you breathe in your watering, they cry “hem!” and bid you play it off. To conclude, I am so good a proficient in one quarter of an hour, that I can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life.

[II.iv.5–8, 15–20]

It may seem strange to hear a future king priding himself on his knowledge of London slang. But Hal puts this

knowledge to good use once he becomes Henry V. He might not have overestimated his ability to absorb France into his kingdom if he had realized the implications of the fact that he lacks such familiarity with the slang of the Paris underworld. Henry has a difficult enough time making one nation out of people who speak the same language with different accents. But to create one nation out of men who do not even speak the same language is beyond even Henry’s political skill.

### III

At first sight, *Henry V* seems to deal exclusively with political and military subject matter. But as we have seen, language as a theme is surprisingly pervasive in the play. The reason of course is that language itself turns out to be a political theme. As Shakespeare shows in Act III, scene iv, though language provides a natural common ground for human beings, it also tends to reflect the conventional differences which separate them, differences rooted in the different regimes under which they live and hence political differences. Language thus becomes a political problem, and any effective leader like Henry V must learn to use language as a political tool. Falstaff’s great contribution to Henry’s education is to teach him the art of rhetoric, how to bend language to achieve a desired effect. *Henry V* opens with the English court using all their linguistic skill to fabricate a pretext for invading France. By an artful interpretation of the French Salic law, the English establish Henry’s claim to the French throne. Still, language is not totally pliant, even in the hands of a master rhetorician such as Henry V. Thus ultimately language sets limits to politics, or at least one may say that a political man can ignore linguistic problems only at the peril of his political achievement.

If one asks why of all Shakespeare’s plays, *Henry V* displays the greatest self-consciousness about language, the answer seems to be that only in an environment of competing languages does one begin to notice the importance of language as such. With the clash of English and French, or even the rivalry of various dialects of English within the British nation, one starts to grasp the distinction between nature and convention in language. As Act III, scene iv, suggests, there could be no communication among human beings if language were not somehow rooted in the world of nature. Reference to the substratum of nature is what makes possible translation from one language to another. But free and perfect translation is not always possible, because language is not simply natural to man, the way animal cries are innate and species-specific. Men have to create their languages for themselves, and in the process end up introducing conventional distinctions into their language systems. Unlike other beings we know, humans use their languages to dispute; their languages convey not just information and emotion, but opinion. Shakespeare seems to set up Act III, scene iv, to move between the natural

and conventional poles of language. We travel from the simplest act of naming things in nature to the complex cultural reaction of shame and indignation. As we see, in a given language, the name for a perfectly natural bodily function or organ can in fact become an obscenity.

Perhaps more than any other, the category of the obscene reveals what is distinctive about human language, because it shows the link between language and social mores. Good language can become a matter of good manners. Princess Katherine's reaction to what she hears as the prime curse words of her language shows her to be a proper and well-bred child of her culture: "O Lord, those are bad words, wicked, coarse, and immodest, and not proper for ladies of honor to use. I wouldn't utter those words before French gentlemen for all the world" (III.iv.52-56). For Katherine, the words are unacceptable in French society, but English society is evidently another matter and she goes on to repeat them as she reviews her whole lesson. She derives her sense of linguistic propriety from her own regime, and, strangely enough, her modesty seems to cease at its borders. In general, human language is bound up with human sociability. Men would not create languages if they were not social beings and they constitute themselves as societies in part through their languages, embodying whatever is distinctive in the way they view their world in the way they carve it up into linguistic categories. That is why language is ultimately a political phenomenon, and even something over which men might go to war.<sup>6</sup>

We obviously cannot expect to have exhausted the relation of politics and language in Shakespeare by examining one scene or even one play. Still, I hope I have done enough to suggest that in his view of language, Shakespeare is closer to Aristotle than to Jacques Derrida. In fact, the connection I have been trying to make between language and politics is adumbrated by Aristotle in his *Politics*, when he establishes that political life is natural to man by pointing to the fact of human speech:

Now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals is evident. Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal whom she has endowed with the gift of speech. And whereas mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals (for their nature attains to the perception of pleasure and pain and the intimation of them to one another, and no further), the power of speech is intended to set forth

the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a polis.<sup>7</sup>

Act III, scene iv, of *Henry V* calls attention to just this political aspect of language, the way it reflects the conventional distinctions which are the heart of a given polis or regime. The fact that Shakespeare sets the one scene of his which is most self-conscious about language in a larger political context suggests that he shares Aristotle's view of the bond between the fact that men are political animals and the fact that they speak the kind of languages they do. Thus if anyone were to question a political approach to Shakespeare by claiming that his plays are not about politics but about language, I think we could comfortably answer solely on the basis of *Henry V*: if Shakespeare's plays are about language, then they are still about politics, because for Shakespeare language itself is political in nature. At the very least, I hope I have shown that no abstract theory of language, least of all one which views language as a self-contained or self-referential system, can serve for understanding Shakespeare's plays. Even when Shakespeare calls attention to language as language, he does so in a living human context, one in which language plays a fundamental role in the complex interaction of man, society, and the world of nature.

1. See, for example, the pioneering work by Allan Bloom and Harry Jaffa, *Shakespeare's Politics*, New York: Basic Books, 1964. See also my *Shakespeare's Rome: Republic and Empire*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976 and the collection of essays edited by John Alvis and Thomas West, *Shakespeare as Political Thinker*, Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1981.

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3. J. Hillis Miller, "Ariachne's Broken Woof," *Georgia Review*, 31, 1977, pp. 45-47.

4. Miller, "Ariachne's Broken Woof," p. 59.

5. III.ii.17-24. All quotations from Shakespeare are taken from G. Blakemore Evans, ed., *The Riverside Shakespeare*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974.

6. On the connection between war and language, see *All's Well That Ends Well*, IV.i, where the enemy is seen as the barbarian, the man who does not speak an intelligible language.

7. *Politics*, 1253a7-20. Quoted in the translation of Benjamin Jowett in Richard McKeon, ed., *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, New York: Random House, 1941, p. 1129.

# Nominal Autobiography in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*

Margreta de Grazia

Once upon a time, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, there lived a reportedly lackluster young man, named William-Henry Ireland, who repeatedly heard his father say that he would give half his substantial library for the possession of a single signature by Shakespeare. Eager to please his father, William-Henry began leafing through 16th century papers and documents but he could not, alas, locate a Shakespeare signature. He consequently did the next best thing: he made one himself. He took a facsimile of one of Shakespeare's signatures from a contemporary edition of Shakespeare and set about reproducing it on old parchment with an ink concocted of three fluids which, when held a few seconds before the fire, dried to look a venerable 200 years old.

Thus begins the story of the most famous of Shakespearean forgers, who, incidentally, fired by this initial success, when on to produce, or rather fraudulently reproduce, promissory notes, a profession of faith, love verses to Anne Hathaway, and most impressive of all a manuscript of the complete *King Lear*—all in Shakespeare's own hand. There is much of interest in this account: the dull youth's pathetic need to impress his overbearing father, the eager gullibility of such eminent men of letters as James Boswell, who kissed the forgeries and counted himself blessed to have lived long enough to see them, and the bardolatry that even today makes the William-Henry Ireland forgeries almost as valuable as the Shakespearean originals would have been—had they existed. What is of interest to me here, however, is only one particular of this account: the importance conferred upon Shakespeare's signature; the desire

to possess Shakespeare's name written out in his own hand.

Why should Shakespeare's signature be relevant to a discussion of Shakespeare's autobiography? The answer is quite simple: a signature is a form of self-representation, a way of making oneself present in writing. So too is autobiography. Signatures and autobiographies are each forms of writing in the first person. Curiously enough, the prizing of signatures coincides with the emergence of the term *autobiography*: both take place in the decades around 1800. (The OED credits Southey with the first use of the term in English in 1809). When the way in which a man writes his name (his signature) changes, so too does the way in which he writes about himself (his autobiography). As I hope to indicate, the way in which a man writes his name changes after the sixteenth century and that change becomes visible by the end of the eighteenth century when Shakespeare's signature becomes a precious collector's item. And the way a man writes about his life changes no less radically after the sixteenth century as I hope to show in my discussion of the only work we have by Shakespeare written in the first person: his Sonnets.

Shakespeare would have been utterly baffled by the coveting of his signature, the coveting that drove William-Henry into literary fraud. There is no evidence that Elizabethans were interested in signatures except for the practical purpose of identifying oneself as the writer of a message or of contracting oneself to the terms of a legal document. Independent of the letter or document on which it appeared, independent of its personal, official, or legal context, a signature had no importance. A signature alone on a blank piece of paper would have been meaningless and worthless, no matter how illustrious the signator. In fact, the name signed was not even necessarily written by the bearer of the name. It was apparently common practice for one man to sign for another without acknowledging the substitution. Secretaries, for example, often signed the

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names of their employers on both personal letters and official documents. Walsingham's secretary did, so did Lord Grey's; a secretary signed Essex's name on confidential letters to the Queen. Nor were signatures on legal transactions necessarily authentic. A clerk taking down or copying a deposition might himself sign it with the name of the deponent. A witness to the making of a will might himself sign it in the name of the testator, without indicating that he had done so. A man's signature then was not exclusively in his own hand in the sixteenth century. In this respect, it was transferrable, like that other mark by which a man of means might identify himself: the signet or seal, the wax impressed with an emblem or device. As Hamlet deftly illustrates when he affixes the royal seal to the orders for the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, one need not be the owner of a seal to use it; so too, one did not need to be the possessor of a signature in order to sign it.

Not only is there little concern about who signs one's signature; there is also little concern about the style in which it is signed. The several sixteenth century writing manuals we possess, like Peter Bales' *Writing Schoolmaster*, for example, and John Davies of Hereford's *The Anatomy of Fair Writing*, give no special instructions on the writing of signatures. In the forming and connecting of letters, a writer has the same freedom in signing his name as he does in writing anything. It is this freedom that makes it virtually impossible for experts to attribute a work to an author on the basis of paleographic evidence alone: attesting to the difficulty is the controversy still raging after one hundred years (among paleographers and editors, at least) over the identification of the hands in the manuscript of the *Play of Sir Thomas More*. A writer may use any of the six or seven hands that writing masters of the period identify (Secretary, Bastard Secretary, Exchequer, set hand of the Chancery, etc.) or a combination of any of them. It is not unusual for the same writer to switch from one style to another in the same manuscript, sometimes changing hands in mid-sentence, and then sign his name in still another, or to revert to one of the hands he has already employed. The same diversity that characterizes a writer's manuscript then, characterizes his signature. To add to the diversity, the spelling of his name regularly varies, often quite widely. We have only six authenticated signatures by Shakespeare, all taken from the last four years of his life, so we do not know how many of the eighty-three documented variants on his last name he used. The six we possess are written in six different scripts and in six different spellings, even though three of them appear on the same document, the document that is probably the most important a man signs in his lifetime: his will. Because the signatures are so varied in form and because Elizabethans did not necessarily sign their own names, some paleographers have questioned the authenticity of even the authenticated signatures. If a name may be signed an indefinite number of ways, what is to be used as the standard of authenticity? If a signature has no consistently recurring form, can it even be called a signa-

ture? How would it be recognized if it had no distinct form? Would every variation be considered a signature so that a man would have numerous signatures? What then would constitute a forgery?

There may be only one signature that conforms to our assumptions of what a signature is: Queen Elizabeth's. Elizabeth's signature possesses the uniformity of spelling and handwriting that we require. In each of the abundant samples of her signature that we possess, the orthography and calligraphy are stable from the time she ascended the throne as a young woman to her dying day at the age of seventy. In fact, it may be that in this period the word *signature* could only be properly applied to her signed name or its official surrogates. All the instances I have seen indicate that the word referred exclusively to the Queen's signature or else to that of her notaries whom she authorized to extend her written power.

How are we to understand the Queen's possession of an exceptionally stable signature in an age when signatures were commonly unstable? I do not believe we should take this to mean that only Elizabeth had a definite sense of self, that only she was sufficiently conscious of her identity to record and circulate it in a uniform and recognizable signature. I think a consideration of the problem might involve determining in what respect Queen Elizabeth was different from her subjects. Perhaps it was not that she had a more distinct sense of self but that she was a different kind of self altogether. And indeed such a singular self was attributed to her by that very principle she referred to in ascending to the throne, the principle of the "King's Two Bodies": "I am but one body, naturally considered," she declared, "though by [God's] permission a Body Politic also." Accordingly, Elizabeth had two selves, two bodies, one natural and ephemeral like that of any person, the other politic and continuing like that of no other person. Perhaps it is in that unique capacity, as an embodiment of state and church, that Elizabeth possessed a fixed signature. It would have reflected, then, not a distinct and individuated self, but rather a secular and religious corporation. Her signature was not a projection of selfhood, but rather an extension of the power and authority invested in her by her monarchical position, by her crown. When her representatives signed their names on official documents, their signatures took on like stability and uniformity. When acting as Elizabeth's surrogates or delegates, as appendages of her corporation or body politic, as it were, their names assumed the fixity of her own. This might explain what appears a most curious phenomenon: that such statesmen as Egerton, Cecil, and Walsingham, all members of the Queen's Privy Council, sign their names uniformly on state papers but on their own personal correspondence vary their signatures considerably.

To summarize, signatures in Shakespeare's time were with one regal exception and attendant special cases not necessarily written in one's own hand and not orthographically or paleographically consistent. The signator had no

inviolable personal or legal relation to his signature. His signature had no fixed form making possible its identification with one particular individual. I think we would have to say that in our sense of the word, there were no signatures in Renaissance England. Names were written out, sometimes by their bearer and sometimes not, and typically without respect to uniformity. They had a function certainly, as when affixed to the bottom of a letter or on a legal document, but no value apart from that supplied by the context in which they appeared.

How then has it come about that a mere scrap of paper with nothing on it except for Shakespeare's signature is worth a fortune? (Even a spurious or doubtful signature was estimated at a million dollars in 1971.) To answer that would involve a consideration of a complex network of eighteenth century developments that would include the standardization of language, the rise of private bank accounts, and the institution of laws governing copyrights and power of attorney. More centrally, it would involve a description of a changed notion of the self—of *individuality*, *personality*, and *character*, all three concepts which acquire their present emphasis in the late eighteenth century. I will not pursue this matter here; but in passing let me offer one or two observations which I think are illuminating. The eighteenth century began to posit and assume a new relation between the signature and the signator. At the same time that William-Henry Ireland risked simulating a Shakespearean signature, signatures of various men of note started to be prized and collected. It is then that the word *autograph* is used no longer exclusively to refer to writing in one's own hand (a manuscript) but is used primarily to distinguish the writing of one's own name. And of course, we in this country have no trouble recollecting when its revolutionary synonym *John Hancock* became current in our English. Autographs became of value because they were seen to possess a personal and intimate relation to the individual who wrote them. It is not long until the science of graphology will emerge, the inference of personal traits on the basis of handwriting, the analysis of characters (in the Elizabethan sense of *letters*) to determine character (in our sense of *personality*).

Autographs are not the only form of personal writing flourishing in the eighteenth century: collected letters, journals, diaries, and autobiographies enjoy an unprecedented popularity on which book-sellers are quick to capitalize. Like these forms of writing, an autograph is a type of self-representation that intimates or displays the private and personal.

A signature can be seen as an abbreviated or cryptic autobiography; an autobiography can be seen as an expanded or amplified signature. With an awareness that both forms of first person writing underwent radical changes after the sixteenth century, we finally reach my announced subject: Shakespeare's *Sonnets* as autobiography.

The *Sonnets* are the only work we have that Shakespeare wrote in the first person, yet it has never been easy

to read them as autobiography. The nineteenth century avoided reading them as such in order to avoid the disheartening conclusion that the greatest poet of the language was, by his own admission, an adulterer, sodomite, and perjurer, that he was, as one Victorian critic chastely put it, "not immaculate." A wide range of nineteenth century approaches to the *Sonnets* might be seen as moves to clear Shakespeare of such charges. The *Sonnets* were written not by Shakespeare but by another; or else only partly written by Shakespeare (the offensive ones assigned to other poets) or if written entirely by Shakespeare then written on behalf of friends or clients, or if written on his own behalf then not as any direct reflection of his own experience but rather as fictions, dramatizations, allegories, bearing as remote and complicated a relation to his experience as the plays. The need to impersonalize the *Sonnets* culminates at the turn of the century with an influential discussion of them as insincere exercises in literary artifice that could not be about Shakespeare—or about anything else for that matter.

In this century, moral compunctions have ceased to determine readings of the *Sonnets*, at least in any obvious way. We are free therefore to read the *Sonnets* as autobiography. And in recent decades, they *have* largely been read as Shakespeare's account of himself, whether that account is thought to consist of people, places, and events that constituted his outer life, or of the ideas, feelings, and beliefs that animated him inwardly. Both historical and psychological approaches have their practitioners, though only the most indomitable continue to dig and delve for facts (for the precious little they uncover still needs to be verified from the very outside sources they seek to enlarge). There is a much richer yield to be gotten by probing the *Sonnets* for Shakespeare's inner workings. No extraneous considerations constrain such readings, not even structural considerations: since the 1609 ordering is not necessarily Shakespeare's, the *Sonnets* can be read as two units divided at sonnet 126 where the subject appears to change, as a collection of discrete or interconnected groups variously demarcated, as 154 independent poems, or as one integral sequence following either the 1609 order or whatever order a reader prefers. A variable text coupled with critical ingenuity is bound to yield prolifically, perhaps even inexhaustibly—were it not for interference from the outside: from critical theory.

In the last decade, critical theory has made it difficult to take any first person enunciation at face value. There is no necessary relation between the historical author and the 'I' of a work any more than there is between him and a character in a play or narrative: the first person thereby becomes simply another third. Post-structuralist theory goes further still, cutting the tie between writing or speech and its ostensible source, first person or otherwise. Its origin—the speaking or writing subject—is dismissed as an accident of circumstance. Where the accidental aspect of that accident of circumstance prevails, the *Sonnets* form a

shimmering Derridean surface of free-floating signifiers; where the circumstantial aspect dominates, the *Sonnets* constitute a political, historical, and social artifact. As far as I know, we don't yet have either a full reading of them *en abyme* or as "cultural poetics." What we do have, however, is not far from either in its deposition of the author: Stephen Booth's 800 pages of extravagantly fine criticism on the *Sonnets* that bring not a single comment to bear on the man who wrote them. In one important respect we are where moral compunctions left us at the turn of the century: dissociating the *Sonnets* from their author and concentrating on the impersonal features of poetic language.

In what is to follow, I would like to make it possible to begin returning to the *Sonnets* as autobiography; as Shakespeare *speaking about himself*. But the *self* that is spoken about is not a lover of acute sensitivity, a thinker of profound imaginative powers, a poet of heightened perception, or a craftsman of exceptional skill. The self of the *Sonnets* is the self as a name. In *speaking about* that nominal self, the *Sonnets* do not represent it in the same way that a self-portrait represents the artist, for that relation assumes a subject with an existence apart from the image that portrays him. In the *Sonnets* the *self* cannot be separated from the *speaking about the self*; he exists as a *name* coming into contact with other lexical units and occupying various syntactic positions.

I would like to look at the *Sonnets* as what the use of the first person leads us to suspect they are: Shakespeare's speaking about himself. But to do so, requires both a new sense of self and a new sense of speaking, both of which depend on a new sense of the workings of a proper name.

It is in the last line of sonnet 136 that Shakespeare announces his proper name: "my name is Will." And it is in this sonnet that the subject most visibly functions as a name whose actions are interactions with other words within his own discourse. Each of the seven times the word 'will' is repeated in the sonnet, 'Will' as the subject's name cannot be distinguished from 'will's' various other designations. The first time it is pronounced in the injunction, "Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy will," [1. 2] the proper name 'Will' confuses our subject with other men: the name might designate another man by that name—his mistress's husband, for example, or another lover, not to mention the several historical candidates scholars have nominated. The proper name then is not proper to him; in fact, it is not even exclusively proper. It is a common name too, a synonym for desire or lust, common because denoting a class or state of being, common also because held in common by all men, more common still in vulgarly referring to the organ (male or female) that is both instrument and object of lust. Not only does 'will' work as both proper and common noun; it works too as verbal auxiliary denoting future resolution, as in line 5: "Will *will* fulfill the treasure of thy love." (The verbal form extends not only the sound of the noun it follows—"Will will"—but also its sense, protracting it by projecting it into the future.) Son-

net 136 thus conflates personal and generic name, proper and common noun, noun and verb. Will's name, rather than distinguishing him, makes him indistinguishable not only from other men who bear his name (his namesakes), but also from other words that sound identical to it (homonyms).

We might say that as a sound—the sound *wəl*—the subject Will remains at least phonetically distinct from the different sounding words that surround his name. The difference, however, is only phonetic, for every noun in the sonnet that is not 'will' is a semantic substitute for will in one of its several senses. Nouns work like pronouns, each referring to the same subject rather than introducing a new one. No special case has to be made for "love" in line 4 as, synonym for will as desire, nor for "love-suit" as expression of that will; and it would take only some thumbing through Booth's commentary to identify the other nouns with will as sexual part, male or female: "soul" [1. 1] refers to the sexual counterpart to the spiritual essence; "things of great receipt" [1. 7], "store's account" [1. 10], and "treasure of thy love" [1. 5] designate female sexual capacity, the feminine empty, "nothing" [1. 12] or "none" [1. 8] when not supplied by masculine "number" and "one" [1. 10]. Verbs too relate to will, to acts of will: "come" [1. 1] refers to sexual climax, "check" [1. 1] to its deferral; "knows" [1. 3], "proves" [1. 7], "reckoned" [1. 8] to forms of carnal knowing; "fulfill" [1. 4] and "fill" [1. 6] to sexual satisfying, "is admitted" [1. 3] and "hold" [1. 11] to female compliance. Adjectives modify sexual traits, "sweet" [1. 4] and "great" [1. 7] are anatomical desirables, "blind" [1. 2] applies to lack of sexual discernment; and adverbs specify degrees of sexual penetration: "so near" [1. 1], "thus far" [1. 4], "with ease" [1. 7]. With the exception of conjunctions, prepositions, and articles, every word in the sonnet is either a homonym or synonym for the subject's name, thereby literally verifying his admission in sonnet 76: "every word doth almost tell my name" [1. 7]. A language made up of homonyms and synonyms for his name renders him anonymous. Among so many verbal counterfeits, he can "pass untold" [1. 9] for without difference there can be no identity.

Such uniformity of vocabulary renders syntax purely perfunctory or superficial. The word 'will' and its synonyms monopolize all grammatical positions. Phonetic repetitions make this abundantly audible in lines 5 and 6—"Will will fulfill the treasure of thy love, / Ay fill it full with wills, and my will one"—but the same syntactic appropriation occurs in line 3's more varied syllables: "And will thy soul knows is admitted there," which would lose nothing in terms of sense if rendered, "And will thy will wills is willed there"; even "thy" and "there" in this line can be eliminated since the situation the sentence urges would blur genitive distinctions, making his will hers, thereby also doing away with the need for the spatial differentiator "there." Throughout 136, underlying the phonetic variables is the same semantic formula: "Will is will" or "Will

wills," a pure instance of the circular reasoning that Elizabethan logics identify with inordinate willfulness. The couplet's fallacious syllogism follows the same tautology: "Make but my name thy love, and love that still, / And then thou lov'st me for my name is Will."

Sonnet 136 then looks like a supreme instance of willful discourse. Will uses language to obtain his will, to prevail rhetorically over his mistress' will so that he might have his corporeal one. In doing so, he appropriates language, infusing its vocabulary, syntax, and logic with his likeness. Or is it the other way around? Has he appropriated and personalized the language or has it appropriated and verbalized him? *Has* it seized upon him as a name not of his own choosing and locked him within a tight system of verbal interrelations from which he cannot emerge? The very question brings to mind that one sense of will which the sonnet conspicuously excludes from its homonymic ranging but which is central to any scheme even loosely Christian: will as choice, as free will. The sonnet, a petition to his mistress, highly contrived and therefore seemingly controlled, looks like an act of will, more so than other sonnets because of its excessive ingenuity. But if the will to which it gives voice is lust, is Will speaking voluntarily? If desire drives him to speak, he has not chosen to speak but does so involuntarily, as an animal cries. Would this then place him in the viciously inexorable cycle of sonnet 129's "lust in action," caught up in a habitual and therefore involuntary routine of "had, having, and in quest to have," in this sonnet at the stage of "in quest to have" or "Mad in pursuit"? Without any form of self-reference, 129 seems the most impersonal sonnet of the collection; but it becomes singularly personal if we remember that Will makes himself synonymous with lust, with involuntary will, so that the battery of adjectival phrases in 129 ("perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame") pertains to him as well as to the abstraction he so knowingly and tellingly defines. Even though his name is never spelled out in 129, it could be said of this sonnet too that "every word doth almost tell my name" (sonnet 76), especially when "Will" is heard in the couplet, as phonologists lead us to believe it was in the sixteenth century when 'well' and 'will' were pronounced identically. "All this the world well knows, yet none knows well." In sonnet 129, too, the subject is present as a name, either stated and pronounced or implied and understood, entangled in verbal relationships of sound and sense.

It is not only in sonnets like 129 and 136 that the subject's proper name surfaces. Through its homonyms and synonyms, it presides over the entire collection. The first verb in the sonnets is a synonym for will ("From fairest creatures we *desire* increase") and the last two Anacreontic sonnets concern the transformation of "hot desire" into "holy fire of love." The youth's self-will thwarts the opening communal desire and Will's appetitive will frustrates his final solitary desire. The first group of sonnets, the procreation group, evolves around the idea of *will* as bequest "beauty's legacy" [sonnet 4], that would extend its

possessor into the future. The last two Anacreontics describe a therapeutic *well* that cures "men diseased" with the exception of the subject who retreats back to the chronic and pathological routine that admits of no change of future. At both ends, the *Sonnets* are bracketed by synonymic and homonymic variants of the subject's proper name.

Within those brackets, Will consistently emerges in a state of incompleteness seeking to be made whole, seeking the fulfillment that is happiness. Will exists in a state of perpetual want that is at once lack and desire. The lack, heightened by a consciousness of time and death, takes the form of the multiple privative states that characterize him: debt, poverty, sickness, loneliness, absence, lameness, bareness, pain. It seeks to complete itself through objects that would both contain him and make him content. In the youth, in verse, in the mistress and in various combinations of the three, Will would be fulfilled (thereby deferring the "well-contended day" [sonnet 32], the consummation of death, with whose "fell arrest" all men must "be contented" [sonnet 74]). In seeking fulfillment in another, Will repeatedly attaches himself to versions of himself. The youth is his "next self": in relationships personal and grammatical the two are interchangeable. One mirrors the other to such a degree that it is often assumed they share the same name. The mistress too is a projection of himself, of the desire by which he identifies himself, so that her outer darkness figures forth his inner defects, her black eyes reflect his blindness, a relation clenched verbally in the sound "my mistress' eye" [sonnet 153] that designates both her ocular (and sexual) eye and his pronomial I, recapitulating his self-gratifying conflation of her will with his own. In loving either object, he falls into the same pattern from which he tries to break the youth in the first seventeen sonnets: of self-love, "having traffic with thyself alone" [sonnet 4], "self-willed" [sonnet 6]—the state full-blown in the monumentally monolithic sonnets of the 120's that make ungrounded claims to self-sufficiency, as in the supremely, in fact divinely, solipsistic, "I am that I am." The tautology then of 136 is the collection's central configuration: will desires will, the self seeks to complete its wanting self in images of itself largely of its own making, a narcissistic and incestuous relationship that cannot be separated from the homonymic and synonymic pleonasm all generating from the subject's proper name.

In this paper I have been urging that the *Sonnets* be read autobiographically in relation to their author, but not in a relation to him as a particular individual experiencing temporal and psychological events, but as a name functioning within discourse. We are accustomed to thinking of a proper name as a social, political, and religious marker that positions its bearer within his family, state, and church; but it is crucial to see it also as situating its bearer in language, as any name situates its referent there.

If we resist having a proper name work like any other word, it is because we tend to distinguish sharply between

the names we use to identify people and the ones we use to identify everything else. We set them apart from ordinary vocabulary by capitalizing them, and our dictionaries omit them or relegate them to an appendix of their own. Yet there is indication that our distinction between proper and common was not so hard and fast for Elizabethans. Proper names especially in manuscript were not always capitalized, while common names in the arbitrary orthography of the day sometimes were. Nor was special attention given to their spelling. Shakespeare's last name, as I have mentioned, received as least eighty-three different spellings, spellings ranging from Shaftspere to Shaxbee to Chacsper; it appears as Shagspere on his marriage bond and as Shaxberd on a court record crediting him with *Comedy of Errors* and *Measure for Measure*.

Just as no conventions of punctuation or spelling singled out proper names, so too no lexicons excluded them from the rest of the language. Though there were no comprehensive monolingual dictionaries in the sixteenth century, there were hard word lists that defined proper names as well as neologisms and technical vocabulary. Bilingual dictionaries too would often include Christian names among their other entries. Of course proper names had the unique function of designating an individual rather than a class, of naming one single man named, for example, *Will* rather than a collective general group named, for example, *man*. But the frequent instances in which proper names are used generically in contexts as diverse as proverbs and Biblical glosses, suggests that the distinction was hardly inviolable. Will, as we have seen, referred not just to one man but to all men; so did the name Jack as in the proverbial "Jack shall have Jill" repeated in *Love's Labor's Lost*; so did Tom and Dick and Harry, though Harry IV wittily exempts himself from those generic catch-alls and substitutes Francis in his stead; so do Peter and John so that New Testament commentaries explain that the name of Peter belongs both to Simon and to all men that are faithful and John Donne explains that not just he alone but all men are Johns, though not all may be true Johns.

There is more in the period that invites us to treat proper names as if they were common. The original and derivative forms of both proper and common names were thought to provide access to the truth of what they named. The tradition of Biblical exegesis that originated with the Church Fathers (Origen, Jerome, and Augustine) examined the Hebrew forms of names for both people and things in order to comprehend their true designations. Hebrew names were thought to be God-given and therefore to retain vestiges of the original language that man, before the Fall and Babel, had shared with God. By analyzing Hebrew names, exegetes sought to recover the relation between thing and sign that Adam had intuited when he assigned true names to the animals in Eden. Churchmen, especially Protestants who preferred etymologies to catholicizing allegories, relied heavily on this form of philological investigation in order to move from sign to knowl-

edge-of-the-thing-signified. In his sermons, John Donne frequently acknowledges his indebtedness to this form of inquiry, as in this injunction: "To know the nature of the thing, look to the derivation, the extraction, the origination of a word." Launcelot Andrews too devotes long passages of his sermons to etymological excursions, sometimes devoting entire sermons to a single word, as he does in one of his Nativity Sermons in which he celebrates the birth of the Incarnational Word by concentrating on one word that names him—Immanuel. For such writers, no form of human reasoning draws a mind so close to truth as the investigation of the names God in the Old Testament gives to both men and things: "His nominals be reals."

Etymologizing was not, of course, limited to religious studies or to the Hebrew language. It had precedents in classical and medieval writing: Plato's *Cratylus* was seen to recommend the same sort of investigation in respect to Greek and Isidore of Seville was consulted for Latin derivations and developments. The dictum of the fifth century grammarian Servius was applied to words in all languages: "names are called names because by them things are known." Elizabethan grammars were traditionally divided into two sections, etymology and syntax, and Elizabethan logics invariably included etymology or *notatio* as a valid place from which to argue. Typically in this period, the discussion of any subject will begin with a discussion of its name. Thomas Eliot begins his *Book of the Governour* with an exploration of the word *republic*; Thomas Wilson introduces his logic, *The Rule of Reason*, with an extended discussion of the words *logic* and *reason*, and Thomas Morley in his *Introduction to Practical Music* prefaces his descriptions of various musical terms with their derivation, explaining, for example, why *motet* derives from motion. In discussing any type of subject matter, a writer commonly begins by interpreting its name and proceeds by following the discursive lines emerging from this interpretation.

It is my thesis that when that subject happens to be a man, say William Shakespeare, the same practice is followed. His name, as I hope I succeeded in showing, provides the focus for the writing that is about him. John Donne says of the names in the Bible—those of the children of Israel for example—that it is not so much that the *names* are in the *history* as that the *history* is in the *names*. I think Shakespeare's history or story of himself, his autobiography, is also contained in his name—his proper name and its common homonymic and synonymic cognates. Since his name is given to him and not chosen by him, and since the phonetic and semantic interrelations into which it draws him are inscribed in language and not put there by him, his writing can never be entirely his own. If he had been given another given name, his autobiography would look and sound quite different. It might, in fact, resemble one of the at least forty other English sonnet collections that remain from the 1590s and early 1600s.

These sonnet collections also tell the story of their writ-



ers. A quick scanning of the major ones reveals immediately that Shakespeare was not alone in fashioning his sonnets around his name. Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti* tells the story of Edmund, *ed mundo*; they largely turn on his repudiation of the *mundane* and worldly vanity that he himself narcissistically reflects, as in the exceptional two sonnets [35 and 83] that mirror or echo one another word for word and conclude with the self-referential: "All this worlds glory seemeth vayne to me." Sir Phillip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* tells the story of Phillip, *phil ippos*, lover of horses or the "horse to love" he becomes in his own emblematic allegory in which he *is* Cupid's horse [49]; though he euphemistically rechristens himself Astrophil, lover of a star, he is not, as Stella well knows, aiming so high. Fulke Greville's *Caelica* tells the story of Greville, and "grief" and "ill," as he himself insists, "do best decipher" [83] him in his protracted despair of skies both Caelican and celestial. Henry Constable's *Diana* tells the story of Constable whose recurring motto "preserver ever," refers to his characterizing constancy which takes the form of stubborn and relentless importunity. William Percy's *Coelia* tells the story of another Will whose self-centered self-love is doubly suggested by his name: once, by his given name, Will, and again by his self-reflexive family name, Percy, *per se*, for himself. Barnabe Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenope* tells the story of Barnabe Barnes; the echoing first syllables of his two names unite to form the sound *bar bar*, the sound Greeks identified with bar-barians, outsider or non-Greeks of unrefined speech and unrefined manner; Barnabe Barnes's sonnets are barbaric in both word and deed: their typically stuttering phrasing expressing desire that is anything but civilized culminates in the final poem—a reiterative sestina describing the orgiastic rape of his mistress.

In each of these sonnet sequences, the writer's name functions as a rubric that informs and shapes his self-presentation. His name, as both proper and common noun, provides his entry into language and sets him in relation to those terms that constitute the story that tells of him. In describing it this way, I do not mean to suggest that the name is prophetic or oracular, that it dictates or predicts an inescapable course. Every name that I have mentioned contains an option like that option present in Shakespeare's name. Just as his name, Will, refers to both voluntary choice and involuntary appetite, so too Edmund's name contains two worlds (in alignment with Augustine's two cities); Greville's holds two types of grieving, one amorous pining and the other penitential contrition: Phillip's contains two types of loving horses, the horsemanship that puts man properly in control of his horse or the horsemanship that inversely gives the horse free rein of him. Constable's presents two types of constancy, stiff-necked infatuation and right-hearted devotion. To be sure, the name is

given to the bearer, but the sense in which the name is taken is of the bearer's own choosing. It is that choosing between the options contained in the writer's name that makes the sonnets autobiographical, that makes them about one self rather than another. But because the options in each case are those every Christian man must face, this form of sixteenth century autobiography can hardly be said to individuate, to reveal an individual distinct in experience, thought, and feeling from all other men.

I began this paper with a discussion of signatures as self-representation and then proceeded to a reading of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* as an autobiography centered on his name, and have ended by suggesting that other Elizabethan sonnet sequences are autobiographical in the same respect. Through the course of the paper, I have gradually enlarged my focus: I have moved from signatures to a single Shakespearean sonnet, to Shakespeare's *Sonnets* in general, and finally expanded to include several Elizabethan sonnet collections. In this final paragraph, I would like to enlarge my scope still further, in fact, I will enlarge it about as far as it can go.

My final words concern *man* and *language* in the sixteenth century. Although this paper has focused on a rather small body of Elizabethan literature, its ultimate aim is to challenge an assumption so prevalent that it is rarely recognized as an assumption. Like all assumptions, it has a beginning, and in time it will no doubt have an ending too. It begins in 1860 with Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* and perhaps has in 1980 culminated with Stephen Greenblatt's highly applauded book, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. Burckhardt proclaimed that the greatest achievement of the Renaissance was the discovery of the individual; Greenblatt demonstrates through the study of six major Elizabethan figures how the Renaissance individual self-consciously generated his own identity. Attending such an assumption is the equally pervasive view that in a world of emerging individuality, language is first and foremost self-expression, a means of articulating, asserting, and projecting selfhood. In my discussion of one of the dominant modes of first-person writing in the Renaissance, the sonnet sequence, I hope I have provoked a serious rethinking of that two-fold assumption. No individual emerges from the *Sonnets*, no individuated psychological and emotional entity with personalized thoughts and desires. Insofar as a self can be said to emerge, it is a self as a proper name, a name which rather than singling out its bearer draws him into a complicated network of verbal interrelations that form the pattern of his experience. Though the central terms may differ, other sonnet writers find themselves in variations of the same pattern and so must have Shakespeare's original readers, whatever their names.

## BLACKWATER

The summer ends. The winds of autumn rise  
Chilling the earth at evening. Darkness falls  
Suddenly and early. In heavy skies  
From north and west assemble geese, their calls  
Drifting and tossing in uneasy air.  
High clouds catch final sunlight, burst aflame,  
Vanish. Circling above the water, where  
Rushes and grasses wait, wild mallard home.

I have come here for refuge. In the night  
Shapes of the sleeping birds merge with water;  
At land's edge softly their muted cries touch  
And interweave the lapping waves. A white  
Moon hovers near the branches of a fir;  
Ten thousand stars burn cold and out of reach.

ROBERT S. ZELENIKA

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# Mission over Hanoi

## From A Country Such as This

James Webb

A garbage detail was throwing trash off the fantail of the U.S.S. *Shiloh*. Leftover food, bags upon bags of paper and cans, large wall lockers, unidentifiable boxes, all bounced and rolled in the white wake of the steaming ship, mixing with the foam. Red Lesczynski could see pieces of garbage for miles behind the ship, all the way to the horizon in the late afternoon sun, as if the *Shiloh* were marking off a trail on the otherwise amorphous reaches of the blue, unending South China Sea.

He and a dozen other pilots were shooting their .38-caliber survival pistols, using the trash as targets. Lesczynski practiced often off the fantail, although he did not know many downed pilots who had either dared or had a useful opportunity to fire the .38 at the North Vietnamese. When you were hoping for rescue, you evaded, as silently as possible. When rescue was hopeless, you didn't commit suicide by firing your weapon at a people who outnumbered you 17 million to 1.

But it was a way to let off steam, to relieve the boredom of shipboard life. Except for the combat missions, he might have been a monk at a retreat, alone in a midocean cloister with the other members of his sect. It was flat, tedious, with a day's highlight being dinner in the wardroom and the movie afterward, or perhaps a game of chess or Go. That in itself heightened the tension of the missions, rather than allowing one to gear up for them. There was so little movement or variation on the ship, and yet three of every four days the *Shiloh* was "on the line" he was flung off the carrier deck two and sometimes three times a day by a steam catapult, as if his F-4 Phantom were a pebble in

a slingshot, to form an attack group over the sea and then race through ground fire and missiles toward a bombing target where for ninety seconds every fear in the world was real, exploding all around him, calling for the most minute recesses of his concentration. Then it would be over and he would find the boat again, that square little speck in the sea, and set the tail hook of his aircraft on top of a cable on its angled deck, jerking to a violent stop. The whole thing took little more than an hour, and he would again be surrounded by the tedious calm. It was the paradox that taunted him, as if he were a lobster being dangled over a boiling cookpot for a few seconds every hour, only to be returned to the tank. What would the lobster think, if it could think, when it was again safe in the tank but knew it would soon be once more dangled over the pot?

Salt air covered him like a scab; he loved the smell and the taste. The snub-nosed pistol jerked in his hand as he fired again and again at a five-gallon can that had once held cooking oil. He couldn't tell whether he had hit the can. It bounced in the churning wake like a Ping-Pong ball, and was soon out of range.

"Ah, the hell with it." He returned his weapon to the chief petty officer in charge of the "famfire detail," and left the open platform of the fantail, entering the bowels of the aircraft carrier.

More men lived on the U.S.S. *Shiloh* than in Ford City. And all of them had jobs. The huge *Forrestal*-class supercarrier was home to 4,100 men, and 80 aircraft. It weighed 76,000 tons, fully loaded. It was longer than three football fields, and had four acres of flight deck. Its power plant could summon 280,000 horsepower from four geared steam turbines, enough to push the *Shiloh* through any sea at 35 miles an hour. It carried more than 26 million pounds of fuel in its hull. The *Shiloh* had deployed from Alameda, California, just after Christmas 1965, and had been operating as the center of a twelve-ship task force on Yankee Station off the coast of Vietnam since mid-January

©1983 by James Webb. *A Country Such as This* is to be published this Fall by Doubleday. James Webb graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1968. He chose the Marine Corps and served as an infantry officer in Vietnam. Among other decorations he holds the Navy Cross and the Silver Star. Mr. Webb has previously published *Fields of Fire* and *A Sense of Honor*.

1966. In its five months of Yankee Station duty, the *Shiloh* had been to Subic Bay, Philippines, twice, for four days each time, and to Yokosuka once, for three days. Other than that, the *Shiloh* had been constantly "on the line." Its pilots had flown 17,000 missions, and dropped 22 million pounds of ordnance onto North Vietnamese targets.

Lousy targets, mostly. The wrong targets. Lesczynski exited a narrow, honeycombed passageway and began crossing the hangar deck. It was filled with aircraft undergoing maintenance or being rearmed and refueled. A-4 Skyhawk and A-6 Intruder attack craft, EA-6 Prowler electronic warfare planes, RA-5 Vigilante reconnaissance jets, S-2F anti-submarine planes, and SH-3 Sea King helicopters variously mixed with his own F-4 Phantom fighters across its reaches. The hangar deck was long and wide and dark, its bulkheads and deck a musty gray, like a basement. The flight deck was two levels higher; planes moved up and down on four huge elevators.

He was the executive officer of his squadron, and was slated to take command of it within six months. He stopped for a few minutes, chatting with crewmen who were working on the F-4s, checking their efforts and assuring them, with simple words, of the importance of their jobs. Then he set out again, heading for the flight wardroom, for dinner.

In one corner of the hangar deck a group of sailors was playing a fast game of basketball, shouting and running, shirtless in the tropical heat. Across its middle, a line of men extended from a ladder that went to the deck below, waiting to enter the main galley and eat dinner. A few of them wore the tight, multicolored shirts of flight deck personnel, but most of them were dressed in blue dungarees and baseball caps. Many were reading from ever-present paperback books that fit perfectly inside rear dungaree pockets. Others conversed, clowning around and raucously taunting each other. Many wore tattoos on their forearms.

Lesczynski grinned blandly as he passed the different groups of sailors, waving to a few of the men he recognized. They were young and they all worked hard, twelve hours a day for months on end, enduring cramped quarters, long lines, and the lonely isolation of shipboard life. They worked because they believed, or because it was a job, or because it bought them liberty in arguably exotic ports. Some worked because they didn't want to go to the brig. It didn't matter. They kept the ship going twenty-four hours a day, no matter what.

The 1-MC blared into every compartment, preceded by a boatswain's eerie whistle. It was Big Brother. "*Now hear this. Now hear this. The smoking lamp is out, throughout the ship, while handling ammunition. I say again, the smoking lamp is out, throughout the ship, while handling ammunition.*"

Lesczynski walked out the forward end of the hangar deck, and climbed a ladder up to the "02" level, between the hangar deck and the flight deck. The flight wardroom

was on the "02" level. It was less formal than the ship's wardroom below, designed cafeteria-style to accommodate the more fluid schedules of the pilots. In contrast to the main wardroom, there were no Filipino stewards to hold a tray of food in front of an officer, as if he were an aristocrat dining downtown. No seating by rank. No careful conversation, designed to teach one the art of gentle avoidance. Lesczynski liked the flight wardroom.

Commander Jimmy Maxwell was holding court with two junior officers. Lesczynski's friend since his first days of flight training was now the executive officer of the A-6 attack squadron, and like Lesczynski was on the "fleet up" program, which would give both of them command within a few months. Maxwell had gone spry and gray after fifteen years in the cockpit. Crow's-feet were etched deeply into the corners of his eyes. His tight hawk's face was self-assured, and animated. Maxwell waved to Lesczynski, who joined them. Then he smiled sardonically, without joy, his leathery face emanating a resignation that might have been anger, had he the luxury to question policy.

"They bagged another A-4 today."

"Over that Dong Khe site?"

"Yes, sir, old LBJ sure knows how to treat his boys. You know why he calls us his boys, don't you? Son, I'm from Mississippi, and I know what that means. It means he thinks he owns us. What was it he said? The military can't bomb a shithouse without his approval."

Lieutenant Nick Damsgard, new to the squadron and on his first Western Pacific deployment, leaned forward, his heavy brows furrowed earnestly. "If he'd let us go after Dong Khe a month ago, we could have flattened it."

Maxwell feigned alarm. "You don't shoot up missile sites before they're ready for you! They're not part of the war until then. What do you want to do, win this goddamn thing?"

They all laughed, staring into their food, dry chortles that indicated none of them really thought it was funny, not when they were dangling their very lives over the North every day in pursuit of a goal that Lyndon Johnson had never made clear to himself, much less them. Maxwell snorted again. "If Goldwater had won in '64, this war would have been done with in a week, and there wouldn't have been enough of North Vietnam left over to plant rice on."

Frank Salpas, also a new lieutenant, stroked his moustache, staring down into his food. "I'm not so sure, Commander. This is a different kind of war. Johnson seems pretty serious about doing the right thing. I mean, he's trying. He's putting at least a half-million ground troops in the South."

Maxwell snorted again. The constant attrition of the air war was getting to him, Lesczynski could tell. "It's not how many troops he's got on the ground, any more than it's how many goddamn bombs we're dropping. It's what you're *doing* with them! You tell me what the hell it means to fight a 'limited war,' all right? Do you think North Viet-

nam is fighting a limited war? Shee-it. Do you feel like you're a little bit at war when you're jinking up there, dodging SAM missiles? Johnson won't let us knock out SAM sites while they're being built. He won't let us take out ships in Haiphong harbor that have SAMs visible on their goddamn decks! He won't mine the harbor. He won't let us go after operational MiG airfields. But we're 'his boys' when we get our asses shot off! He must think this is a goddamn *golf* game or something, and he needs to give the North Vietnamese some kind of *handicap!*"

Damsgard looked up from his tray, smiling ironically. "He's stuck with a war that he doesn't know how to fight. He just wishes it would all go away. This whole 'Rolling Thunder' operation is a joke. Tell me how much we've disrupted the life of the North Vietnamese."

Maxwell nodded earnestly, agreeing. "Here we've got a whole fleet of B-52 bombers that could put Hanoi back into the Stone Age, and old LBJ sends them off to make toothpicks out of trees on the Ho Chi Minh trail. And here we've got light attack planes and precision fighters, and the man sends us against the North day in and day out. Not against targets that will hurt the North Vietnamese, but against 'interdiction targets.' I don't know how many pieces of railroad track I've blown away in the last five months. But I can guarantee you that Russia and China and the other communist countries have been replacing them as fast as we've been blowing them away. The North Vietnamese probably *love* what we're doing. It keeps their people united. It doesn't really hurt them. And it keeps the aid rolling in from the communist bloc."

"Can you imagine these sorts of restrictions during World War II?" Lesczynski had listened quietly, eating his food, but could no longer restrain his own frustration. "We couldn't have hurt the Japanese by simply shooting down the aircraft that attacked us. Hell, they'd *still* be regrouping, putting together fleets and forays! We went to their hearts. We took the war to them. We blew away their planes on the ground, we knocked out their industry. We took out Tokyo." He pointed a fork, growing animated. "Last week. Remember? Knock out the Sai Thon rail yard, they say, but if one bomb hits the steel mill next door you're in deep shit!"

They all three watched him attentively. He did not often talk about the conduct of the war. For the most part, he viewed it as unproductive, a negative morale factor for the men who served under him. But tonight he felt unsettled, provoked. "This isn't going very well at all. Are we going to say that the Japanese were more evil than the North Vietnamese, and that they deserved more of our wrath? Why? The North Vietnamese are clearly trying to take over the South by military force. It's the North Vietnamese who have almost their entire army in the South right now. We have stated to the world that the South should not be subjugated against its will. If that's worth fighting over, then it should be worth a serious, total effort. How long is it going to take Johnson to understand

that the North Vietnamese believe they're winning, and that this sort of bombing reinforces that belief?"

He had grown his moustache back. His lips curled into a whimsical smile underneath its thick red gash. "I'll tell you the truth. I don't think McNamara has the guts, and I don't think LBJ has the clarity of thought, to fight this war. It's that simple."

Lieutenant Salpas grunted once, then nodded, a slow cynical grin growing underneath his moustache. "Did you hear about LBJ's big Silver Star for gallantry in action in World War II? Went out on a reconnaissance flight as an observer from Congress, and the plane got shot at. He sat there in his seat and watched, and then decided that since he didn't shit his pants, he deserved a medal. Take a look at his pictures. He loves to wear the lapel pin."

Maxwell grunted back, a combative grin streaking his narrow face. "Uh-huh. Well, if that's what it takes, he can come out here and go on that Alpha Strike with us 'boys' tomorrow, I can make sure he gets the goddamn Medal of Honor."

\* \* \*

The real question was why they kept doing it, so well and with such precision, day after day, week after week, in the face of a steady trickle of losses that had been deceptive at first, but eventually overwhelming. So many shipmates, so many planes, downed for the honor of interdicting a system that by the very nature of their bombing would grow stronger with greater outside support.

Sitting in his stateroom after dinner, Red Lesczynski scanned the classified briefsheets from the past few weeks' activities, one of his prerequisites as squadron executive officer.

*June 12-19: Interdiction.* 100 railroad cars damaged or destroyed, Qui Vinh, Pho Can, and Nam Dinh rail yards damaged extensively. 5 major highway bridges dropped. Junks and barges "lucrative."

*June 20-26: Interdiction.* 40 trucks, 100 junks and barges damaged or destroyed. Me Xa highway bridge, Mai Duong railroad and highway bridge dropped, considered essential to the Hanoi/Haiphong transportation system. Russian SA-2 missile site damaged in conjunction with attack on Mai Duong. Extensive damage to yards and facilities at Qui Vinh, Sai Thon, and Van Coi.

*June 27-July 2: Interdiction.* 200 railroad cars, numerous trucks and bridges damaged or destroyed. Major strikes against Dong Khe SAM missile site, the Dong Can military area, and Bien Son barracks.

He tried to measure those frail statistics against the terror that produced them, and the loss:

*June 14:* A-3 lost over North Vietnam. Orange ball seen by observers. Crew MIA.

*June 15:* F-4B hit during attack on PT boat. Pilot, RIO eject over water, rescued by SH-3 helo.

*June 15:* A-4E downed by ground fire, North Vietnam. Pilot ejects, is seen on ground. POW or MIA.

June 17: A-4C hit by ground fire during pullout from dive on Vinh railroad. Pilot ejects, radios from ground that he is about to be captured. POW or MIA.

June 19: A-1F crashes ahead of ship after night catapult launch. Pilot missing.

June 20: A-1H crashes ahead of ship after night catapult launch. Pilot not recovered.

June 21: RF-8A downed by antiaircraft fire. Good ejection. Enemy defenses prevent helicopter approach. MIA.

June 21: F-8 damaged by MiG-17, 4 F-8s respond. 1 F-8 downed. Good ejection observed. Another F-8 downs MiG with Sidewinder missile. 1 MiG destroyed. 1 pilot MIA.

June 25: A-4E hit by antiaircraft fire. Pilot ejects over water, rescued by SH-3 helo.

June 25: A-6A lost directional control on bombing run. Pilot and RIO eject. Pilot rescued by SH-3 helo. Chute of RIO seen, but not located. RIO MIA.

June 27: A-4E crashed during bomb run on barges. No ejection sighted. Pilot MIA.

June 27: A-4E caught fire en route to strike. Pilot ejected, rescued by Air Force HH-43 helo.

July 1: A-4E hit by ground fire during withdrawal from strike. Good chute sighted. Pilot not recovered. MIA.

*Well, let's see. Two years of time and salary, minimum, to get an adequate jet pilot to the fleet. A half a billion dollars, I'd say, to build this carrier, equip it, and put it on the line. Millions of dollars for every plane, and the load it carried. The reputation of our country riding in every cockpit—its military reputation, its sense of political wisdom. And people, count two weeks of them, lost blowing away railroad tracks. Railroad tracks! Pissed down the tube, Lyndon Johnson, pissed down the tube.*

The feeling had grown over the previous six months until, every time he read such statistics, Red Lesczynski felt as if he were somewhere between a gladiator and a whore, although he would never publicly relate this to his men. There was something almost malevolent in the way Navy and Air Force pilots were being wasted, in the restrictions forced on them. God forbid that they should go after the enemy's political centers, even though the communists had been killing government officials in the South for a decade. There was something supposedly inhumane about attacking any area where there might be civilians, although no such inhumanity had been seen in any other war, or even in the South in this one. They flew against railroad yards and were not allowed to attack MiG training bases. They could not attack Soviet missile sites until they were operational, and then, of course, it was like walking down the tube of a cannon. They had indeed, as Jimmy Maxwell had lamented over dinner, produced photographs of ships unloading missiles at Haiphong harbor, and were ordered to stay away. In fact, the North Vietnamese had protested before the International Control Commission a few weeks before that U.S. planes had made "provocations" against foreign ships at Haiphong, causing

further admonitions from Johnson and McNamara to his "boys," rather than warnings to those supplying the communists.

When did a missile become a missile? When did a war become a war? When did a military professional finally cry "foul" to this commander in chief? At times Lesczynski tried to emphathize with Admiral Kuribayashi, who had commanded the Japanese defenses at Iwo Jima during the Second World War, fully knowing that he would lose the battle. Like the Japanese commander, who died in the battle, Red Lesczynski believed not in the specifics of what he was doing, but in what his effort represented.

He thought a lot about Jerry Schmidt as he whiled away his hours on the *Shiloh*, wondering how the intense CIA agent was dealing with the similar botching of the war down South. Johnson and Westmoreland were obsessed with world opinion, on the one hand knowing that it would take a half-million American soldiers to establish a combat presence and the support functions it would need in order to operate halfway around the world, and on the other not wanting to appear to be the "aggressor" in the war. The result was piecemeal escalation, with the North Vietnamese controlling the pace and thus the entire initiative in the war. The units in the field were performing admirably, but the United States was continually reacting, continually behind. It was not a happy time if you were a believer.

Sophie wrote him every day. The letters came in bunches, with the resupply. When he had been young, he had believed that a man could get used to being away, could program it into the other cycles in his life. But it had gotten harder each time, so that now, at thirty-seven, it was as if he had split himself in two. So much of him was left with her, and with the children. J.J. was starting high school. How he longed to watch his son on the football field. Katherine was going through puberty without her father's advice. There were so many questions about dating that she would now throw at J.J. Little John liked to fix things; bicycles, even cars. At home, Lesczynski's Saturday afternoons belonged to John and his tools. There would be other times, and he dwelled on that, but he would never be able to see his children through the same lens as before.

He read several hours a day. That was the one salvation of shipboard life. He had brought more than thirty books, and would soon be finished with them all. He had made meticulous notes. They were a mixed bag of classics and military oddments. He was trying to understand this war, the Pacific, Japan. Japan was the key, and always had been.

He pulled out an old, faded volume written in 1920 by a Russian general, Nikolai N. Golovin, in collaboration with Admiral A. D. Bubnov. *The Problem of the Pacific in the Twentieth Century*. He had found it in a secondhand bookstore in Washington. Among other things, the book had accurately predicted both the timing and the course of World War II.

He checked his notes:

p. 43: "Japanese imperialism is not an invention of a handful of politicians. It is the expression of the spirit of modern Japan."

p. 81: "The motives that will prompt Japan to engage in the struggle are so deep and so vast that not one but several wars will have to be waged before a solution is reached."

p. 38: "When Europeans fight they always endeavor to set their own strength against that of their opponent. The Japanese endeavor to use the opponent's strength against him. By this method you add your opponent's strength to your own and may therefore win in spite of being weaker."

He pondered the last paragraph for several minutes before opening up the book. It made him want to show it to Kosaka. It represented a combination of those two favorite Japanese games, *jujitsu* and Go. It also made him wonder, in an oriental triple-thinking way, whether there was indeed some connection between what he was doing and Japan's growing strength. He didn't feel smart enough to figure that out, at least not yet.

He read carefully for an hour, marking the book and taking notes. The last paragraph of Russian wisdom that he added to his thick three-hole binder stayed with him as he left his small desk and climbed into his bed.

p. 153: "The realities of the Pacific include the necessity of all international agreements being backed by actual force. We may deplore this fact the more bitterly that mankind has but recently suffered such heavy losses in blood and treasure, but such is the present condition of the world, and the primary principal of positive science in search of the truth."

\* \* \*

"Now, pilots, man your planes. I say again, pilots, man your planes."

In the gray sea dawn a stiff wind pushed into the *Shiloh's* prow, beating insistently against the faces and chest of pilots and sailors who busied across the long, plane-cluttered flight deck. The aircraft carrier had turned north, into the wind, and geared up to thirty-three knots for launching. The steady wind across the deck would help lift the aircraft by increasing their relative ground speed. In minutes, thirty-two of them would scream off from three different catapults of the *Shiloh*, each plane taking a small dip in front of the bow as it shifted from the pull of the catapult to its own power, and then disappear.

Red Lesczynski left the F-4 ready room with seven other pilots and reached his aircraft. He did a quick but thorough preflight, walking around the sleek, long-nosed jet alongside its blue-shirted plane captain, an act that had his life in its hands, but one that had been done so many thousands of times that it was down to a series of quick looks and jokes with the plane captain.

"All set, Christianson?"

The plane captain grinned through snagged teeth. Underneath the tight cap and the Mickey Mouse sound attenuators was a boy hardly older than his son. "It'll get you there, Commander. Big one today, huh, sir?"

It was indeed, one of the largest raids of the air war, and one of the closest ever to downtown Hanoi. He checked his payload. A cluster of Mark 82 five-hundred-pound bombs hung close to each wing, above cylindrical pods that would fire Zuni five-inch rockets. Four F-4s, including his own, would go in first, taking out as many of the radar-controlled anti-aircraft guns and missile sites as possible. Twelve A-6 and six A-4 attack planes would follow with heavy bombloads, going after the Bac Giang petroleum storage area outside of Hanoi. Four of his F-4s would hold back as a RESCAP, to come to the aid of aircraft under attack by MiGs or damaged by ground fire. Two A-3 tankers would accompany the flight for emergency refueling. Two "Shrikes," especially configured A-4s, would provide immediate counter-battery fire to missile sites that locked onto the group as they went toward the target. An EA-6 "Q" aircraft would fly at the head of the group with the F-4s, in order to provide electronic jamming and surveillance. And finally, an RA-5 would follow up the strike, making a photograph for damage assessment. Once Lesczynski's F-4 flight rolled in, it would only take ninety seconds for the whole strike to be done with.

"Now, pilots start your engines. I say again, pilots start your engines."

He checked his survival gear inside the cockpit. The kid in the blue shirt gave him the signal and he fired it up. The A-4s went off the forward catapults, followed by the A-6s. The sun was burning a narrow streak across the sea to their right, the east, where eight thousand miles away his family was then finishing dinner and speaking sorrowfully of his absence. It was the July 4 weekend and they were in Ford City. The flight deck was filled with aircraft roaring down catapults and others taxiing toward them, with thin sailors dressed in colored jerseys, red and blue and white, yellow and purple and green, each jersey indicating with-out words their jobs. He followed a series of yellow-shirted men who looked like funny insects with their goggles and bulbous sound attenuators, the men pointing forcefully at him, ensuring they had eye contact with him, and then pointing again to the next yellow shirt, who guided him through an intricate maze of equipment and aircraft toward his launching catapult.

On the forward left catapult they hooked his Phantom into its bridle. He spoke briefly with Ted Cunningham, his back-seater, a young lieutenant (jg) on his first combat cruise, ensuring all their gear was a "go." His thumb went up and then he saluted, a signal to the NCO outside, and suddenly he was being slung along a ramp toward the ravening, empty sea, all the while gunning his Phantom with everything it had, going from a full stop to 240 miles an hour in the time it took him to whisper "Please, God," and then the jet gave a sighing dip just in front of the bow,

down toward the waiting water, and after that he was free, airborne, making a slow turn to the left, picking up the rendezvous TacAn: 335 degrees, 15 miles, 10,000 feet, circle to your left.

They gathered quickly, the A-6s below him at 9,000 feet, the A-4s below that at 8,000, the "dogs and cats" below that, all circling with undeniable beauty in the clear blue sky. Each of the flight leaders checked in and he then heard Maxwell, the strike commander, give the word back to the ship.

"Combat this is Mad Dog One. All aboard. Departing with thirty-two."

They flew in loose formation, the F-4s and the "Q" up front, the others spread laterally behind them in four plane flights. As they approached the coastline Maxwell checked in with the airborne coordinator, a C-130 orbiting in a safe area over Laos, giving him the on and off target times.

"Combat Nail this is Mad Dog One with thirty-two, estimated eight oh five with estimated eight oh seven, over."

"Roger, Made Dog One, you're clear. New time on target zero eight ten."

Lesczynski grinned nervously, imagining Maxwell's curses as they pulled into a wide, five-minute circle. The Air Force was hitting the southern outskirts of Hanoi from bases in Thailand. They'd either been late or had a pilot down.

Then it was their turn and they powered in hard and low, just above the green as it slipped suddenly under them. They were "feet dry" now, over hostile ground. They jinked as they flew, moving suddenly left and right to throw off SAM missile radar intercepts.

"Okay, let's go."

Lesczynski pitched up suddenly, moving almost vertically, as if rising from the green earth itself. The other three F-4s followed close behind. He came down in a straight line, directly toward the target. The attack aircraft would come in afterward at various angles, avoiding a pattern that might be picked up by North Vietnamese radar.

"Red One, in!"

He had seen the gun sites on the photos during the pre-flight briefing and they were clear now as he roared toward them, their little puffs going off around him. His aircraft unleashed a string of Zunis, their smoky trails impacting again and again, and then he pulled out of the dive, away as the bombs fell behind him. It all happened in a few seconds, and the Phantoms made their turn, heading back toward the new rendezvous over the sea.

"Red One, off."

The A-4s were next. "Blue One, in."

He could hear the chatter as they talked to one another, quick instructions.

"Heads up!"

"Look out, John!"

"Go left, now."

"Blue One, off."

Here came the first flight of A-6s. "Hawk One, in."

It was all so sterile once you'd made it through.

"Hawk One, off."

It was almost over. "Mad Dog, in."

"Break break break, be advised Mad Dog One is down."

The mission, his obligations, the world, all changed in five seconds. Jimmy Maxwell had been bagged. Lesczynski immediately began to turn his fighter around and return to the site. He had no munitions left, but he could not bear the thought of having to stand before Louise Maxwell and not assure her that he had done everything in his power to help her husband.

He heard Maxwell's wingman, speaking with a forced calm. "Okay, we got two good chutes. I've got them in sight." The wingman contacted the airborne coordinator. "Combat Nail, this is Mad Dog, got a bird down just off the target. I see him on the ground. I'm over him. We got two other birds out to tank, and they'll be back directly to you."

"Roger, Mad Dog, we'll direct."

The fire from the petroleum tanks rose twenty thousand feet, red and orange with oily curls of smoke. Lesczynski jinked and zigged and zagged, changing altitude, shaking radar scopes, moving back toward the target. They were too far inland for the Search and Rescue helicopters that operated off forward destroyers. The only hope was for a Jolly Green Giant to come overland from Thailand. That would take twenty minutes or so.

"They're locked onto us, Commander!" Lieutenant (jg) Cunningham was a seatful of terror in back of him. Red lights flashed on the instrument panel, indicating that a SAM radar had indeed locked them into its sights. He jinked several times. A missile flew past them. It looked like a telephone pole as it raced toward the heavens.

"That was too close!"

Maxwell was talking on his "beeper" survival radio. He was about a mile west of the target. The Jolly Green was on its way. Lesczynski could hear Combat Nail instructing it. A group of enemy soldiers was moving across a wide field, sweeping, looking for Maxwell and his bombardier. If the soldiers got too close it was all over. Lesczynski dove at them from the sky, thinking to pin them down, to distract them. They wouldn't know he was out of ammunition.

The 85-millimeter battery was in a hidden emplacement, off to his left. It puffed once and he saw it for the first time, all six guns firing until his field of vision on that side was loaded with its flashes. A dozen orange balls were coming at him, drifting up into space with a filmic slowness, an unreality, and he knew he was bagged. A shell ripped through his lower canopy as he tried to pull out of the dive and the stick became uncontrollable, the aircraft unresponding, a dead horse on which he was saddled, rolling slowly to the left. In the space of a half second, the time it took to let go of the stick and reach for the ejection lever, he realized that both his legs were wounded, his oxygen mask had been torn off by shrapnel, the oxygen bottle near his feet had exploded and set the cockpit aflame, and he



was peering at the ground through a hole in the underside of his Phantom, a mere thousand feet below. The ground, Vietnam, death, was coming up to meet him. His Phantom was still going five hundred miles an hour.

He pulled the ejection lever and nothing happened. He pulled it again and he was propelled through the closed canopy, the jet now at five hundred feet. His chute opened just enough to break his impact. He hit the ground at a forty-five-degree angle and bounced into the air again, doing a full, almost graceful loop and then landing on his knees and forehead, a three-point thud.

It was all so *loud*. That was his first, woozy thought as he staggered to his knees and then tried to stand. In the cockpit it had been sterile, except for the radio chatter. Suddenly the world was swimming with roars and explosions; missiles going off, the 85-millimeter battery pumping out three shells a second at other aircraft overhead, bombs and missiles coming back down from the covering jets, rifles and pistols shooting into the air with futile pops. The petroleum storage area was a towering, crackling backdrop a mile away, whose flames reached forever into the sky, as high as Mount Everest.

The soldiers who had been searching for Maxwell were now sweeping toward him instead, spread laterally across the dry rice paddy, the AK-47s pointing at him. They filled his vision as he tried to stand, thirty of them moving in a half jog. He reached back to disconnect his parachute, an automatic, unthinking move, but it wasn't coming off. Then he looked down and noticed that his left arm was hanging useless, unresponding but for little twitches, like a chick trying helplessly to fly. The bone in his upper arm had snapped completely in two, and the part still attached to his shoulder was jiggling, causing the rest of the arm to flail around.

He couldn't even surrender. He raised his right arm into the air and they took it for a threat, half of them dropping into firing positions and the other half rushing him. A soldier grabbed the dangling arm and twisted it behind him, in a tight hammerlock that kept on going until his detached wrist was up behind his head. He hit the man unthinkingly, trying to stop the pain. The others charged him, then noticed the arm was loose and merely beat him up instead of shooting him.

They acted as if they had never seen zippers before. They cut his flight suit off him, stripping him down to his undershorts, and tied a rope around his neck. In the distance, he saw a Jolly Green Giant helicopter pop in just over the trees where Maxwell had been and then disappear, under heavy air cover. He had seen nothing of Cunningham, his back-seater. They walked him across the dry field. Loudspeakers were everywhere, blaring terse urgencies he did not understand. An old man tried to come at him with a scythe, and the soldiers pushed him away. The soldiers took a delight in suddenly yanking the rope and

making him fall. Both his legs were bleeding, the blood gathering in the nonregulation, powder-blue socks Sophie had sent him. He felt silly, as much as anything else, in his white boxer undershorts and the funny socks.

Under a clump of trees a nurse dressed the cuts on his head, ignoring his arm and legs. It grew quiet. Finally the all-clear siren sounded over the ubiquitous loudspeakers and they walked him to a dirt road, where he was loaded into a green munitions truck. A blue uniformed commissar met the truck in front of a small cluster of buildings. He had a terse, bulbous face. He seemed amazed at Lesczynski's size. The commissar was the first person to speak directly to him. He closely examined Lesczynski's features, then made a judgment.

"Russki?"

"Polski." He didn't know what else the man might have meant. "American."

They took him into a large, bare room and made him sit on the floor. People gathered at its open windows and stared at him. Shortly, an officer in green clothes, wearing a pith helmet, entered the room with three armed soldiers. The officer's face was expressionless, but his eyes had the frozen intensity of a professional killer. He stood in front of Lesczynski and spoke in fluent English.

"I am going to ask you some questions. If you do not answer you will be severely punished."

"I need a doctor."

"Later, if you demonstrate a proper understanding. What is your name?"

"Stanislaus Lesczynski."

"What is your rank?"

"Commander, United States Navy."

"What ship did you take off from?"

"I can't answer that, according to the Geneva Agreements."

The officer issued a command in Vietnamese. Someone behind Lesczynski kicked him hard in the head, knocking him over. Two men grabbed him by the arms, dragging him to the center of the room. His bad arm was up around his head again and he screamed in agony. The crowd outside the room responded with a chant, louder and louder. He felt alone, so alone. *I'm going to die in the midst of strangers who hate me.*

They tied his ankles together, and then his wrists and his elbows so that they touched, the ropes so tight that they cut the blood off like tourniquets. It was done with one rope, so that his back was arched and his frame was immobile.

They kicked him and beat him and pinched his hands and arms with pliers until the skin was completely numb and the limbs were paralyzed, as if they did not exist. Each time they asked the same question. Finally, awash with guilt at such a small surrender, he relented.

"U.S.S. *Shiloh*."

"What squadron?"

The same routine. The three guards took turns to see

who could hit his face the hardest. He began to realize that he was in a small sense winning, because he was making them pay for information they already had. Finally, he could stand it no longer.

"VF-907."

"What kind of plane were you flying?"

"You ought to know. You shot it down."

"What was your target?"

Out of one window, past the hateful enjoying faces, tongues of red flame still licked the noonday sky. "Where all that fire is coming from."

The interrogator left the room for a few minutes. He returned with four photographers, who immediately began taking pictures. He walked directly to Lesczynski and shoved his head down to the floor. A soldier pointed an SKS rifle into the back of Lesczynski's head, and pulled the trigger.

In the millisecond it took for the trigger to squeeze and click, Lesczynski came to a sort of unrelenting peace with his captivity. He was in such pain at that moment that he welcomed any relief, even death. His mind went to other things as he stared into the dirt floor. *I wonder where they'll bury me. I wonder how long it will take for Sophie to find out. What is it like for a bullet to hit your head?*

The trigger clicked. The firing pin hit an empty chamber. The crowd outside taunted him. And he knew that, for some perverse reason, they needed to use him more than they needed to kill him.

They blindfolded him and loaded him into the bed of a truck, and in twenty minutes he was in Hanoi.

\* \* \*

"Put these on. You are going to a press conference."

The interrogator threw him a pair of oversized flight boots and an Air Force flight suit, freshly washed. They untied his hands. He had been sitting on a small stool in the Hoa Lo prison's interrogation room for five hours, going through the same string of questions and beatings as before. They had to help him into the clothes. One of the guards fashioned a sling for his arm out of thin gauze.

They loaded him onto the back of a military truck and made him stand at the front of the truck bed, holding onto a bamboo pole. The truck lumbered through endless Hanoi streets, another truck in front of it with a spotlight on him, another one following, filled with journalists. Crowds gathered on every street at the urgings of the Big Brother loudspeakers, chanting at him and throwing things. Warm urine covered one side of his face. Feces impacted on the bamboo rail near his hand. The crowd periodically surged against the truck, forced back by troops with bayonets. But even Red Lesczynski could tell the whole thing was staged. The demonstrators were somehow flat, mechanical. They looked sideways, for their controllers, as often as they did at him. *Wonderful stuff for pictures. Red Lesczynski on display.*

Hanoi was actually a beautiful city. He preoccupied him-

self with that thought. And far away, in the corner of one eye, he could see the petroleum plant still burning.

At the International House they kept him outside, in a flower garden, for ten minutes. When the guard came to guide him inside, he refused to move unless they gave him water. He had asked before, and been denied. He had not drunk anything since breakfast, a lifetime ago on the South China Sea. Finally the guard relented, and gave him two glasses of ice water. He knew he would pay for his obstinance, but it didn't matter. There would be so many things to pay for that they would all blend in, anyway.

There were Caucasian reporters in the press room, as well as Asians. He did his best to march up to the podium, and saluted when he reached it. *In the Orient, the man who shows no fear is king*, that's what MacArthur had said, but he was not really thinking about MacArthur at that moment. He was remembering Crane Howell, the hobbled, irascible professor at the academy who had grown old before his time, who had survived the work camps and the beatings of the Japanese. If he was lucky, he would live to be old and beaten also. There was no use hoping for more. It was now his fate.

The reporters asked him no questions. He was merely meant to be an object on display, like elephant tusks after a safari. Afterward, the trucks drove him back to Hoa Lo prison, better known among American fliers as the Hanoi Hilton, through a different section of town, through same groups of chanting people. And then the fun began.

For ten days they beat him. For ten days they did not let him sleep. For ten days they asked him the same questions, over and over, slapping and punching, keeping him in leg irons, laughing as he urinated and shit on himself. For ten days they allowed his wounds to fester, until his legs were swollen and the gashes had turned black, the blisters splitting and draining onto the floor, as if he were a frankfurter on a spittle over a hot fire. For ten days they worked the ropes, tightening them and loosening them to regulate his pain, until he developed infected blisters that would make permanent scars, his "varsity stripes" along his wrists and upper arms. For ten days he saw no one but the guards, heard no voices but Vietnamese, found himself locked inside a seven-foot-square repository of darkness and filth that made him wish over and over that he could merely die and see the end of it.

And after ten days, he found himself writing with numbed fingers the words that they dictated into his delirious, semideadness:

1. *I condemn the United States Government for its aggressive war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.*
2. *I have encroached upon the air space of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.*
3. *I am a war criminal.*
4. *I have received humane and lenient treatment from the people and the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.*

# Truth-Telling and the *Iliad*

Douglas Allanbrook

The terrible word *truth* implies a parity between what we see and what we say. There are two books which most vividly exhibit this quality of truth. These two books are the *Iliad* and Thucydides' history. I sometimes think that they are the only two that do so consistently. Both books reflect in their words and accounts, speeches and stories, the real that is in front of our eyes and that is so difficult to own up to or to talk about. It would be too much to attempt to talk about both of these incomparable books, and tonight I shall talk only about the *Iliad*. It would be too much to attempt in an hour to talk with any kind of completeness about the *Iliad*, and I shall merely try to fix your attention upon the salient features of the poem's words, similes, Gods, and story. The thesis underlying the pointing out is the traditional one that the *Iliad* is the truest and most famous poem because of its unvarying and harsh vision, its unwavering eye. The singer of the poem never turns aside into the justification of Gods, cities, or individual men. He tells the truth as he see it. His poem is the artifact of things as they are.

Everyone who talks about Homer is indebted to the poet's commentators throughout the ages. A lecture of Jacob Klein's focused my attention on the dimensions and passion of the story of Achilles and Zeus. I have also been influenced in what I have to say by two modern writers on the *Iliad*, Redfield and Whitman, and have used certain of their observations, though disagreeing with certain of their conclusions. The writer who looms hugely on the horizon of any talk about Homer, and who is Homer's most important critic, is Plato. This lecture certainly disagrees with his criticisms, all the more so as it is clear that Plato loved and revered the poem.

The beginning of the road through the poem will be to look at words, at nouns which name things; then Homer's similes will be examined; next proper names and lists and

catalogues; next the names of the Gods and what they illuminate; and finally the story itself as it illuminates the men and gives them to us as models for our own looking in general. There may be a certain madness in this method of looking at things; generally when we talk about things we argue about them, justify them, or attempt to shove them into the artificial frame of a problem to be solved. Homer is not rhetorical, and language talking about him should not be either, although it is well nigh impossible to talk in any way consonant with his purity and passion.

Homer names everything he sees and has lots of time at his disposal. He has a lovely flexible hexameter to fit his words into, and while his grammar is simple, his vocabulary is enormous. Everything to be seen is named specifically. Reading the poem at random one finds words for yoke-rings for oxen, for two-handled goblets, and a word for the tiller of a boat which is always in the plural because the boats he talks about had two tillers. When Odysseus sails back with Chryse in Book I, returning her to her father, all the details of the docking are spelled out:

But Odysseus

meanwhile drew near to Chryse conveying the sacred  
hecatomb.  
These when they were inside the many-hollowed harbor  
took down and gathered the sails and stowed them in the  
black ship,  
let down mast by the forestays, and settled it in the mast  
crutch  
easily, and rowed her with oars to the mooring.  
They threw over the anchor stones and made fast the stern-  
cables.

[I, 430-436]

When Priam in Book XXIV comes to Achilles' shelter all details of the wagon which will convey Hector's body back to Troy are named:

... and they in terror at the old man's scolding  
hauled out the easily running wagon for mules, a fine thing  
new-fabricated, and fastened the carrying basket upon it.

---

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They took away from its peg the mule yoke made of  
 boxwood  
 with its massive knob, well fitted with guiding rings and  
 brought forth  
 the yoke lashing (together with the yoke itself) of nine  
 cubits  
 and snugged it well into place upon the smooth-polished  
 wagon-pole  
 at the foot of the beam, then slipped the ring over the peg,  
 and lashed it  
 with three turns on either side to the knob, and afterwards  
 fastened it all in order and secured it under a hooked guard.  
 [XXIV, 265-74]

Achilles' shelter where the fateful meeting with Priam  
 takes place is described minutely:

... a towering  
 shelter the Myrmidons had built for their king, hewing  
 the timbers of pine, and they made a roof of thatch above it  
 shaggy with grass that they had gathered out of the  
 meadows;  
 and around it made a great courtyard for their king, with  
 hedgepoles  
 set close together; the gate was secured by a single door-  
 piece  
 of pine, and three Achaians could ram it home in its socket  
 and three could pull back and open the huge door-bar;  
 three other  
 Achaians, that is, but Achilles all by himself could close it.  
 [XXIV, 448-56]

After the death of Hector, when Achilles thinks of  
 "shameful treatment for glorious Hector", everything is  
 named:

In both of his feet at the back he made holes by the  
 tendons  
 in the space between ankle and heel, and drew thongs of  
 ox-hide through them,  
 and fastened them to the chariot so as to let the head drag.  
 [XXII, 396-98]

As we the listeners to the poem follow the action of the  
 story and listen to the words, it is as if we were looking  
 down on the plain in front of Troy. It is as if the names, the  
 nouns, the substantives, were glinting in the sunshine. All  
 the objects in the bright space between the blackhulled  
 boats and the Skaian Gates glitter and shine; they reveal  
 themselves to our eyes as if we were movie cameras or vul-  
 tures or dogs. The art of Homer is like the movies; there is  
 the camera eye, the selection of objects to be photo-  
 graphed, the quick shifts of scene from the beach to the  
 interior of a house in Troy, the close-ups and the dialogue.  
 Strictly speaking, a camera sees nothing; it records for a  
 director who has a story to tell. What exactly vultures and

carrion dogs see is a mystery. You recall the opening of the  
 poem:

Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilles  
 and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the  
 Achaians,  
 hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong  
 souls  
 of heroes, but gave their bodies to be the delicate feasting  
 of dogs, of all birds, and the will of Zeus was accomplished  
 since that time when first there stood in division of conflict  
 Atreus' son the lord of men and brilliant Achilles.  
 [I, 1-7]

It is not clear that birds and dogs see what we see, and for  
 us their sight seems pitiless. Certainly as the opening of  
 the poem sings, they are always present, looking from on  
 high as the vultures do, or circling the edges on ground  
 level like the dogs.

Nothing is said about these objects named; they are  
 named as what they are, and not so much written about as  
 presented. What is seen is named specifically as what it is  
 when it reveals itself to sight. It is not that a vase is two-  
 handled, it's a two-handled vase; it is not that a cauldron is  
 unfired, it is an unfired cauldron; it is not that a chest is  
 made of cedar, it is a cedar chest. Even more clearly we  
 never see a sword, we see a bronze sword; we never see  
 red, we see a red fire. Direct perception is always correct, it  
 cannot lie. The stick seen under water does appear  
 crooked, and it would be false in this primary sense we are  
 talking about to say that it was straight. It is crooked to our  
 vision, and something would be wrong with the world if it  
 were not. Sentences that remain true to this firstness or  
 primacy of vision as imaged in a word are always indica-  
 tive. Nouns in such sentences indicate things. They are  
 placed in their sentences in time as objects are in space.  
 This is language approaching the state of painting, while  
 simultaneously, in this poem, the words are being sung. A  
 painting argues nothing, proves no point. Music although  
 in time, and an aspect of language, argues nothing, proves  
 no points. Paintings and music see and hear for us. Simi-  
 larly with so many of the words and sentences of the *Iliad*;  
 they argue nothing, they prove nothing, they say clearly  
 what is seen in a perpetual and vivid present, in moments  
 of firstness and primary sensing, moments that are the op-  
 posite of the infinite and the unbounded, that are crystal-  
 lized facets in the eye of attention focused on each object.  
 There is no reality worth a damn unless it is attended to,  
 and attention must be fixed with a word that is an image.  
 The sentences in the *Iliad* are almost all indicative. The  
 sun is out, and there are no nebulous futures or contrary-  
 to-fact conditions. Nothing is hypothesized, nothing is ab-  
 stracted, nothing needs to be proved, as there are no prob-  
 lems to be solved and there is no path of discourse which  
 leads from or goes under what is in front of us.

Certain special words in the *Iliad* occur over and over

again. Each occurrence of the word is specific and apt in its naming. But in its manifold occurrences the word casts a web of meaning which links together all of the occurrences. The most notable of such words is the word "fire." In Book I the pyres of the dead Achaians consume the bodies of those stricken of Apollo's plague. In Book V when Diomedes begins his day of glory Pallas Athene "made weariless fire blaze from his shield and helmet" (V, 4). Hector's funeral is conducted with quiet finality, and his body burns accompanied by the proper lamentations of his family and his city. Fire finally reaches the boats of the Achaians and accomplishes the plan of Zeus for Achilles' glory. When Hector is dead on the ground, killed by Achilles and the trickery of Athene, the Achaians remember that fire:

And the other sons of the Achaians came running about him,  
and gazed upon the stature and on the imposing beauty of Hektor; and none stood beside him who did not stab him;  
and thus they would speak one to another, each looking at his neighbor:  
"See now, Hektor is much softer to handle than he was when he set the ships ablaze with the burning firebrand."  
[XXII, 369-74]

Patroklos' body is consumed by fire together with the bodies of the twelve young Trojans slaughtered by Achilles for the greater glory of his friend, and Achilles circles the pyre dragging Hector's body by the heels. In the terrifying climax of the poem Achilles stands on the ditch and bellows, his head encircled with a nimbus of fire. He strikes terror into the hearts of the Trojans, who well see in it their own destruction. Achilles is like fire, short-lived, destructive, gleaming, and irresistible, a pile of ashes at the end—"consumed by that which it was nourished by," to speak as our best poet speaks. Achilles also looks like fire. In Book XXII, just before the end of Hector, Achilles closes in on him "like the flare of blazing fire" (XXII, 135).

The word "fire" becomes more than the sum of its individual instances. It becomes part of the meaning of the whole poem as we see the work of fire and the lives of the heroes, and the heat of the battle, and the burning of corpses, and the sacrifices to the gods, and the certain future fire which will consume Troy and finally cast young Astyanax, Hector's son, to instant death over the walls. The meaning of such a word is what we mean, I suppose, by the word "symbolic." The word is in each specific instance precise, but in its many instances its meaning spreads abroad to encompass a whole network of signification. We grasp the enormity of its meaning without demonstration or argument. It exhibits itself, and shines in our eyes.

One word, according to authorities, is dangerous to utter. The first word of the poem, the subject of the poem in

the objective case, is a special holy word, a "tabu." The word is, of course, *μῆνις*, the wrath of Achilles which will bring manifold destruction, etc. It is a word that is reserved for Achilles and the gods; it names a brooding and potential power. It always presages some terrifying future. It is hardly adventitious that *μῆνις* is the first word in this poem whose story has a tension and a resolution that is as clearly aimed as the loosing of an arrow toward a target. In the network of meaning in the poem it is clear that this sacred "wrath" is like fire. Any ordinary wrath blazes up like a fire, but this wrath is like a holy fire, which is not to be gazed at any more than the head of a Gorgon is. Through it the will of Zeus is accomplished, and many heroes slaughtered. The word occurs very rarely in the poem, while the word fire is ever-present in the fabric of the story. The word is avoided, although one can circle around it by talking of things that are like it or by finding circumlocutions that glance toward its meaning. The meaning of the word is the story itself, as the poet clearly announces in his invocation to the goddess.

Vision and the naming of things, or seeing and saying, have yet another aspect which has been hidden and only hinted at in what has been said so far about the Iliad. We see only what we pay attention to, and the poet pays close attention. We see a particular object only by coming to it from something else or by going from it to something else. The specialness of what we see is not only that it is a brazen sword with a golden handle, but that it is different from anything else in its very particularity. It is also different from anything that is next to it, or indeed it could not be seen. It may be like something, but must always remain different. Words used truthfully reflect this, and that is why Homer constantly uses similes and very rarely employs metaphors. It is, after all, a special kind of lie to say that my love is a rose. She is a girl and she is like a rose, or better like a red, red rose. Achilles is not a fire, he is like a fire, and he does not fight water, but battles with a special river which runs along the edge of the battlefield and which has one name which is employed by the gods, the Xanthos, and another name, the Skamandros, which is used by humans. It is clear that fire and water are antithetical, but it is in the samenesses and differences presented at once in a simile that vision is both clarified and respected for what it is. To be sure, there are a few metaphors in Homer. People sleep "their brazen sleep," "night wraps up their eyes," or someone is called "the scourge of Zeus." Similes, however, are the ever-present figure of speech in Homer, and they range from the simplest ones to comparisons of enormous complexity and irony. Simple similes give flashes of vision as the images dart from like to like while preserving the necessity of seeing things as separate. Ajax carries his shield "like a wall." Athene and Hera walk into battle eager to help the Achaians "like shivering doves." Men attack "like lions"; their armor "glitters like the thunder flash of Zeus."

Complicated similes reveal more, and Agamemnon is

never seen more clearly than in the simile near the beginning of Book XI. Let us read it:

And as a lion seizes the innocent young of the running deer, and easily crunches and breaks them caught in the strong teeth when he has invaded their lair, and rips out the soft heart from them, and even if the doe be very near, still she has no strength to help, for the ghastly shivers of fear are upon her also and suddenly she dashes away through the glades and the timber sweating in her speed away from the pounce of the strong beast; so there was no one of the Trojans who could save these two from death, but they themselves were running in fear from the Argives.

[XI, 113-121]

Agamemnon has just killed and stripped Isos and Antiphos, two sons of Priam. Achilles had previously caught them on the slopes of Mt. Ida and released them for ransom. This time Agamemnon struck Isos in the chest above the nipple and hit Antiphos by the ear with the sword, and eagerly stripped off their armor, which armor he had seen before when Achilles had brought them in from Ida. Before this we have heard Agamemnon's fierce words in Book VI when his brother Menelaos was moved to pity a Trojan:

"Dear brother, o Menelaos, are you concerned so tenderly with these people? Did you in your house get the best of treatment from the Trojans? No, let not one of them go free of sudden death and our hands; not the young man child that the mother carries still in her body, not even he, but let all of Ilion's people perish, utterly blotted out and unmourned for."

[VI, 55-60]

This side of Agamemnon was present to the listener before the simile in Book XI, but what the listener to the simile becomes startlingly aware of is a truth about Agamemnon as he is placed in juxtaposition with Achilles. What was begun and seen in Book I when the two men stood apart in their bitter quarrel is now made manifest. Agamemnon may be a bumbling king of kings, an unsure leader of the host, too big for his boots, but for all that he is a killer, like the lion of the simile. Earlier in Book XI you will recall his shield with the face of the Gorgon upon it, the symbol of fear and trembling and horror. We never have physical description of the heroes in the Iliad; we don't know the color of their eyes or of their hair. Only ugly Thersites with his peculiar eggplant-shaped head is described in physical detail. We know Achilles is beautiful,

and that Priam is so in another way. We envisage great Ajax, the wall of the Achaians, and noble Diomedes. The great, vacillating, and violent Agamemnon is always present to our eyes after this simile, all the more so as he is remembered by being placed in conjunction with Achilles, who had spared the lives of the two boys that Agamemnon is here shown slaughtering as a beast slaughters.

Ten books later Homer portrays Achilles slaughtering yet another boy whom he had previously ransomed. This is the near-monstrous book in which Achilles butchers Trojans beside the river Skamandros and then launches himself against the divine river itself. You recall what he says to the boy before killing him:

"So, friend, you die also. Why all this clamour about it? Patroklos also is dead, who was better by far than you are. Do you not see what a man I am, how huge, how splendid and born of a great father, and the mother who bore me immortal? Yet even I have also my death and my strong destiny, and there shall be a dawn or an afternoon or a noontime when some man in the fighting will take the life from me also either with a spearcast or an arrow flown from the bowstring."

[XXI, 106-113]

If we were to construct a simile ourselves it would not be a bestial one; with all of our later stories in us we might well liken Achilles to an Angel of Death, but we would never liken him to a lion.

Let us now examine another simile earlier on in Book XI than the one we just looked at. The two armies are facing each other, drawn up in two lines:

And the men, like two lines of reapers who, facing each other, drive their course all down the field of wheat or of barley for a man blessed in substance, and the cut swathes drop showering, so Trojans and Achaians driving in against one another cut men down, nor did either side think of disastrous panic.

[XI, 67-71]

Here our seeing is wrenched from the world of war to the world of peace. Reaping a harvest is the co-operative work of a group of men, and the grain is a blessing, and bread is life-giving and puts strength into the body, and the man who owns the field is blessed in his substance. Two things that look alike—the lopping-off of stalks of grain and the cutting down of human bodies—are both hard work. The result of one is fruit and nurture, and of the other desolation. We of course use Homer's simile constantly, but as a metaphor. We speak of "death, the grim reaper," or of infantry soldiers being "mowed down" by machine-gun fire, or even push our metaphorical perversity so far as to speak of "body counts" as if we were numbering the stalks of grain that fall or counting our merchandise. Metaphors

conceal the truth often, if they are not downright lying. Men are not lions and bodies are not for counting. No man is an anonymous unit to be counted. Agamemnon is like a lion slaughtering a young deer, and foot soldiers killing each other in facing lines are like reapers. The seeing of one thing as like another thing to the eye but also as startlingly different to the intelligence reveals the character of what is seen. In this grim poem of violence, wrath, and war there is never a simile which lulls us into acceptance of war as something ordinary, never a passage which lets us get used to it. It is always seen for what it is, the field of hateful Ares, not the field of peaceful harvest. The difference between the scenes of peace and the scenes of war make the battlefield agonizingly clear. War is not excellent, although heroes gain glory in it. The poem, in its truthfulness, never suggests for a moment that we will ever be without war.

The famous simile at the end of Book VIII, so often commented upon throughout the ages, accomplishes a vaster kind of seeing by means of likeness and difference. Book VIII, as you will recall, is where Zeus puts into play his plan for Achilles' glory. The Achaians will be driven back temporarily and Hector will be unleashed. Hector has just boasted of what he has and will accomplish, and has voiced the poignant and overweening wish:

"Oh, if I only  
could be as this in all my days immortal and ageless  
and be held in honour as Athene and Apollo are honoured  
as surely as this oncoming day brings evil to the Argives."  
[VIII, 538-41]

After this he sacrifices to the gods, but they "took no part of it/. . . so hateful to them was sacred Iliion" (VIII, 550-51). The simile is as follows:

So with hearts made high these sat night-long by the  
outworks  
of battle, and their watchfires blazed numerous about them.  
As when in the sky the stars about the moon's shining  
are seen in all their glory, when the air has fallen to stillness,  
and all the high places of the hills are clear, and the shoulders  
out-jutting,  
and the deep ravines, as endless bright air spills from the  
heavens  
and all the stars are seen, to make glad the heart of the  
shepherd;  
such in their numbers blazed the watchfires the Trojans were  
burning  
between the waters of Xanthos and the ships, before Iliion.  
A thousand fires were burning there in the plain, and beside  
each  
one sat fifty men in the flare of the blazing firelight.  
And standing each beside his chariot, champing white barley  
and oats, the horses waited for the dawn to mount to her high  
place.

[VIII, 553-65]

The first likeness and difference here is between stars and fires; another likeness and difference arises as one gazes upon the still moon-and-star-lit landscape and the thousand fires burning in the plain between the river and the ships. Quiet and peace envelop both the plain and the landscape. Stars and fires both glitter, and both seem uncountable in their numbers; there are a thousand fires and each has fifty men, and who can count the stars. The beauty and terror and quiet which are behind the truth of the view come all from the awful differences. The landscape is a world of peace inhabited by a shepherd whose heart is gladdened by the clarity of the night. The stars in their purity and eternity, though shining, are the antithesis of the fires, which will be ashes as the day dawns and destruction begins. We, the listeners, grasp the scene like visitors from another realm, from another star-system, knowing the past and the future; yet simultaneously we are not from another realm or from another star-system, but live on the plain, waiting anxiously for another dawn. We are ourselves like a simile of sameness and difference in our attending to the poem, as we are both like and unlike what we see.

A whole host of similes introduces the whole host of the Achaians in Book II before the mighty catalogue unfolds in all its specificity. First the gleam from their bronze dazzles the upper air as an obliterating fire lights up a vast forest. Next, pouring from their ships and shelters with the earth resounding under their feet and under the hooves of their horses, they are likened to nations of birds, of geese, of cranes, of swans settling in clashing swarms onto a water meadow. The host takes position, thousands of armed men, as leaves and flowers appear in their season. Next they stand in such numbers, their hearts burning to break the Trojans, as multitudinous nations of swarming insects which, avid for milk, drive hither and thither about the sheepfolds in spring when the milk splashes in the milk-pails. Only this last simile switches to the world of men and peaceful human work. The order has been: obliterating forest fire, nations of birds, leaves and flowers in season, nations of insects about the stalls of shepherds. The focus finally narrows down to the leaders of the host, and last of all to the leader of the leaders, Agamemnon:

These, as men who are goatherds among the wide  
goatflocks  
easily separate them in order as they take to the pasture,  
thus the leaders separated them this way and that way  
toward the encounter, and among them powerful  
Agamemnon,  
with eyes and head like Zeus who delights in thunder,  
like Ares for girth, and with the chest of Poseidon;  
like some ox of the herd pre-eminent among the others,  
a bull, who stands conspicuous in the huddling cattle.  
[II, 474-81]

This whole great list of similes, with its carefully controlled

order of seeing things, and all of the other similes we have looked at, have one characteristic which is so simple that it almost escapes notice. Everything is compared to something that is always as it is, whether the comparison is to objects or animals, to activities or to landscapes, or to the recurrence of spring: lions, reapers, goatherds at their rounds, nations of birds and insects, forest fires, stars. The great succession of similes just looked at in Book II has as its function the focusing, the funneling of our attention to the great list of proper names and place-names which follows in the Catalogue. Proper names, of course, are all over the *Iliad*, not merely listed once in the Catalogue. No one in this poem is anonymous, whether he be an Achaian, a Trojan, or an outlander speaking some outlandish speech. No one in this poem dies without being named, and his name is attached to where he came from. In this the poem is true to all of us. We may not all be brothers, but we all have names and parents and were born someplace, and to ignore this is to lie in the blackest manner known to lying. No one is a number, and people are not to be counted, they are to be named. There are many warriors in this poem named at the moment of their death who otherwise play no part in the story:

So Iphidamas fell there and went into the brazen slumber,  
 unhappy, who came to help his own people, and left his  
     young wife  
 a bride, and had known no delight from her yet, and given  
     much for her.  
 First he had given a hundred oxen, then promised a thousand  
 head of goats and sheep, which were herded for him in  
     abundance.  
 Now Agamemnon, son of Atreus, stripped him . . .

[XI, 241-46]

Or consider poor Gorgythion, named by name and descent, and immortalized by a simile:

Gorgythion the blameless, hit in the chest by an arrow;  
 Gorgythion whose mother was lovely Kastianeira,  
 Priam's bride from Aisyme, with the form of a goddess.  
 He bent drooping his head to one side, as a garden poppy  
 bends beneath the weight of its yield and the rains of  
     springtime;  
 so his head bent slack to one side beneath the helm's weight.

[VIII, 303-308]

If I were to tell the truth about the war that I knew, it would certainly not be an account of the so-called strategy of the vain and posturing commanding general. Rather I would tell of a boy from the tobacco-growing country of the upper Connecticut river in Massachusetts who married a young virgin from his own town a month before sailing, and who met his death quickly, shot from behind by a German patrol.

The Catalogue in Book II is the very triumph of specific-

ity, a great parade of proper names and places drawn up in the plain for the listener to hear about. The Muses themselves are invoked as being goddesses who know all things, and who remember all those who came beneath Ilium. It is as if I, in telling the terrible story of Gettysburg and Antietam, were to call on some recording angel to help me with the resounding catalogue of names and places from Portland, Maine, to Chattanooga, Tennessee. The catalogue has the endless fascination of an exhaustive list; the listener checks off every place he has ever heard of, and learns some new ones. A Canadian humorist once commented that the Catalogue of Ships in Homer had all the dignity and beauty of the New York Telephone Directory. To which one can only reply that the Telephone Book is fascinating in its very specificity; it is better than imagination, or rather it feeds the imagination, and fills the reader with wonder and terror at the thought of all those names, nationalities, streets, and boroughs.

So far in this lecture tonight we have examined names of objects, names of animals, names of artifacts. Certain names such as "fire" and "water" assumed a vaster meaning, even though each instance of their use was specific. We talked finally of proper names, proper nouns, people rescued from anonymity as they died and were named. We have yet to see the truth of the named heroes, Achilles and Hector and Ajax, the meaning their names assume for us, although much was revealed about the name Agamemnon by the lion simile. To some sceptics it may seem suspect to talk about the name of Achilles as having meaning. Achilles' mother is a goddess, and most of the other heroes are of divine descent. Is there any real referent for us in such names? Was Achilles ever? He's not Alcibiades, or Caesar, or General Patton. Can the name of a person which is not linked to a real person have any relation to the truth? The names of the gods disturb listeners more than the names of the heroes. This may be more so nowadays than in previous ages, though no one was more upset by the names of the gods than Socrates. What are the names of the gods referring to? Are they merely allegorical names? Dare we even give names to gods? The names of the gods must have been like a thorn in the side of many of your thoughts and discussions about Homer. By a kind of reversal of meaning you may well have been put off by the fact that the gods appear so real; they are married, they have domestic quarrels, brothers and sisters detest each other, they have mansions, they eat together; goodness as such seems to have little to do with them, though they certainly exhibit specific excellences. Another knot to disentangle in the *Iliad* is that great Zeus is so different from the other gods. He stands apart from the other immortals with a divinity and power which Achilles' appears akin to. Zeus' dire silence throughout the long tension of much of the poem, until Achilles' day arrives and the plan of Zeus unfolds in its double-edged fulfillment, is the very will of the poem, as the poet tells us in the opening lines. Even this great mystery, Zeus, however, is hoodwinked by his wife,



and his threats to her and to the rest of his family are never carried out. Another aspect of the gods which may disturb our listening to the story as true may be best stated by remembering that Herodotus says that Homer and Hesiod named and defined the gods. Certain listeners may be used to considering the gods as formless, as Good, as not being something that was written up by a poet; in other words many listeners have been used to the gods as being real by the very fact of their not being like anything we see and by their not being embodied in a fiction. The gods are called the "deathless" ones, the immortals, and it is by examining closely this name that I propose that we get closer to the truth of their names. This real name, the "deathless ones," is a name that speaks of a lack of something. They don't die, and we do. It is not merely that they are bigger, more beautiful, and more powerful than we are; most importantly they are other than mortal. In all of this the gods are like similes, and our vision of ourselves and the world as it is is sharpened by the presence of the gods. I am in no way saying that they are similes, and God knows they are not metaphors. They are like similes in that they sharpen our attention to what lies around us. The fact that they are without death but like us gives their actions at times a kind of frivolity. War is a comedy for them; if Ares and Aphrodite are wounded in the battle before the walls of Ilion it is only a kind of play which will be put right by their parents. Artemis, the killer maiden, is spanked by her mother until the deadly arrows fall out of her pockets.

The gods are like and unlike the listeners to the poem in another way. They look down on the plain of Troy, and see what goes on; they know the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story, and enjoy it just as we do; and again like us turn aside from it and go on about their own affairs. They are the guarantors of the fiction. The difference again is of course that they are "deathless," and their enjoyment is completely aesthetic, unsullied by suffering or the approaching evening. The following short poem by Emily Dickinson is not for them, though in some awful way one suspects that they might appreciate it, as mere aesthetes among us do:

I like a look of agony,  
 Because I know it's true;  
 Men do not sham convulsion,  
 Nor simulate a throe.  
 The eyes glaze once, and that is death.  
 Impossible to feign  
 The beads upon the forehead  
 By homely anguish strung.

The lives of the gods obviously can never be tragic; their dangers and their wounds are only ripples on a surface. Ichor runs in their veins, not blood, and they are nourished with nectar and ambrosia. Their deathless light in the upper air makes the listener see more clearly the plain of Troy and the slaughter and passion and travail which take

place there. They resemble the simile of the stars and the campfires.

All seeing necessitates something different next to what we see. We see a chair because it stops being a chair when it is in place, and next to something else which is not a chair, even if it be air. The limit of life is death, and we apprehend mortality in the *Iliad* by watching the deathless ones. We, the listeners, see what we are in the poem by seeing what we are not, and the heroes of the poem itself are always face to face with the deathless ones and with death; they are descended from the deathless ones in half their being, but receive no guarantees from their descent; they have no insurance against the end of life. It is more difficult to pin down what is revealed to us by the character of the gods. Ares may be the easiest one to talk about first, even though he is related to no special hero in the poem. He is sung of as despicable and quarrelsome, and he changes sides from the Achaians to the Trojans. Athene in Book V instructs Diomedes:

"Be not afraid of violent Ares,  
 that thing of fury, evil-wrought, that double-faced liar  
 who even now protested to Hera and me, promising  
 that he would fight against the Trojans and stand by the  
 Argives.

Now, all promises forgotten, he stands by the Trojans."

[V, 830-34]

He is accompanied by allegorical figures of Terror, Fear, and Hate when we first meet him in Book IV, just before Diomedes' great day. Zeus, his father, hates him. At the end of Book V he says to his son:

"Do not sit beside me and whine, you double-faced liar.  
 To me you are most hateful of all gods who hold Olympus.  
 Forever quarrelling is dear to your heart, wars and battles.

[V, 889-91]

In this poem where war is the daily doing of the heroes it is a remarkable sign of the clear vision of the poet that the god of war is associated with no single hero, and is shown as a despicable, brazen, and howling youngster who belittles, and is worsted by his sister and hated by his father. It cannot be merely that Ares represents one aspect of war, defeat, and terror, as one noted commentator argues. Ares, the god of war, is simply and clearly a vision of the nature of the battlefield. No single hero is illuminated by him as is Achilles by Zeus, or Paris by Aphrodite. This same vision of war is present throughout Thucydides, and seems to guide his hand as we watch the spectacle of barbarism unleashed upon Greece not by barbarians but by war. The same vision enlivens the vivid scenes of the battle of Waterloo in Stendahl and the battle of Borodino in Tolstoy. Ares has no favorites and takes no sides.

Apart from Ares, seeing what the gods are like means looking harder at the person each is linked with. Helen is not like Aphrodite when she says to her in Book III,

“Strange divinity! Why are you still so stubborn to beguile me?” (III, 399), and, later in the same speech:

“I am not going to him. It would be too shameful  
I will not serve his bed, since the Trojan women hereafter  
would laugh at me, all, and my heart even now is confused  
with sorrows”

[III, 410-12]

Helen is humiliated by her goddess when she is told to repair to her chamber and Paris is scooped out of the battlefield and dumped into her bed. To the old men on the wall she seems like a very goddess in her beauty, but within herself she is divided and at war with herself, and it takes Aphrodite's curses and anger to drive her to Paris' arms.

When Athene stays Achilles' hand in Book I at the height of his murderous quarrel with Agamemnon, Achilles is already debating within his chest two courses. Again the goddess is like and unlike him, and is seen by no other man. She does not make him do what he does; she holds him back from one course and points him to the other course he had already been debating within.

Zeus and Achilles are alike in their loneliness, in their withdrawal, and in their detachment and lucidity as they view the plain and the battle. When Thetis comes to Olympus she finds Zeus apart from the others “retired at a distance”—a phrase used only of him and Achilles. The near-divine and excessive nature of Achilles' wrath is the blood and heart of Zeus' plan, and Zeus, unlike Achilles, is the mind of it; he is the guarantor of Achilles' glory. Zeus and Achilles hold the tension of withdrawal throughout all the mighty battles of the middle books. Only in furthering Achilles' glory does Zeus stand apart from his family in strife and threaten them, a parallel to Achilles' days in his tent and his standing alone in his wrath even after the embassy of men closest to him. The difference between Zeus and Achilles is the difference between the deathless one and the death-haunted one. However alone Achilles is, and however near to divinity he may be in his ruthlessness and his wrath, he remains mortal. He is fallible at the moment of his greatest glory. The terror hidden behind Zeus' nod of the head when he accedes to Thetis' petition, the double-edged truth of his promise, lies all in Achilles' love for Patroklos. The poet insists by the constant witness of others on the lovable and gentle nature of Achilles' friend. Briseis, the captured woman, bears most touching witness to this in Book XIX. At the end of her lament for him she says, “Therefore I weep your death without ceasing. You were kind always” (XIX, 300). Greeks in a later age marvelled that Patroklos was older than Achilles, and yet so beloved. Patroklos weeps for the fate of the other Achaians in front of Achilles, and Achilles' indecision in the face of his friend leads him to give permission, the fatal permission to enter the battle, clad in the mighty armor of Achilles who loves him. This weakness of judgement is the beginning of the train of events which are sung of as the pit

of loneliness and detachment and ferocity. The irony of his act is voiced by the poet in the unspeakable prayer of Achilles to Zeus, Apollo, and Athene just before Patroklos' departure:

“Father Zeus, Athene and Apollo, if only  
not one of all the Trojans could escape destruction, not one  
of the Argives, but you and I could emerge from the slaughter  
so that we two alone could break Troy's hallowed coronal.”

[XVI, 97-100]

Zeus has not tricked Achilles, he has stood behind and deepened what was already present. Achilles is better and deeper and more terrifying and monstrous than other men just as Zeus is first among the gods. Achilles' wrath and his pride go beyond the human range, but his everlasting memory remains because of Patroklos, because he is, as are other mortals, dependent upon another.

The gods, and especially Zeus, may indeed foresee what they foresee, but all there is for them to foresee are men's actions. Zeus foresees Patroklos' death, but Achilles' judgement is responsible for it, and he is the fount of his own suffering. The gods are the unchanging look of the present state of affairs, which is the perpetual state of affairs.

The hardest pill of all to swallow in the poet's fiction is the role of the gods in the deaths of Patroklos and Hector. Theirs are the most important deaths to the story, and they are the most touching and lovable of the heroes. Both men are tricked by the gods, and at the end, defenseless, they are slaughtered like pigs. Patroklos, dying, foresees mighty Hector's death, and when that death comes in the story the hero, again defenseless, tricked by Athene after his nightmare run around the walls of Troy, falls. What is the intent of the poet in presenting the deaths of these two heroes in such a manner? The full weight of the meaning has to be faced and grappled with. The poem is peopled with heroes who gain their glory in battle and who exhibit and are praised for their courage in mortal combat. Their courage cannot consist in merely killing—that would be bestial. Their excellence must consist in seeing what death in battle is like and then facing it. The truth, as presented by Homer in these scenes, with all the help of the apparatus of Apollo's and Athene's intervention, is that the moment of defeat is the end of the story and the story must end in defenselessness:

“No, deadly destiny, with the son of Leto, has killed me,  
and of men it was Euphorbos; you are only my third slayer.”  
[XVI, 849-50]

says Patroklos to Hector. Hector, dying, says to Achilles:

“Be careful now; for I might be made into the god's curse  
upon you on that day when Paris and Phoibos Apollo  
destroy you in the Skaian gates, for all your valor.”  
[XXII, 358-60]

Achilles, the clearest seer of all, answers him:

“Die: and I will take my own death at whatever time  
Zeus and the rest of the immortals choose to accomplish it.”  
[XXII, 365–66]

Courage is defined by seeing and facing such moments in the imagination, even before they happen, and understanding that the gods are no help at the end. When one man kills another in battle, the one killed has nowhere to turn; the end is slaughter. The gods at such a moment are merely the bright noonday sun beating down upon the deadly killing place in the space between the city and the ships.

It is only at the end of this lecture that the most important and revealing aspects of the *Iliad's* truth-telling emerge. An entry into this last consideration of the poem will be to say what the poem is, and what the poem is not. It is a story, but it is not rhetoric; no appearances are saved. It is a fiction which exposes things, and its exposition is never an apology or an argument or a hypothesis. Milton, great arguer and lawyer, and also great poet, calls upon his muse in these words:

... what is in me dark  
Illumine, what is low raise and support;  
That, to the height of this great argument,  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.  
[*Paradise Lost*, I, 22–26]

Milton intends to be an advocate and to save his client by means of his poem. There is nothing to be saved in the *Iliad*, only something to be seen. Certainly we listeners may argue for all generations about Achilles, but Homer has done his job when he has told his story, and he is vastly uninterested in dialectic.

The truth of the name Achilles is the story of Achilles, and the story is not rhetorical. We don't see the heroes until they act, and they act in a story that is composed, that is a fiction composed by Homer. The story of Achilles is not like a story delivered in court by a lawyer in defense of his client. Achilles is not on trial. The story is not a probable fiction after the existent fact of Achilles sitting in the dock of justice. It is not history either, although that the Trojan war was fought and that Achilles may have been there lends credibility to the fiction. In a trial both the prosecuting and the defense lawyers will try with all their art to tell a probable story about the man in the dock, a story which will support or lend credence to an action already committed. The man on trial is accused of some crime, and a probable story or account of his actions will give an appearance of truth to his guilt or to his innocence. This is the essential use of rhetoric: to tell a probable story in defense of a man or of a cause. Aristotle in his book on rhetoric illustrates a side of this by noting that when a large, strong man

is robbed by a small weakling, both should lie. Our ordinary daily life and our daily reading are enmeshed in a web of rhetoric: our arguments, our constant justifications, the speeches we listen to, the sermons we attend to, the daily editorial page, the puny talk of personalities that waver in front of our eyes in the penumbra of our TV sets. As probable stories are the bread and butter of our daily existence, Aristotle intends to exhibit a whole side of our being in his rhetorical treatise. When in the *Poetics* he finds poetry more philosophical than history, he intends to say that poetry is more general; but nearly in the same breath he observes that the poetic story must be probable, must be believable, or no one would be caught by it. We have insisted that the *Iliad* is not rhetoric, but we must also insist that it share with rhetoric the probability of its stories. Nothing will work unless it appears probable. The enormous difference is that in the *Iliad* we begin with the story and end up with the man, whereas in rhetoric we begin with the man in the dock and then proceed to a probable story in order to justify or accuse the prisoner. That is why it is possible to talk of an Achilles or an Ajax or of a David the King, while it is so offensive to talk of a Napoleon or a Michelangelo or an Alcibiades. Alcibiades and Napoleon did particular things, and any historian who is not merely a chronicler will argue about their doings after the fact of the Battle of Waterloo or the Syracusan expedition, although he will falsify if he makes his account a necessary and inevitable story. Waterloo could have been avoided, and Alcibiades might well have taken Syracuse if he had not gotten drunk on a certain evening in Athens. The poet is under no such restraint. He tells stories that could happen, stories that are truly probable and that unfold inexorably. Such a nexus of inevitability is the heart and soul of fiction; it gives it its generality and its truth. It is like the view of the gods from Olympus as they watch the plain of Troy. It is what the word fate means in the poem. It is what makes Homer's *Iliad* or true fiction in general applicable to the whole of things, and it is what takes such poems and books out the the realm of rhetoric and away from the dreary round of one thing after another, and away from the endless talk of justifying and accusing, buying and selling, all under the whip of power and self-love.

Many have regarded the *Iliad* as if it were the Gorgon's head—something too fraught with terror, too harsh and grim, to be accepted as true and primary. It is easier to consider it merely as the first book to be met with, and to think that later books will somehow deal with it, employing it as the opening gambit in a long history of dialectical opposites, or to assume that somehow philosophy will have certain consolations which can soften or deal with the greatness and monstrosity of Achilles. I would propose, in concluding this lecture, that we consider it both first and primary among all books which the listener is acquainted with. That Achilles is first and primary in the poem is reflected in the whole sophisticated structure of the work. He is first in courage, truthfulness, strength, beauty, ter-

ror, and friendship. He demands and receives more glory than any other hero, and loses what he cherishes most at the moment that he is glorified by the gods. After Patroklos' death he is not present on the scene as other men are. His loneliness and wrath then have a detachment and ferocity beyond all ordinary human bounds. You will recall what he says to the boy he slaughters by the river. After Patroklos' death he eats no human food until he sups with Priam in Book XXIV. He is both great and monstrous, a disturbing fact which piety would have been otherwise. He manages the funeral games with perspicuity and tact, seeing all the heroes for what they are, and even awarding Agamemnon a prize while refraining from asking him to compete. When he and Priam look at each other and admire each other, they both see things with a clarity born of suffering and passion, and Priam kisses the man-killing hands of Achilles, the hands that killed his son, and Achilles lifts the body of Hector into the smooth-rolling cart. There is no conversion or turning around of Achilles in Book XXIV; he quietly and simply sees steadily and truly with no illusions. He will fight again and die, and so will Priam, and the world is as it is, and nothing will change. He sees as a god sees, but remains a mortal. At the same time, Achilles' primacy in the poem in no way impugns the other heroes; in particular the civilization of the poem makes Hector and Priam figures that one cherishes, and even loves. Both of them are men one would choose to live with in a city, or in the arena of political life. There is no Goliath or Satan or Turnus in this story. Ajax is a paradigm of strength and courage and fidelity, and his name remains with us as such. Odysseus is better at counsel than Achilles. Diomedes has his incomparable day of glory. Nestor's loquaciousness is the virtue of his age, and there is wisdom in stopping action to listen to the past, though it be tedious at times.

The proposition that I proposed submits that the poem

itself has the same kind of primacy among all the books you read that Achilles has in the poem. I do not intend this merely historically, although it is perfectly clear that the book has an enormous importance in its chronological firstness. How marvelous it would be to have Alexander the Great's copy of the *Iliad* as edited by his teacher Aristotle. Rome's greatest poet, Virgil, had to face the *Iliad* as if it were the Gorgon's head. Plato had to tame Achilles, and face down the truth of the poem and the power of its beauty. Homer is like an ever-present star on the horizon for Dante and Milton. All of the above mentioned facts from the history of literature and philosophy are so, but the primacy of the *Iliad* lies in its perennial freshness and truth. It is about what impinges most importantly on anyone, if he will but look around. There are other books one might choose if he were running a city, as one might prefer Hector to Achilles in running a city hall or state. There are other books which have the sagacity and lie-telling abilities of Odysseus, and there are many Nestor-like books of prudence, full of memory. The *Iliad* does not eliminate these books any more than Achilles blots out the greatness of the other heroes. For us in this eccentric little college, it is rightfully the first book. Philosophy must come after.

It may have seemed trivial in matters of such importance to have talked so long about nouns, proper names, similes, and story telling, and it is probably not consistent with the spirit and greatness of the *Iliad* to be arguing in its behalf. Homer has no ax to grind, no thesis to prove, and the thunder of Zeus would strike him dead if he tried to solve any problems. He is like a roving camera eye or an omnipresent eagle, and only Shakespeare can match his impartiality. In his poem the sun is always high noon, and the angle of its light is a right angle. The virtues commensurate with its seeing are courage and truth-telling, and the primacy of the poem shows that these indeed are the true human excellences.

# The Supreme Court and School Desegregation: *Brown v. Board of Education* Reconsidered

Murray Dry

## I

"We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." So wrote Mr. Chief Justice Earl Warren, for a unanimous court in *Brown v. Board of Education*,<sup>1</sup> the school segregation case, which was decided on May 17, 1954. In his definitive history of this case, Richard Kluger explained that "all the Supreme Court had truly and at long last granted to the black man was simple justice."<sup>2</sup>

Now the law says that, like them or not, white America may not humiliate colored Americans by setting them apart. Now the law says that black Americans must not be degraded by the state and their degradation used as an excuse to drive them further down.<sup>2</sup>

This apparently simple case has been surrounded by notoriety and controversy from the day it was decided. James Reston reacted to the Court's reliance on social science evidence to establish the inherent inequality of segregation with a day-after column in *The New York Times* entitled, "A Sociological Decision: Court Founded its Segregation Ruling on Hearts and Minds rather than Laws." Reston said of the Court's work that it read "more like an expert paper on sociology than a Supreme Court opinion"; it "rejected history, philosophy, and custom as the major basis

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for its decision and accepted instead Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo[sic]'s test of contemporary social justice."<sup>3</sup> Over the years the meaning of the case was extended far beyond its original legal scope. The *Times*, in its editorial on the tenth anniversary of *Brown*, described the decision as "significantly broaden[ing] the role of the judiciary in the defense of human rights."

How swiftly will we complete the arsenal of laws required to provide effective safeguards against racial discrimination? And, more fundamentally still, how fully, how peacefully, and how fast will be accomplished the transformation of attitudes necessary to make equality real and in every community North and South?<sup>4</sup>

The expanding expectation from school desegregation to the elimination of all racial discrimination to a broader transformation of attitudes was repeated in the *Times* in its extensive reporting on the twentieth anniversary of *Brown*, but this time with a note of scepticism.

The question is whether the momentum generated by the activities of the last twenty years has set in motion an irreversible process which will almost automatically lead to racial justice in this country, as some whites seem to think, or whether, as most blacks hold, the largest and hardest job is yet to be done, and whites have quit the game before the first quarter has even ended.<sup>5</sup>

Other twenty-year appraisals of *Brown* revealed disagreement on its accomplishments. A black dentist from Mississippi was quoted as saying: "We have accomplished things in the past few years that I thought it might take decades to achieve. Some of this is a result of white recog-

dition of black voting power, but a lot of white people here have had a change of heart." Black leaders Bayard Rustin, Robert S. Browne, and Roy Wilkins expressed concern about the gap between educated and uneducated blacks and emphasized the need for more political and economic power.

By 1974, if not the most surprising, perhaps the most disturbing result of the school desegregation decisions, and one requiring most serious consideration, was the phenomenon of "white flight" in Northern metropolitan school districts. Kenneth Clark, the black psychologist whose studies on black children's self perceptions were used by the NAACP in its litigation, and which were cited by the Supreme Court, said: "the whole morality issue of the school desegregation issue disappeared when it moved North,"<sup>6</sup> meaning support for the decision eroded as its consequences were felt by Northern whites. Another explanation for the condition of Northern metropolitan school systems referred to "the hard facts of demography, ethnicity, and the inexorable flux of human migration."<sup>7</sup>

Alexander Bickel, late constitutional law scholar and professor at Yale Law School, who was involved in the original *Brown* decision as a clerk for Justice Frankfurter, supported the latter view in the *New Republic* in 1970. Distinguishing desegregation, as the dismantling of dual school systems, from actual integration, Bickel explained how the combination of private schools plus racially separated residential patterns in mainly northern metropolitan areas permitted all but poor whites to flee from public schools affected by court-ordered integration schemes. He also noted that government and its intended beneficiaries were at cross purposes: while the court and HEW were rezoning and pairing Southern schools to integrate them, black leaders in Northern cities were trying to decentralize school systems to gain community control.<sup>8</sup>

The U.S. Civil Rights Commission took a very different view of the *Brown* mandate. In the conclusion to its 1976 Report, the Commission acknowledged no distinction between integration and desegregation, denied that the courts were eliminating anything other than *de jure* segregation, denied that pupil assignment for racial balance had become the *Brown* mandate, and simply affirmed the constitutional right to equal educational opportunity. The difficulty with this formulation was that while it denied that desegregation had become a mandate for racial balance in the public schools, its only test of the extent of desegregation in the nation's schools was numerical.<sup>9</sup>

The different views about the *Brown* mandate in the 1970s reflected different views of education. The Coleman Report on Equal Educational Opportunity<sup>10</sup> questioned the link between integration and educational achievement. The Civil Rights Commission and scholars who rejected the Coleman Report viewed integrated schooling as a socializing experience essential for racial harmony in the United States. The Supreme Court expressed this view in its *Brown* opinion, and the Staff Director of the Civil Rights Commission reaffirmed it in 1974:

"Schools are socializing institutions. They are the only institutions where all children are required to do so [sic]. If we cannot desegregate education, I don't think we can desegregate anything." On the other hand, Constance Baker Motley, who represented James Meredith in his bid to desegregate the University of Mississippi and who was a federal judge in 1974, said:

It seems today *Brown* has little practical relevance to central city blacks. Its psychological and legal relevance has already had its effect. Central city blacks seem more concerned now with the political and economic power accruing from the new black concentrations than they do with busing to effect school desegregation.<sup>11</sup>

Whichever explanation of "white flight" is preferred and however one views the educational results, the numbers show more black elementary and secondary school pupils in majority white schools in the South than in the North or the border states in 1974. In the District of Columbia, the school system had become virtually all black and the brightest black students had also left the public schools.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, as the Supreme Court decided its first metropolitan school district implementation cases—Charlotte-Mecklenburg in North Carolina in 1971 and Denver, Colorado, in 1973<sup>13</sup>—controversy over judicial power intensified. In the first case, the Court upheld a district court order for dismantling a dual school system which included busing pupils to approach a racial balance guideline. Because this decision disregarded the provision of title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act defining desegregation as the assignment of pupils without regard to race, and explicitly prohibiting the assignment of students to overcome racial imbalance, it produced numerous Congressional proposals to restrict the Supreme Court's jurisdiction over school desegregation cases. In the second case, the Supreme Court upheld a district court order to institute a district-wide remedy—involving pupil assignment throughout the district for racial balance—on the basis of a finding of segregative intent by the school board in one part of the district, notwithstanding the absence of any history of a dual school system. This case produced the first dissent, that by Justice Rehnquist, and every major desegregation case thereafter has produced a divided Court.

As we approach the thirtieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the confusion over its mandate and the extent to which it has been fulfilled, controversy over the actions of the Supreme Court and federal district courts, and concerns over education have not abated. The Supreme Court is still finding racially segregated systems that have not been dismantled, the federal government is still bringing suits for desegregation, and Congress is still trying to restrict the courts' powers to order busing for racial balance. In addition, the gap between the educational achievements of blacks and whites has not been narrowed, and the National Commission on Excellence in Education

has recently issued a report arguing that “the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people.”<sup>14</sup>

To mark the upcoming thirtieth anniversary of *Brown*, I propose a reconsideration of the Supreme Court’s opinion in the school desegregation cases. I do this for two related reasons: the importance of the issues in the original cases and the connection between the opinion handed down and the subsequent controversy over the case. I shall argue that *Brown* was a great but flawed judicial achievement and that the flaws were avoidable and have made a great political task even more difficult. The flaws concern the following topics: (1) the exercise of judicial review, especially in light of problematic constitutional history and precedents which must be overruled; (2) the distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* segregation and the importance of the distinction for American government; and (3) the meaning of education in America. My argument will show that the treatment of precedents and principles was weak; that the use of social science data unwittingly led to a confusion about the *de facto/de jure* distinction; and that the Court accepted a flabby view of education which concealed different and often conflicting educational purposes. My reconsideration will proceed in the following order: the 14th amendment and the precedents, the cases and the opinions, scholars’ commentary, and finally a revised opinion.

## II

All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law. [14th Amendment, section 1]

### *The 14th Amendment and the Precedents*

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund lawyers who represented the litigants in the segregation cases faced two constitutional challenges: first, nothing in the language of the 14th amendment clearly prohibited school segregation, and study of the Congressional debates surrounding the amendment’s ratification revealed lack of clarity at best and no intention to prohibit school segregation at worst; second, in 1896, the Supreme Court, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, upheld a Louisiana statute providing “equal but separate” accommodations on intrastate rail cars, on the grounds that the law treated both races equally and the regulation was reasonable in light of the customs of the people. The

alternative position was stated by the sole dissenter, Justice John Harlan, Sr., who argued that the intention of the Civil War amendments was to remove the race line from government. The most moving formulation of this position goes: “Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law.”<sup>15</sup> This was an interpretation of the 13th and 14th amendments, since the languages of the 13th was explicit only about slavery or involuntary servitude—and it was stretching the latter term to argue that segregation laws were included—and the 14th amendment made no reference to race. Still, it was generally conceded that the purpose of the 14th amendment was to protect the newly freed race against discrimination in its civil rights. Furthermore, in an earlier case, *Strauder v. West Virginia*, decided in 1880, the Supreme Court invalidated a law which excluded Negroes from serving on juries in sweeping language which Harlan was able to quote in support of his argument in *Plessy*.

The words of the amendment, it is true, are prohibitory, but they contain a necessary implication of a positive immunity, or right, to exemption from unfriendly legislation against them distinctively as colored—exemption from legal discriminations, implying inferiority in civil society, lessening the security of their enjoyment of the rights which others enjoy, and discriminations which are steps towards reducing them to the condition of a subject race.<sup>16</sup>

In the majority opinion in *Plessy*, Justice Brown narrowed the reach of the *Strauder* precedent by distinguishing between political and civil rights, which included the right to serve on juries and, presumably, the right to vote and the right to sue to make contracts, and social equality, such as a right to be free from enforced segregation in places of public accommodations. The *Plessy* majority’s position did have something in its favor, even though, as I shall argue later, Justice Harlan’s position stated the American standard and the deeper truth of the matter. Justice Brown cited a Massachusetts case upholding segregated schools and an Indiana case upholding laws forbidding intermarriage. While these cases were decided before the 14th amendment, it is doubtful that the framers of that amendment intended their work to invalidate such laws. Even the government’s friend of the court brief in *Brown*, which supported the litigants, acknowledged this:

In 1868 public schools had been hardly begun in many states and were still in their infancy. School attendance was, as a general matter, not compulsory. The Negroes had just been released from bondage and were generally illiterate, poor and retarded socially and culturally. To educate them in the same classes and schools as white children may have been regarded as entirely impracticable.<sup>17</sup>

*Stare decisis* refers to the doctrine of following previous decisions where the law is settled, in order to maintain stability and respect for the law. But this is not sufficient, since the 14th amendment did intervene between the ear-

lier state decisions and *Plessy* and the language did permit the interpretation offered by the Court in *Strauder* and urged by Harlan in dissent in *Plessy*.

A second defense of the *Plessy* opinion can be offered. Given the deep-rooted prejudices of the whites, the recollections by the blacks of the injuries sustained, the natural differences which a change of law does not eradicate, the deep apprehension of Southern whites about racial mingling, as well as the actual condition of most of the newly freed negroes, a case can surely be made for the reasonableness, apart from the wisdom, of enforced segregation in public accommodations at that time. We shall return to this topic.<sup>18</sup>

The Court faced the following alternatives as it studied the briefs and prepared for oral argument in *Brown* and the companion cases: (1) to affirm the decisions of the lower courts on the authority of *Plessy*; (2) to reverse the lower courts without overturning *Plessy*, on the grounds that the school conditions were not in fact equal and could not be equalized with racial segregation; (3) to reverse the lower courts and strike down segregation, by finding *Plessy* no longer applicable in the field of education; or (4) to reverse the lower courts, strike down segregation, and repudiate *Plessy* as wrong then and wrong now.

Counsel for the states with segregated schools took the first position; counsel for the challenging students and parents alternated between the second and the third positions; and the Supreme Court, in its first consideration of the case, alternated between the first and third positions and then, when it decided to overturn school segregation, settled on the third position.<sup>19</sup>

Two Supreme Court decisions involving segregation in higher education had eroded the force of *Plessy* and also permitted the NAACP lawyers and the government, in its *amicus* brief, to argue that *Plessy* did not have to be overturned to invalidate school segregation. In *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*, decided in 1938, the Supreme Court invalidated a law which provided for state funding to send qualified Negro law students to law schools in any neighboring state and ordered the petitioner admitted to the law school at the State University of Missouri.

By the operation of the laws of Missouri a privilege has been created for white law students which is denied to negroes by reason of their race. The white resident is afforded legal education within the State; the negro resident having the same qualifications is refused it there and must go outside the State to obtain it. That is a denial of the equality of legal right to the enjoyment of the privilege which the State has set up, and the provision for the payment of tuition fees in another State does not remove the discrimination.<sup>20</sup>

Oklahoma had a similar law which was challenged by a Negro who had applied to the state's university for a doctorate in education. After the *Gaines* decision, Oklahoma amended its statute to provide for admission of Negroes to the university, but on a segregated basis. This meant sit-

ting at a special desk in a designated area, in classes, in the library and in the cafeteria. In *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*,<sup>21</sup> decided in 1950, the Supreme Court found such state-imposed restrictions productive of inequality of educational opportunity and hence a violation of equal protection of the laws. In a third related case, decided the same day as *McLaurin*, the Supreme Court invalidated Texas's provision for a separate in-state law school for Negroes and ordered petitioner admitted to the University of Texas law school, to which he had applied for admission. In *Sweatt v. Painter*, the Court took note of the inequality in number of faculty, variety of courses, etc. when comparing the University of Texas law school with Texas State University for Negroes, and then it added:

What is more important, the University of Texas law school possesses to a far greater degree those qualities which are incapable of objective measurement but which make for greatness in a law school. Such qualities, to name but a few, include reputation of the faculty, experience of the administration, position and influence of the alumni, standing in the community, traditions and prestige.<sup>22</sup>

Hence both the Court's previous cases and its hesitancy to argue that the South had been acting unconstitutionally for nearly sixty years led it to address the constitutional question presented by *Brown* in terms of the effect of segregation itself on public education.

### *The Cases and the Arguments*

The *Brown* cases were five in number and they were divided into the state cases, which came from Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware, and the federal case, from the District of Columbia. The cases were first argued in December 1952 and then, when reargument was called for—ostensibly to hear more about the 14th amendment but also to give Justice Frankfurter time to get a unanimous Court decision against segregation<sup>23</sup>—they were reargued in December 1954. Two separate unanimous opinions of the Court were handed down on May 17, 1954: *Brown v. Board of Education et al.*, which included all four state cases, and *Bolling v. Sharpe*, which covered the District of Columbia. The constitutional issue was the same in all cases and the lower court treatments had all followed *Plessy*. In the South Carolina (*Briggs v. Elliott*) and Virginia (*Davis v. County School Board*) cases, the three-judge district courts found inequality in facilities but sustained the state provisions for segregation and ordered equalization. In Delaware (*Gebhard v. Belton*), the Delaware Court of Chancery found inequality and ordered the plaintiffs admitted to the previously all-white schools, but indicated that the State could obtain a modification of the order after equalization. In *Brown*, the Kansas case, the three judge district court denied relief since the facilities were equal, but it did find that "segregation in public education



has a detrimental effect upon Negro children."<sup>24</sup> In the District of Columbia (*Bolling v. Sharpe*), the district court dismissed the complaint.<sup>25</sup>

The two opinions, *Brown* and *Bolling*, came to the same result in different ways. This may have been due, in part, to the different lawyers arguing the cases for the plaintiffs<sup>26</sup> and, in part, to the different constitutional provisions. The state cases involved the 14th amendment's equal protection clauses; the federal case came under the 5th amendment, which addresses Congress and has no equal protection clause. Since it was not surprising to have the same result for the District as for the state, it was not surprising for the Court to use the due process clause, which is also in the 14th amendment, to fashion the same result as it did with the equal protection clause. Yet the argument in *Bolling* was not only different, it was closer to Harlan's *Plessy* dissent, it did not rely on social science data, and it would not have lent itself to expansion the way the *Brown* decision did. I shall first examine the major *Brown* opinion, noting the sources of controversy and confusion; then I shall turn to *Bolling v. Sharpe*.

The order of topics in this brief opinion is: the intention of the framers of the 14th amendment; the relevant precedents since *Plessy*; the importance of education today; the reason why segregation on the basis of race in public schools is necessarily unequal; the conclusion, or holding, that the plaintiffs and others who were similarly situated are denied equal protection of the laws; and, finally, a call for reargument on the implementation question, so that the Court "may have the full assistance of the parties in formulating decrees."<sup>27</sup>

On the first point, the Court argued that study of the ratification of the 14th amendment yielded inconclusive results for the question of school segregation. It buttressed this contention with the reminder that free public education was just beginning in 1868. While the school case precedents, discussed above, had not overturned *Plessy*, they did permit the Court to argue that equal protection of the laws involved more than the tangible factors of education, such as classroom facilities and number of teachers.<sup>28</sup>

The Court proceeded to describe education in 1954 as "perhaps the most important function of state and local governments," as "the very foundation of good citizenship," and as "a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment." With that out of the way, the Court asked: "Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other 'tangible' factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunity?" Its immediate answer, and it was only here in the reading of the opinion that Chief Justice Warren tipped his hand and let the participants and spectators know what the Court had decided, was: "We believe that it does."<sup>29</sup>

The critical argument concerning the effect of segregation on education is first stated by the Court in its own words and then the words of the lower court in the Kansas case.

To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. The effect of this separation on their educational opportunities was well stated by a finding in the Kansas case by a court which nevertheless felt compelled to rule against the Negro plaintiffs:

"Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racial[ly] integrated school system."<sup>30</sup>

The argument is in two steps: first, racial segregation generates a feeling of inferiority; and, second, this will affect the hearts and minds of the Negro children in a manner that will significantly impair their ability to learn.

In the first sentence, the infinitive "to separate" is the subject, and it clearly refers to a separating agent, i.e., the school board on the direction of the state legislature. In the passage quoted from the district court, however, segregation is said to have a greater impact when it has the force of law. This implies, however, that it has some impact, and a harmful one, in terms of feelings of self-worth and hence motivation to learn, even without the force of law. This must refer to *de facto*, or actual, segregation. This is the basis, in the *Brown* opinion, for the extension of the *Brown* holding from the prohibition of *de jure* segregation to the prohibition of *de facto* segregation.

People have disagreed on what *Brown* required and whether its mandate has been carried out because the core holding, or rule of law, outlawed *de jure* segregation, but the *dicta* implicated *de facto* segregation. The debate over busing is a debate over whether *Brown* and the subsequent cases stand for the proposition that schools should be desegregated, that is, made free of positive acts of segregation by public officials, or whether schools should be integrated, regardless of what the cause of the actual segregation may be.

The Supreme Court supported its argument by asserting that notwithstanding the extent of psychological knowledge at the time of *Plessy*, its finding was "amply supported by modern authority." Its citation<sup>31</sup> began with the work of Dr. Kenneth Clark, who had conducted attitude tests on Negro children using black and white dolls; he testified at the trial in the South Carolina case. NAACP

lawyer Jack Greenberg was quoted as saying that "the main function of the social science testimony was to help the courts—and especially the Supreme Court—convey the confidence of its common sense perceptions of what the nation knew about right and wrong in this regard."<sup>32</sup>

The inclusion of Clark's doll studies reveals that modern social science is not always a sound vehicle for proving the soundness of common sense knowledge. Clark's studies have been subject to extensive criticism, covering the effect of the interview situation on the children and the limited number of cases. In addition, the one test which compared responses from Northern and Southern negro children, and hence had some direct applicability to school segregation, conflicted with the intended thesis. There were eight questions to the test; one asked the children to pick the doll which resembled them. The Northern Negro children identified themselves with the white doll in greater proportion than the Southern children, 39% to 29%.<sup>33</sup> This hardly proved the psychological harm of school segregation.

Even if the dubious Clark tests are omitted, however, it does seem odd that psychological findings should be the basis for striking down a Supreme Court precedent and establishing a new constitutional right, that of equal educational opportunity. Suppose subsequent perception tests revealed, as some did,<sup>34</sup> that Negro children suffered from greater doubts about their own worth in integrated schools? One can well imagine how, under certain circumstances, this could occur; would that justify segregation?

The social scientists were not altogether responsible for the extensiveness of the Court's findings, however. The Supreme Court apparently accepted uncritically the finding of fact of district judge Walter A. Huxman, a finding that changed the emphasis from the original formulation presented by the expert witness in his court. Huxman started with the finding that segregation had a detrimental effect on Negro children; then he found that detrimental effect to be greater when it had the sanction of law. The source of this finding was the testimony of Louise Pinkham Holt, an assistant professor in the psychology department at Kansas University. In answer to the question, "[D]oes enforced legal separation have any adverse effect upon the personality development of the Negro child?" she replied.

The fact that it is enforced, that it is legal, I think, has more importance than the mere fact of segregation by itself does because this gives legal and official sanction to a policy which is inevitably interpreted both by white people and by Negroes as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. Were it not for the sense that one group is inferior to the other, there would be no basis—and I am not granting that this is a rational basis—for such segregation.<sup>35</sup>

The fact is that the expert witness was focusing on state enforced segregation; the judge picked up a casual com-

parison to private discrimination and turned it into a major premise. I do not wish to suggest that a more accurate treatment of the expert testimony in the Kansas case would have made all the difference for the development of the *Brown* mandate and the popular acceptance of the decision, but the extended claim, unsupported by evidence and not nearly so common-sensical as the case against government-enforced segregation, surely lent itself to confusion over the meaning of desegregation and charges of bad faith.

Let us return to the second school desegregation opinion, *Bolling v. Sharpe*. Chief Justice Warren began by noting that equal protection and due process, while not identical, both stem "from our ideal of fairness." Arguing that some discrimination "may be so unjustifiable as to be violative of due process," Warren proceeded to attack racial classifications as "contrary to our traditions" and hence "constitutionally suspect." This put the burden of proof on the government to justify the regulation, as opposed to making the complaining party prove that a constitutional right had been violated. The meaning of "liberty" in the due process clause was defined as extending to "the full range of conduct which the individual is free to pursue," which cannot be restricted without a proper governmental objective. Warren then concluded, again for a unanimous Court, that "segregation in public education is not reasonably related to any proper governmental objective, and thus it imposed on Negro children of the District of Columbia a burden that constitutes an arbitrary deprivation of their liberty in violation of the Due Process Clause."<sup>36</sup> This argument focuses on the government's action and is, therefore, applicable to government-enforced segregation only.

The line of argument in *Bolling v. Sharpe* has been used in subsequent cases involving race classification; a suspect classification, such as race, alienage, or national origin, triggers a strict scrutinizing of the governmental action. While it resembles Harlan's argument that the Constitution is color-blind, it does not rule out the possibility of justifying racial classifications in special circumstances, such as, for example, affirmative action. It has not been prominent in subsequent school desegregation cases, however, where the focus has been on the dismantling of dual school systems and the determination of a segregative act on the part of a school board, even where segregation was not required by state law, as it was in the Southern states.

### Scholars' Commentary

Criticism of the Court's opinion focused on the intention of the 14th amendment, the principle of *stare decisis*, and the dubious character of the social science evidence. In his famous critique, Herbert Wechsler argued that while school segregation was wrong and it was desirable to end it, the constitutional basis for the Supreme Court's

taking the initiative in the matter was dubious.<sup>37</sup> Wechsler found the social science argument unimpressive and doubted that the Court's judgment truly rested on that basis. He thought the judgment "must have rested on the view that racial segregation is, in principle, a denial of equality to the minority against whom it is directed; that is, the group that is not dominant politically and, therefore, does not make the choice involved." But he found this argument inadequate as the basis for a decision based on "neutral principles," that is, "based on reasons that in their generality and their neutrality transcend any immediate result that is involved." It seemed to him to "involve an inquiry into the motive of the legislature, which is generally foreclosed to the courts." He thought there was something to the Court's *Plessy* statement that, since the law spoke of equality, the badge of inferiority was in the eye of the beholder. To Wechsler, the issue in the case was not equal protection, but freedom to associate under the due process clause, and the challenge was to explain why one desire for association should overrule another desire for disassociation.

Wechsler was not satisfied with the reason he attributed to the Supreme Court, because he regarded it as "a choice among competing values or desires," which lay in the realm of mere fiat and was, therefore, inappropriate for a judicial argument. The only exceptions to this position were "values that can reasonably be asserted to have constitutional dimension";<sup>38</sup> what they are Wechsler did not say, and if asked why they do not include prohibition on race classification, he probably would have referred to history.

The responses to Wechsler's challenge to justify the constitutional basis for the *Brown* opinion have tended to reaffirm the inappropriateness of race classifications or to specify what Jim Crow legislation meant in fact. Both Louis Pollack and Charles Black cited C. Vann Woodward's *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* to the effect that such laws "were constantly pushing the Negro further down." On the question whether "separate but equal" can really be equal, Pollack concluded "that the constitutional doubts instantly generated by statutes drawing racial lines have not been allayed."<sup>39</sup> And Black, whose treatment of historical examples is fuller, responded this way:

Equality, like all general concepts, has marginal areas where philosophic difficulties are encountered. But if a whole race of people finds itself confined within a system which is set up and continued for the very purpose of keeping it in an inferior station and if the question is then solemnly propounded whether such a race is being treated 'equally,' I think we ought to exercise one of the sovereign prerogatives of philosophers—that of laughter.<sup>40</sup>

Both scholars may be right, but neither presents a full argument in support of his position.

A further defense of *Brown* comes from Alexander Bickel, who took issue with Wechsler's claim that courts

should not attempt to settle value questions. Drawing on his study of Lincoln, Bickel argued that "the constitutional function of the Court is to define values and proclaim principles," and "it is at the heart of the utility of such a process to proclaim the absolute principle that race is not an allowable criterion for legislative classification."<sup>41</sup> For the source of that principle, we need to consider his discussion of judicial review. In the first chapter of *The Least Dangerous Branch*, Bickel makes the distinction, which is not explained, between "immediate material needs" and "certain enduring values." Then, he says that "our system . . . like all secular systems, calls for the evolution of principle in novel circumstances," and he continues by asserting that the most fundamental principle of American government is the rule of the people.<sup>42</sup> It seems that for Bickel the character of our democratic government is very much open to chance, that is, to the changing needs of a persistent majority. If that is the case, it is very hard to understand how the Supreme Court, which possesses only the judicial power, should be permitted to take the lead, as it did, in the matter of school segregation.

Bickel's explicit justification for this action reflects his notion of a Constitution whose very principles, and not merely their application, evolve. This notion is worthy of consideration not only for its own merits, but because it forms a part of Bickel's defense of *Brown*, and this defense is based on a study which assisted the Supreme Court in its deliberations. As one of Justice Frankfurter's law clerks during the 1952 term, Bickel was asked to study the history of the 14th amendment in order to determine the lawmakers' intent on the school segregation issue. Frankfurter circulated the memo which resulted from Bickel's year-long study to the other Justices.<sup>43</sup> Bickel later published a revised version of this memo in the *Harvard Law Review* in 1955. In that article, Bickel concluded that while a general grant of legislative authority would not have passed Congress, and hence one cannot say that the framers intended to outlaw segregation, still:

May it not be that the Moderates and the Radicals reached a compromise permitting them to go to the country with language which they could, where necessary, defend against damaging alarms raised by the opposition, but which at the same time was sufficiently elastic to permit reasonable future advances?

Acknowledging that the framers of the 14th amendment did not compare to the framers of the Constitution, Bickel nonetheless attributed to them "an awareness . . . that it was a constitution they were writing, which led to a choice of language capable of growth."<sup>44</sup> We learn from Kluger that Bickel acknowledged in his notes to Frankfurter that such was a "charitable view of the sloppy draftsmen of the Fourteenth Amendment."<sup>45</sup>

Bickel's view of constitutional construction was shared by Frankfurter and possibly by other members of the Court. To some extent it follows Chief Justice John Mar-

shall's famous account of constitutional construction in *McCulloch v. Maryland*, but with a substantial revision. Faced with the question whether Congress should institute a bank, notwithstanding the absence of any specific authorization in the Constitution's enumeration of legislative powers, Marshall distinguished constitutions from statutes. Because a legal code is prolix and a constitution, which is to be understood by the public, only marks great outlines, "we must never forget that it is *a constitution* we are expounding."<sup>46</sup> But Marshall never meant, as Bickel, following Holmes and Brandeis before him, did, that the fundamental principles of the Constitution are themselves open to change over time.<sup>47</sup>

Is it possible to provide an interpretation of the issues in the school segregation cases which does justice to *Plessy*, reaches the same result as *Brown*, and does not rely on a view of the Constitution and the judicial function according to which the most important principle is the rule of the majority and all else is subject to changing needs?

### A Revised Brown Opinion

The place to start is with Harlan's argument that the Constitution is color-blind. While he may have been wrong in the narrow legal sense, since neither the original Constitution nor the 14th amendment made this principle explicit, he nonetheless stated the higher truth of the American Constitution. Why is that? The explanation needs both to take note of the natural right teaching of the Declaration of Independence, which articulates the most fundamental principles of American government, and then to consider the application of those principles to the American political community. We must answer three questions: (1) What is the teaching of the Declaration of Independence? (2) What application does it have to American government in general? (3) What application does it have to the distinctive condition of chattel slavery in the land of freedom, reinforced by racial difference, which is then eliminated, first as a result of military and political necessity, and then through constitutional amendment? First, according to the self-evident truth of the Declaration of Independence, all men are naturally equal in their rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These rights are universal but pre-political; they apply to all men as men, but they have nothing to do with citizenship in any political community. Because the rights are not secured by nature, men consent to form governments. If government is to be based on consent and limited to the securing of rights, the resulting community would seem to need the support of self-love or interest. No one has a natural right to join any given political community. It was on this basis that Jefferson proposed emancipation and colonization of the slaves in Virginia in 1783 and Lincoln opposed slavery as morally wrong and in opposition to the Declaration, without advocating political equality.<sup>48</sup> A colonization policy may never have been practical, given the number of

Negro slaves in the Southern states, but it was not inconsistent with the Declaration of Independence.

Second, American government was understood to be republican, as distinct from the limited monarchy of Great Britain. The framers' views on qualifications for voting and office-holding reflected support for popular government. Consequently, we can conclude that any legally-based class structure, while not necessarily inconsistent with natural right, was not consistent with the form of government appropriate for America. Therefore, there can only be one class of citizenship recognized by American law. How could America move from a condition of slavery in the land of freedom to equal citizenship for the newly freed race? The task seemed impossible to Tocqueville, when he observed the condition of the races in America in the 1830s.<sup>49</sup> After the Civil War, however, colonization was out, and the only question was, how to bring the newly freed race up to full citizenship. We are now at the problem of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. In light of what has been said, the issue in the case may be described as follows: which is the best way to achieve full civil equality for blacks, through stages of development and accommodation, or all at once; and, even if all at once is preferred or regarded as the sounder choice, is a political choice for gradualism so unreasonable as to require constitutional condemnation?

To argue that full civil equality is incompatible with Jim Crow legislation does not deny the existence of the social sphere, which the *Plessy* opinion distinguishes from political and civil rights. I take issue with the *Plessy* argument on the relationship between law and the social sphere. To the extent that we can distinguish the social from the political (including the civil), the former refers to the voluntary actions of individuals and private associations; their decisions regarding association and disassociation constitute action in the social rather than the political sphere. Then we must distinguish the social sphere, as liable to government regulation, from the purely private sphere, which is not. Congress may be justified in prohibiting certain forms of racial discrimination in the social sphere, on the authority of the commerce clause, as it did in the 1964 Civil Rights Act, but neither Congress nor the state may tell anyone whom to invite to dinner. Furthermore, the civil rights legislation reflects a concrete and healthy consent-giving, which distinguishes it from judicial intervention in the social sphere. Finally, what distinguishes the legislative action in *Plessy* from the legislative action of 1964 is that the former, by legally enforcing a dual citizenship, is inconsistent with our republican form of government, as discussed above, while the latter is consistent with it.

The distinction between commercial activity and social activity in the narrow sense of socializing is important for understanding the best case ever made for the gradualism approach to full citizenship for Negroes. In his Atlanta Exposition Address of 1895, one year before *Plessy*, Booker T. Washington emphasized vocational education for

blacks as a way of their attaining self-sufficiency. He argued from expediency as well as principle for racial cooperation in commercial matters, and he was willing to let social association wait. In a sentence which appears to anticipate *Plessy* and which puts it in its best light, he said: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." According to Washington, "No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized."<sup>50</sup>

This position was vigorously criticized by W. E. B. DuBois, on the grounds that it distorted half-truths about the Negro and his position and that it had the effect of getting both races to accept the Negro's subordinate position as permanent.<sup>51</sup> It is not easy to decide who was right at the time. Surely commercial success and education seem to depend on civil and political rights and higher education; on the other hand, Washington was, as DuBois acknowledged, the most influential black leader of his time among both races and the blacks surely needed the assistance of the white majority. But it is not necessary to settle that debate in order to say that to the extent that *Plessy* ever was a legitimate decision, it was within the context of a gradualist approach to bringing full civil rights to the newly freed race. If 1896 was arguably too soon after slavery to accomplish this, especially in light of an appraisal of hatreds and fears and the actual condition of the black race, surely by 1954 it was easy to review the history of Jim Crow legislation and pronounce that the South had not proceeded in good faith, that Harlan was right about the consequences of judicially validating Jim Crow legislation, and that the practice was in violation of the Constitution because it implied second class citizenship. *Plessy* then turns out to be no longer valid, not simply because we wish to change a practice which a current majority of the country abhors, but also because the only defensible grounds for the decision implied a timetable for transformation which had long since expired.

### III

#### Conclusion

This treatment of *Brown* has intended to show that the Supreme Court's achievement was substantial but flawed, and that the flaws involved (1) the exercise of judicial review, especially as it concerns the overturning of the *Plessy* precedent, (2) the distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* segregation, and (3) the meaning of education in American political life. The first topic has been treated above; it remains to show the connection between the Court's treatment of the other two topics in its *Brown* opinion and the subsequent problems in connection with the implementation of *Brown*.

The distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* segregation

derives its importance from our form of government, or, to be more precise, from the way of life which our republican form of government is instituted to secure. Ours is a government which is instituted to secure rights but which refuses to take note of their right exercise. It is a government which looks up to an individual's right to pursue happiness without defining the content of that happiness. Ours is therefore necessarily a limited government if we consider the things it can legitimately require of its citizens. Because rights or individual claims take precedence over duties, or obligations of citizens, American political life necessarily knows and respects a private sphere. Our form of government is similar to Plato's account of democracy in that we tend to regard all desires as equal; it differs from that account, and hence from a pure democracy, in its attempt to avoid the excesses of democratic license. Our way of doing that, however, in contrast to that of Plato's account of the best regime, is mainly through institutional checks and balances and a strict scrutiny of governmental powers rather than education as a means of cultivating human excellence, moral or intellectual. Consequently, certain democratic vices, associated with the emancipation of our desires and passions, are tolerated so long as the resulting activity does not harm another in life or limb. Love of one's own is generally more powerful than love of community; in American government, or in any liberal democracy, the political constraints on self-interest, as Tocqueville called them, are minimal.<sup>52</sup>

And now we come to race differences and the problem of slavery in the land of freedom.<sup>53</sup> The severity of the problem of reconciling individualism with racial harmony was discussed by Tocqueville, Jefferson, Lincoln, and W. E. B. DuBois. The transformation of the former slave race into black Americans presents such difficulties because no government, and certainly no liberal government, can eradicate prejudice, which is a reflex of self-love, and the natural racial difference makes it impossible to eradicate race prejudice. On the other hand, eradication is not only not necessary, it is not appropriate. The limited objectives of liberal government make it possible for government to treat its citizens equally under the law and for individuals to associate in distinctive groupings and even take pride in their differences. This is precisely what W. E. B. DuBois discovered and advocated in 1897.

If we carefully consider what race prejudice really is, we find it, historically, to be nothing but the friction between different groups of people; it is the difference in aim, in feelings, in ideals of two different races; if, now, this difference exists touching territory, laws, language, or even religion, it is manifest that these people cannot live in the same territory without fatal collision; but if, on the other hand, there is substantial agreement in laws, language and religion, if there is a satisfactory adjustment of economic life, then there is no reason why, in the same country and on the same street, two or three great national ideals might not thrive and develop, that men of different races might not strive together for their race ideals as well, perhaps even better, than in isolation.<sup>54</sup>

More recent expressions of the same thought, if not as comprehensive, can be found in Malcolm X's Black Nationalism and in Black Power.<sup>55</sup>

If there is a range of legitimate associations and disassociations, regarding religious and ethnic background and economic status as well as race, then the rules for such association should be minimal and, generally, should proceed from a government authority which reflects the consent of the governed. Thirty years after the *Brown* decision we note that the federal government and especially the federal courts are still involved in the administration of school systems. To a large extent, this is because the implications of the *Brown* opinion, regarding equal educational opportunity, made it difficult for the courts to recognize the limits of legitimate court intervention.

This became clear when the desegregation suits reached metropolitan school districts, starting in North Carolina and then reaching Denver, Detroit, Columbus, and Dayton, which cover the major Supreme Court decisions of the 1970s. The problem is this: once the clear cut cases of dual school systems are eliminated, what is the test to distinguish a school board's discriminatory act of segregation from racially neutral actions and individual choices, including where to live and whether to go to a private school? The Supreme Court has not yet thrown out the distinction between government-enforced and adventitious segregation—for it would be difficult if not impossible to justify such judicial action; but it has not come up with any clear principle or test for distinguishing racial imbalance that results from a segregative act from racial imbalance that is adventitious.

The lower federal courts, which have the responsibility for implementing *Brown*, have tended to view racial imbalance as presumptively illegal, the result of a segregative act; often that act is no more than the failure to draw lines or construct new schools in ways that would have increased the actual racial balance, regardless of neighborhoods. With some exceptions the majority of the Supreme Court has tended to follow the lower courts on this. The decisions in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Denver cases<sup>56</sup> approached the position that the Constitution required metropolitan communities to fashion plans to eliminate racial isolation in the public schools, even if it required system-wide transportation of students. In the former case, the Court justified its decision by linking all the racial imbalance to the condition of the dual school system in 1954, a doubtful assumption; in the latter case, a narrow and limited finding of segregative intent reversed the presumption for the entire district and this led to the system-wide judicial remedy. The majority did pull back, in the Detroit case in 1974,<sup>57</sup> from upholding a lower court's inter-district metropolitan remedy, on the grounds that there was no evidence of inter-district segregation. The dissent pointed out that very little actual integration was possible within the Detroit school system by itself and the state was responsible for education. But was the politi-

cal process required by the Constitution to give racial balance precedence over community control and neighborhood schools?

Then in two cases decided the same day in 1979,<sup>58</sup> the Supreme Court upheld system-wide remedies, following the reasoning of the lower courts (in one case the trial court and in another the court of appeals, which reversed the trial court) that the existing racial imbalance was, in each case, a remnant from 1954, when even though it was not officially sanctioned, there was in fact a dual school system. Of course such arguments have some plausibility, since the very distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* is, at the boundary, a fiction. Clearly, public authorities follow private wishes, and there was indirect government involvement in housing discrimination in 1954; hence it had an effect, indirectly on the school system. But the connection between that discrimination and school attendance patterns 25 years later is nebulous. The Court seems to be driving the mathematical principle of racial balance to the limits of its logic, with no good results to show for it. In the name of equal educational opportunity, it is sanctioning lower court ordered plans which consider nothing but racial balance. This has produced, or accentuated, "white flight" and it has not improved anyone's education.

The most instructive judicial reflections on the Court's dilemma come from Justice Powell, whose cautious attitude toward judicial power resembles Frankfurter's. In his opinion in the Denver case, Justice Powell described the *Brown* mandate as having evolved from neutral desegregation to "an affirmative duty to desegregate." He went on to question the continuing utility of the *de facto/de jure* distinction.

In imposing on metropolitan southern school districts an affirmative duty entailing large scale transportation of pupils, to eliminate segregation in the schools, the Court required these districts to alleviate conditions which in large part did *not* result from historic, state-imposed *de jure* segregation. Rather, the familiar root cause of segregated schools in *all* the biracial metropolitan areas of our country is essentially the same: one of segregated residential and migratory patterns the impact of which on the racial composition of the schools was often perpetuated and rarely ameliorated by action of public school authorities. This is a national, not a southern phenomenon. And it is largely unrelated to whether a particular state had or did not have segregative school laws.<sup>59</sup>

Powell proposed that in place of scrutinizing the actions of the school board for "segregative intent," the Court hold the states responsible for operating "integrated school systems" and examine their actions (such as location of new facilities, attendance zones, etc.) with a view toward their general integrative effect. Powell did not discuss the busing question, nor did he indicate whether he thought the Court's role would be reduced as a result of his proposal. He apparently abandoned his argument for abandoning the *de facto/de jure* distinction, for in his dis-

sent in the 1979 Columbus case, he noted that it was impossible to expect school boards to bring about desirable racial balance and that judicial mandates would probably generate further white flight and resegregation. In other words, he came to see that desegregation would not produce an integrated school system, unless the courts were willing to sustain racial balance as a constitutional imperative. Even then, to succeed the courts would have to insist on consolidated school districts and eliminate private schools.

We turn, finally, to the Supreme Court's view of education. Justice Warren called it "the very foundation of good citizenship" and "a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values."<sup>60</sup> This formulation conceals two problems or complications. The first is that education as socialization is problematic, however necessary it may be. Numerous Supreme Court cases indicate that there is a fine line between illegal indoctrination and permissible inculcation of habits of citizenship; quite understandably, the individualistic bent of the first amendment freedoms frequently limits this form of education. The freedom involved here is not only one of association, but it includes conceptions of racial identification. In *Brown* the Supreme Court accepted the racial amalgamation view of integration as if it were the only valid formulation. It ignored the view of integration which emphasizes a substantial separation within the larger integrated society. This view was prominently stated by Black Power and Black Nationalism advocates in the late 1960s, but it was more fully stated much earlier by DuBois, as we have already noted. Certain kinds of "freedom of choice" are much more likely to succeed than a judicially enforced uniformity. One man's consent may be another man's prejudice, but if community control, in the form of residential schools and local school boards, has any validity, it must apply to communities which are largely white as well as to those which are largely black.

Second, the Supreme Court must understand that education involves more than mere socialization. It should not say, as it did in a 1969 case upholding a student's right to wear an armband expressing opposition to the Vietnam War in class: "The principal use to which the schools are dedicated is to accommodate students during prescribed hours for the purpose of certain types of activities. Among the activities is intercommunication among the students."<sup>61</sup> Here the Court unwittingly likens secondary school education to the operation of a day care center. And even when it prudently permits race to be taken into account in a complex admissions process for higher education, as it did in the famous *Bakke* case, it should not lend its support to a statement which confuses academic achievement and intellectual powers with minimal academic competency. Justice Powell, whose vote and opinion were decisive in *Bakke*, cited with approval and then appended to his opinion the Harvard College Admissions affirmative action statement; it said that "the number of

applicants who are deemed to be 'not qualified' is comparatively small."<sup>62</sup> If these statements truly reflect the authoritative view of education in America, it's no wonder that we have become "a nation at risk."

The great achievement of *Brown v. Board of Education* was that it struck down the *Plessy* doctrine of "separate but equal," which eventually, and necessarily, led to the complete elimination of state-enforced racial segregation.<sup>63</sup> The single opinion which accompanied the unanimous decision in *Brown* was an important part of the Court's achievement; it facilitated the dismantling of genuine dual school systems. Neither the unanimity nor the accommodating spirit of the *Brown II* implementation decision in 1955, which called for desegregation "with all deliberate speed," could prevent substantial Southern resistance for a decade. While I have criticized the Court's opinion and offered a fuller and, in my opinion, sounder argument for the decision, not even a perfect opinion accompanying the Court's unanimity would have eradicated racial prejudice or actual inequality in American life. I have argued that the eradication of either is beyond the limited powers of a liberal democratic government. I do think that if the Court's opinion had presented a sounder treatment of the ordered liberty that we can reasonably expect from our government, it would have prevented the numerous judicially ordered pupil assignment plans which enforce racial balance in the public schools and do nothing more than drive students desirous of education, white and black, out of the public schools. And, if the Court's opinion had presented a sounder view of education than the amalgamation view of integration, we would have more respect for the variety of legitimate views on racial identification and less confusion about education as training and habituation versus education as intellectual development.

1. 347 U.S. 483, 495 (1954).
2. *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976, pp. 710, 747.
3. *The New York Times*, May 18, 1954, p. 14.
4. *Times*, May 17, 1964, p. 10e.
5. Roger Wilkins, "The Sound of One Hand Clapping: Twenty years After Brown; Negro Progress and Black Rage," in *Times Magazine*, May 12, 1974, p. 43.
6. For the passage quoted from the dentist and statements by Rustin and Wilkins, see *U.S. News & World Report*, May 20, 1974, "After 20 Years: New Turn in Black Revolution," pp. 24ff; for the Browne interview, see Roger Wilkins, *op. cit.*; for the Clark quote, see *Times*, May 12, 1974, p. 42.
7. *Times*, May 12, 1974.
8. "Desegregation: Where Do We Go From Here?" *The New Republic*, February 7, 1970.
9. *Fulfilling the Letter and the Spirit of the Law: Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools*, Report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, August, 1976; see summary and conclusion, pp. 293-313, including table 4.1, p. 296.
10. James S. Coleman, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966; the Report and its findings were briefly discussed in William Chapman's newspaper article, "Key As-

sumptions of Desegregation Under Challenge," in the *Washington Post*, May 12, 1974, "Outlook," pp. C-2ff.

11. Both quotations come from the *Times* story of May 12, 1974, p. 42.

12. See *Washington Post*, May 12, 1974, "Outlook," p. C-1ff.

13. *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, 402 U.S. 1 (1971); *Keys v. School District No. 1, Denver, Colorado*, 413 U.S. 189 (1973).

14. The basis for the first statement is the gap between the Scholastic Aptitude Test scores of Negroes and whites, which was over 100 points, on the 200 to 800 scale, for both the verbal and math sections in 1981. See *The New York Times*, January 14, 1983, p. 11a. The test results accompanied an article on the NCAA proposal to require college freshmen to have a minimum combined SAT score of 700 (out of 1600) in order to be eligible to compete in interscholastic athletics. The Commission's Report, entitled "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative of Educational Reform," was published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 4, 1983.

15. 163 U.S. 537.

16. 100 U.S. 303, 307-08 (1880). This was cited by Harlan in *Plessy* at 163 U.S. 537, 556.

17. Quoted by Kluger at p. 652. All the briefs and oral arguments in the case can be found in *Landmark Briefs and Arguments of the Supreme Court of the United States: Constitutional Law*, ed. by Philip B. Kurland and Gerhard Casper, Arlington, Va.; University Publications of America, Inc.; 1975, volumes 49 and 49a.

18. These remarks go beyond the argument of the opinion of the Court. They draw on the reflections of Jefferson, Tocqueville, and Lincoln, which will be discussed below.

19. For as full an account of the Supreme Court's deliberations as is possible, including the distinctive contributions of Justice Frankfurter and the significance of Chief Justice Vinson's death, after the first oral argument, and his replacement by Chief Justice Warren, see Kluger, chapters 22-25.

20. 305 U.S. 337, 349-50.

21. 339 U.S. 637.

22. 339 U.S. 629, 634.

23. See Kluger, pp. 614-616.

24. See 354 U.S. 483, 487, note 1.

25. 354 U.S. 397, 398.

26. This may have been due, in part, to the different lawyers. See Kluger's account of James Nabritt, who argued the District of Columbia case at p. 521. *op. cit.* From the very outset of the litigation, in 1951, Nabritt challenged the race classification for public schools.

27. 347 U.S. 483, 495. The original implementation decision, known as *Brown II*, was decided in 1955. The cases were remanded to the lower courts to enter orders and decrees "as are necessary and proper to admit to public schools on a racially non-discriminatory basis with all deliberate speed the parties to these cases." 394 U.S. 294, 301.

28. Pp. 491-2.

29. P. 493.

30. P. 494.

31. P. 494, note 11.

32. Kluger, p. 439.

33. The study which the Court cited, "Effect of Prejudice and Discrimination on Personality Development," Midcentury White House Conference, 1950, did not involve North-South comparisons. The study which did, "Racial Identification and Preference in Negro Children," was written by Clark and his wife, Mamie. It compared the responses from children in Massachusetts with children in Arkansas. The work was originally published in Newcomb and Hartley, ed., *Readings in Social Psychology*, New York: Holt; 1947; it was included in the third edition, published in 1958, at pp. 602-611. Table 4 makes the North-South comparisons. Kluger gives a full account of Clark and his tests and the varied reactions of the NAACP lawyers and other scholars; see chapter 14, and pp. 353-6, 498, and other references under the index heading, "Clark," "tests." The problem with Clark's tests was first brought to my attention by Hadley Arkes, in his essay, "The Problem of Kenneth Clark," in *Commentary*, November, 1974.

34. See Chapman's discussion of the Coleman Report and later studies, in the *Washington Post*, note 10 above, and David Armor's "The Evidence of Busing," in *The Public Interest*, Summer, 1972.

35. Kluger, p. 421.

36. 347 U.S. 497, 499-500.

37. See Kluger, chapter 23, for a discussion of the Justices' deliberations.

38. "Toward Neutral Principles of Constitutional Law," in 73 *Harvard Law Review* 1, November, 1959, pp. 33, 19, 33, 34, 15, 16.

39. "Racial Discrimination and Judicial Integrity: A Reply to Professor Wechsler," in 108 *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 1 (1959); reprinted in *Selected Essays in Constitutional Law, 1938-1962*, edited by Edward L. Barrett, Jr., et al., St. Paul: West Publishing Co.; 1963, p. 819; the quotation is from p. 839.

40. "The Lawfulness of the Segregation Decisions," in 69 *Yale Law Journal* 421 (1960); reprinted in *Selected Essays in Constitutional Law*, p. 844; the quotation is from p. 847.

41. *The Least Dangerous Branch: The Supreme Court at the Bar of Politics*, Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill Company; 1962, p. 69.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 24 (see also 27), 25, 28.

43. See Kluger, pp. 653-655.

44. "The Original Understanding of the Segregation Decision," 69 *Harvard Law Review* 1, November, 1955, pp. 61, 63.

45. Kluger, p. 655.

46. 4 Wheaton 316, 407 (1819).

47. See *The Least Dangerous Branch*, pp. 106-7, where Bickel mistakenly likens Marshall's to Brandeis' view of the Constitution as a "living organism."

48. For Jefferson, see *Notes on Virginia*, Query XIII; for Lincoln, see his Peoria Speech, October 16, 1854, as well as the Lincoln-Douglas Debates.

49. See *Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part II, chapter 10, edited by J. P. Mayer, Garden City, New York: Anchor Books; 1969.

50. "Atlanta Exposition Address," in Herbert J. Storing, ed., *What Country Have I? Political Writings by Black Americans*, New York: St. Martin's; 1970, p. 61. Washington gave his address in 1895. Nowhere in his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, where he includes the text and discusses the reaction to the speech, does he refer to the Louisiana law of 1890, which was challenged in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. However, in 1915, he wrote an essay in *The New Republic* arguing forcefully against segregation laws in terms of both expediency and morality. See "My View of Segregation Laws," in *The New Republic*, December 4, 1915, pp. 113-114.

51. See "Of Booker T. Washington and Others," in Storing, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-102, especially pp. 97-101.

52. This argument draws on Leo Strauss' discussion of natural right in ancient and modern political philosophy. See *Natural Right and History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1953, and the title essay in *What is Political Philosophy?*, Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press; 1959.

53. For this formulation and the subsequent argument I am indebted to Herbert J. Storing, whose essay "The Founders and Slavery," was given at St. John's College on March 5, 1976, published in the bicentennial issue of *The College* (pp. 17-25), and subsequently reprinted in Robert H. Horwitz, *The Moral Foundations of the American Republic*, Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press; 1976.

54. In Storing, *What Country Have I?*, p. 82.

55. See Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet," and Stokeley Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, "Black Power: Its Need and Substance," in Storing, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-163; 165-181.

56. For the citations, see note 13.

57. *Milliken v. Bradley*, 418 U.S. 717.

58. *Columbus Board of Education v. Penick*, 443 U.S. 449; *Dayton Board of Education v. Brinkman*, 443 U.S. 526.

59. 413 U.S. 189, 220-222, 222-223 (1973).

60. 347 U.S. 483, 493.

61. *Tinker v. Des Moines School District*, 393 U.S. 503, 512 (1969).

62. *University of California Regents v. Bakke*, 438 U.S. 265, 321 (1978).

63. When Virginia's anti-miscegenation law was invalidated in 1967 (*Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1) all Jim Crow legislation had been eradicated.



## Class Day Address 1983

Chaninah Maschler

In the year of the chartering of St. John's College—1784—Kant published a little essay whose opening sentences might serve as a statement of the moral aim of a liberal arts education. The essay is called *What is Enlightenment?* and it begins roughly as follows:

Enlightenment is man's exodus from self-incurred minority. To be a minor means, not to be able to use one's reason except as directed by someone else. Such minority is self-incurred when it is not due to lack of rational competence but to lack of resolve and courage. *Sapere aude*, Dare to know! Have the courage to use your understanding. That is the motto of enlightenment.

Laziness and cowardice are to blame for the fact that so large a portion of mankind, after nature has long discharged them from tutelage and promoted them to adult estate, nevertheless gladly stay minors all their life and why it is so easy for others to set themselves up as their guardians. It's much more comfortable not to be of age: If I have a book that understands for me, a pastor, rabbi, priest who serves as my conscience, a physician who prescribes my diet, I need not trouble myself. Why *think* if I have the money to pay others to take care of the irksome chore for me?

That it takes effort, continual downing of lassitude, to be or become free needs no elaboration. But why does it take courage, more courage, perhaps, today, or courage of a different sort, than in 1784? If courage is called for, there must be something dangerous, or at least frightening in the offing.

Many of us—tutors and students—precisely if we are or have been happy at this institution of learning, describe our St. John's experience on the model of Anderson's fairy

A tutor at St. John's College, Annapolis, Md., Chaninah Maschler previously published a translation of Lessing's *Ernst and Falk: Conversations for Free Masons* (Autumn/Winter 82-83) *St. John's Review*.

tale of the ugly duckling: You remember, in high school or at Columbia or Yale or Princeton, we didn't fit; we were lonely; doubted ourselves and our competence. Then, upon coming here, and learning to trust and act on continual Kantian invitations to self-reliance, we found ourselves flourishing amongst our own kind. We concluded: We are *swans* really! Our egg got mislaid with duck parents and duck schools!

But I don't see anything frightening in the fact that you turn out to be a swan rather than a duck. Anderson's is a self-indulgent, sentimental, self-congratulating tale, with which we ought to be *done*. That we should "find ourselves" as noble swans is not the import of Kant's sermon.

So I want to tell a different parable, though upon reflection you will recognize a formal likeness between the story I ask you to *junk* and that which I ask you to *live with*.

Before turning to the story, let's reminisce:

Do you remember the innocent days of Euclid proposition I 27? It gave us confidence that the *local* condition of equality of alternate angles would *guarantee* that, no matter how far the straight lines making those angles with a transverse be extended, the straight lines would *never* meet (dfn 23, p. 190 Heath). I can still hear the voice of the student at the board who showed that, supposing the condition of equality of alternate angles *met* but the attribute of parallelism *denied* of the lines, one and the same angle *AEF* would have to be both greater than and equal to the angle *EFG*. Reaching the crucial step of the argument, she could not contain herself and shouted: "Oedipus Schmoedipus, he *can't marry his mother*."

What she meant was, of course, that though *tragic* individuals may find themselves burdened with *incompatible* roles, *mathematical* individuals—angles, lines, figures—while normally playing *different* roles in the course of a demonstration—else the demonstration would not work,

wouldn't have a "middle term" to link the "extremes" of the enunciation—*mathematical individuals*, I say, are utterly secure from conflation of impossible roles.

Some of us thought that what Socrates taught in the *Republic* is that we should live in admiration of those serene mathematical individuals who are utterly free of faction. (Cf. *Rep.* VI, 500C; IX, 582; X, 606)

Should we?

Every time I read the fable of the wolf and the lamb and hear the voice of reason weakly bleating "... *et que par conséquent en aucune façon je ne puis troubler sa boisson*" ("... from which it follows, by rational necessity, that I cannot have muddied His Majesty's waters") I think on the freshman mathematics tutorial and that Euclidean *clincher*—*atopon*, impossible, ridiculous—which, La Fontaine reminds us, proves impotent when reasoning with wolves.

That men might, by redesigning and reassigning power, be prevented from becoming wolves to men was the great hope of the philosophers of the enlightenment. We still live in that hope. But we must persevere in it without the prop and sop of grand theories of history's "tending" that way—the way of the sweetly reasonable lamb.

And why is that? Because of a story told by those who taught Aesop himself, a story perhaps told *again* by the poet who sang Songs of Innocence and of Experience; I mean William Blake. Here is the story:

Once upon a time there was a tiger cub who was being raised by a herd of goats. He learned their language, adapted his voice to their gentle way of bleating, and though his teeth were pointy and made for tearing, he nibbled grass goat-fashion. One night the herd was attacked by a fierce full-grown tiger. The goats scattered but the cub stayed. He was amazed at the sight of the tiger, but not afraid. He let out a bleat and began to tear up some grass. The great tiger roared at him: "Why do you make that silly sound? And what are you chewing there?" He grabbed the cub, carried him off to his den, and there ordered him to get his teeth into a bloody raw piece of meat left over from a previous foray. The cub shuddered. The old one force-fed him. Just as the cub was about to spit out the morsel he began to taste the blood. Overcome, he smacked his lips and licked his jowls, rose up, opened his mouth. Stretching and arching, lashing his tail, there suddenly came from his throat a great roar. His teacher asked: "Now do you know who you are?" (Adapted from Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1956.)

Sri Ramakrishna told the ancient story in answer to Kant's question, "What is enlightenment?" and I pass it on to you to counterpoise the tale of the lamb which, though greatly consoling, and true, is also false: The wolf is not just the other fellow: The *i*-sounds of Blake's tiger poem and the *-am*'s of the song of the lamb rhyme out I AM.

## THE HORIZON AS THE LAST SHIP HOME

On a diagonal of light,  
the world hinges. The sea  
slants blue miles away  
to the horizon. At that  
edge, the air is burning  
like the wreck  
of the last ship home.

J. H. BEALL

# Against Time\*

Eva Brann

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\*Given as two Friday Night Lectures at St. John's College in Annapolis on February 18 and 25, 1983.

THE ST. JOHNS REVIEW

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# Against Time

That *time has no being and no power, that the past is most to be cherished* by those who have least taste for by-gones, that *our own temporality is the work of the imagination*—these are the reflections that I want to articulate and confirm in the following inquiry, for I believe and hope to show that opinions of this sort are necessary for thinking of ourselves as free and for filling our lives with substance.

## I. APPROACHES TO THE INQUIRY\*

Given this purpose, the first question is where to begin an inquiry whose object appears to be both ubiquitous and nowhere. There seem to be so many likely approaches to the topic of time: through attention to our all-pervading talk of time in ordinary life and through the neat enigmas which even the lightest musing upon time generates, through the science of nature which claims to determine its concept, and through the observations of poets, novelists, and psychologists concerning our temporal sensibilities. All these efforts provide necessary grist to the mill of reflection, but Time itself does not seem to be revealed in or through them, and the very profusion of speculation bears witness to its elusiveness. There remains the way through philosophy, where time is treated in conjunction with the question of being—and particularly of human being. Here the nature of time becomes at last a direct theme. I shall, therefore, after a brief review of the other approaches, devote the middle section of this study to an interpretation of the five philosophers who seem to me to have given the most coherent and pregnant answers to the question *What is Time?*, and conclude with a section of my own thoughts on, or rather against, time.

### 1. TIME LANGUAGE

The first and obvious way to get to the nature of time might seem to be through examining the mentions of time in ordinary language, through attending to what everyday speech says of time, for example: My watch tells the time, and I can give you the time. Do you have the time to give

\*All references are to books listed in the Bibliography.

Eva Brann recently published *Paradoxes of Education in a Republic* (University of Chicago Press, 1979).

me some time? I am wasting my time, while having the time of my life. Time is money, and the times are bad. At this point in time he has no comment, but time will tell. Time heals and at the same time, time destroys. The time is coming; the time is now; the time is past. We live in time and through times, are on time, race against time, kill time, donate time, are true to the end of time, and imagine once upon a time.

Now the very profusion of usages, although it is an index of the great frequency of our references to time<sup>1</sup>, seems to me to preclude the discovery of a central meaning without our falling into the error of decreeing which of these usages is canonically ordinary. Certainly, how time occurs in daily speech is suggestive: Augustine, for instance, begins his inquiry by asking how it is that we can speak of time as long or short (XI 15), and Heidegger refers to the observation that we speak of time as passing away and not as coming into being (*Logik*, par. 20). It turns out, however, that both authors, far from being guided by what is said, conclude that ordinary speech obscures the nature of time.

It seems, all in all, that from listening to the use of the term *time* one, but only one, crucial conclusion can be reached: Time is always spoken of metaphorically or figuratively. It may be treated as a spatial dimension with length and points, or as a possession to have and to give, or in a personification, as an agent of multifarious potency. Its power is sometimes benign but far more often hurtful, as in the insistently grim time-figures of the Shakespearean Sonnets: devouring Time, confounding Time, decaying Time, swift-footed Time, sluttish Time, Time's injurious hand, Time's fell hand (19, 55, 63-65).

Most time references are well-worn and mean little; they are time-honored phrases, once perhaps heartfelt, for disposing of the mysteries of change. When we talk of time as healing we consign to a hackneyed phrase the miraculous restorative power of nature and the blessed oblivion of which memory is capable. Poets, on the other hand, tend to give time injurious epithets, because, I think, they speak more often and more accurately of the high, intense, and vulnerable configurations of life than we do in ordinary speech.

The word "time" is not, of course, remotely all that language says of time. All our sentences require tensed verbs, particularly "is," "was," and "shall be." But can their use tell us their meaning? Or must we not rather know what is meant by present, past, and future, the three phases of time, to understand the use of aspects and tenses?

## 2. TIME PUZZLES

A second start might be made from the puzzles about time which can be so copiously and near-spontaneously generated. For example, why does time seem to have a forward arrow and a leading edge?<sup>2</sup> Does it progress in a continuous flux or in atomic jerks? Is it within or outside of us, in the soul or in the world? What is the "now" in which alone things are present and which reason reduces to a point between past and future? And above all, how is it possible that anything be in that past which is no longer, or in the future which is not yet? There are many more such problems, even excluding those concerning temporal continuity, which belong primarily to mathematics.

Such conundrums are easily disposed of by the positivist, who obviates them by pointing out that in ordinary life, before the onset of a philosophical seizure, no one is at all inconvenienced by them, so why concoct enigmas?<sup>3</sup> To be more than idle puzzles they must arise in the context of a well-grounded inquiry into time itself. They are not its beginning but its by-products.

## 3. TIME IN SCIENCE

In view of the fact that time is the basic independent variable of all the physics accessible to laymen, it would seem reasonable to turn first to the science of nature, that is, to physics, for help in the search for the nature of time. Reflective physicists and philosophers of physics have, accordingly, propounded powerful theories of time. At the very beginning of the science of dynamics stands the most extreme theory of the reality of time, Newton's self-sustaining, equally flowing, absolute world time—and its equally extreme opponent, Leibniz's relative time, a mere order of phenomenal succession.<sup>4</sup> Newton's theory of an absolute temporal flux may well be integral to the theological purposes of the *Principia*, but it does not seem to be operational within its physics. It is a philosophical rather than a physical requirement. In contrast, the plain statement by a great physicist of the most minimal notion of time conceivable is fairly recent, namely Einstein's wholly operational or instrumental definition of local time as "the position of the small hand of my watch" (p. 39; an instrumental definition is one in which the term is defined through the instrument and the operation which measures its magnitude). Although it may seem strange at first that after two and a half millenia of arduous exploration of the question "What is time?" the outcome should be that time is what the clock tells, one soon sees that this definition is the cleanest and clearest reflection on time that a physicist can give. For in physics time must be positive, that is to say, it should be no more than an observable quantity the method of whose measurement is defined.

There is then an enormous and intellectually most

acute literature about the philosophical implications of time in nature, or more accurately, in the science of nature. (For all references see Sec. IV of the Bibliography.) Three branches of physics seem to be especially amenable to philosophical interpretation: Thermodynamics seems to have implications about the forward motion, the so-called "arrow" of time and its irreversibility. Relativity theory appears to have exploded the common sense notion of universal time or the simultaneity of the present moment throughout space. Quantum theory throws in doubt the continuity of time.

But intriguing as such theories are, because they are bent on interpreting with ingenuity and vigour the unignorable discoveries of physics, they help only incidentally and negatively with the question: What is time? For in these theories time is invariably understood as a privileged process or motion, either a macro-motion or an atomic vibration; the temporality of these timing-motions is itself left unexplained—as indeed it should be since such an explanation would no longer be amenable to verification by observation. The implication is that time really is an aspect of motion to be got at only in *telling* time. But time-telling is commonly taken to be a three-cornered affair, involving an observable event, a timing device, and an observer who can distinguish and relate the two and communicate his findings. And though a physical theory may include the observer with respect to his relative motion or his unavoidable interference with the observation, it is regarded as the part of psychology to deal with the distinguishing and relating itself, that is, with the internal observer. In sum, in physics time itself is the name of a fundamental motion, while the telling of time is not ultimately explicable in physical terms.

Furthermore the philosophical interpretation of physical time is by no means univocal, any more than are those of philosophy in the wider sense, with which the philosophy of physics does, after all, eventually merge. Therefore, through this approach a clarification of the concepts of time implicit in various physical theories is the most that can be expected.

Let me give very brief versions of three accessible cases in point.

1. Eddington introduced the phrase "Time's Arrow" to sum up the observations of thermodynamics. Let there be a partitioned container, isolated from outside influences, and let one part be filled with air, the other empty. Now remove the partition, and the molecules of air in their individual random motions will over time spread through the whole vessel (while the probability that they will ever again simultaneously collect at one end is so vanishingly small as to make the case practically impossible). The aggregate of molecules as a whole will then have less organization and will be said to show increasing "disorder," by which is meant here a certain kind of homogeneity. Its measure is called "entropy." The large-scale phenomenal effects of this statistical law of nature are quite familiar in life:

Things left to their own devices tend to fall into sprawling disorder.

Now Eddington interprets this irreversible process of nature as an intrinsic forward tendency of time itself. If he is right, physics is indeed capable of revealing the nature of time. There are, however, many and much debated difficulties, for example, whether the universe is an isolated system, whether a probable event and a process subject to fluctuations can be imputed to the steady underlying action of time, whether to show that time is "anisotropic," that is, directed, is necessarily to show that it advances, whether the physical law applies as well to life. But the most telling difficulty for present purposes is this: An observer can assert that time is reversible, for example, that if the time coordinate were imagined as reversed the planets would exactly retrace their orbits, only if he also imagines his own time as maintaining its direction so that he can compare the two successive motions. Would not the same hold for an observer of irreversible processes, so that he would have to say not that physical time itself was advancing, but that "disorder" was irreversibly increasing with time, namely his psychological observer's time the question of whose advance is no longer a matter for physics? There is a counterargument, to be sure, namely that human memory itself, the condition of time-telling, is an entropic process since it has an entropic physical basis. But that leaves us with the question, certainly no longer in the realm of physics, whether the human observer of nature can logically himself be subject to its law (Eddington, Ch. IV; Gruenbaum, Chps. 8, 9; Schlegel, pp. 55 ff.; Whitrow, Ch. IV 3, 4).

2. Einstein begins his 1905 paper, which sets forth the special theory of relativity, by defining what the common sense of mankind had so far taken as a natural given, namely what it means to say that it is the same time at places very far apart. His need to do so follows immediately from his definition of local time as what the clock tells, and that, in turn, embodies a deep reflection on the nature of physical knowledge. For nothing is to be counted as scientific theory which does not ultimately refer to possible sensory events. So to tell what time it is at a fixed place somewhere far off we must have a clock and an observer there and sensible signalling between him and us. Now even the fastest signal, light, takes time to go there and to be reflected back; we all know that the light from the star we now see is not the light being emitted by the star now. That means that a procedure for synchronizing both clocks must be established so that we *here* can say what time it is *there now*.

Einstein defines such a procedure. The time for the light signal to come and go is taken to be equal by definition. We signal our time to the remote observer who sets his clock by it just as he reflects the signal. Upon receiving it we set our clock to a time exactly half way between our sending and receiving the signal. The two clocks are thus said to be synchronized, and when an event occurs at the

place far off it will be said to occur at the same time or simultaneously, with our clock-time for the arrival of its signal. Further, clocks which are synchronized with a third are said to be synchronized with each other. Therefore simultaneity is not universal "nowness" but merely what it is defined to be by the synchronizing process.

Next Einstein lays down two fundamental axioms. The first of these is the principle of relativity itself, which says that the laws of physics governing a system are not affected if the whole is put into uniform rectilinear motion. The second is that the speed of light is absolute, namely the same whether the light is emitted from a stationary or a moving source. Within a page Einstein has shown that two clocks which are affixed to the ends of a moving rod and which have been separately synchronized with a clock in the stationary system, and so with each other from the point of view of the stationary observer, will not appear to meet the criteria of synchronicity from the point of view of the moving observers. What the stationary observer sees as simultaneous the moving observers do not. That means that what one observer takes to be the same moment comes apart for another observer into different moments. There is no absolute signification to the concept of simultaneity. The *now* is not universal.

This result is usually interpreted as confuting the common sense notion of a universal contemporaneity, the feeling we have in ordinary circumstances that our now is everyone's now. But I wonder if that follows. The theory means by "the same time here and there" an operation definable in terms of observations, namely, the relating of clocks by a signal which takes time to travel back and forth. The speed of the signal, namely the speed of light, is the crucial element in the formula which shows that events simultaneous in one system will not be so in another relatively moving one. If that signalling speed were to be increased beyond all bounds, an impossibility in physical theory to be sure, simultaneity would be reinstated.<sup>5</sup>

But are we in our thinking and imagining bound by the physicist's requirements? Can we not in our thoughts—which are as swift as the ships of Homer's Phaeacians, namely instantaneous—extend ourselves over all space at once? If our thinking were in principle incapable of coming under the requirements of science we might well imagine any number of friendly extra-terrestrials, moving and stationary, all thinking of us and of each other simultaneously, now. A concord of consciousnesses is not inconceivable. I cannot think that the deep-seated human sense of a universal *now* can be confuted by a definition of time and a canon of knowledge not its own (Einstein, I 1-2; Reichembach, par. 19; Dingle, pp. 460 ff.).

3. In Plato's *Sophist* the debate between the proponents of being and becoming is called the Battle of Gods and Giants. This battle rages between interpreters of relativity theory and furnishes my last example of the difficulty of extracting a clear philosophical interpretation from physical theory. The argument arises over the interpretation of

the Minkowski diagram, which is a geometric representation of a world in which the space coordinates are interdependent with the time coordinates. A number of authors claim that the relativization of simultaneity and the involvement or covariance of space and time so spoil the objectivity of the temporal order, that is, the unambiguous and universal separation of past and future, that one can no longer speak of becoming in the world. The world is a four-dimensional continuum of three spatial and one "spatializing" time coordinate, spatializing in the sense that in this geometric diagram the motion of any substantial point is represented by a stationary curve. This world is already "written." It is and does not *become*, though it appears to us successively, like a prepared cartoon strip we read by moving our eyes. Thus the only change is that in the perceiving consciousness of the observer, and if there is real time it is only his psychological time.

The defenders of becoming argue, on the other hand, that the perturbations of time pointed to by proponents of being do not occur for causally related events, whose succession is preserved in all frames of reference; only the succession of causally unrelated and of simultaneous events is relativized. So nothing, they claim, stands in the way of positing real, that is, causally conditioned, becoming.

Aside from self-contradictory use of the term "being" to mean static appearance and the too-narrow use of the term becoming for causally related succession, the difficulty in drawing philosophical conclusions about time and the world, even supposing the physicists came to terms, seems to me to be that the interpretation really concerns only the representation of the theory, that is, a model of its world, not the world itself (Frazer, pp. 415 ff.; Whitrow, pp. 227-228; Gruenbaum, *Basic Issues*, 195-228).

It seems that while the study of physical theory is indispensable to an understanding of process and motion, it can be no more than suggestive with respect to time. But that really implies that time properly speaking must belong not to nature but to the observer.

#### 4. TEMPORAL SENSIBILITY

Sometimes it is the matter itself which arouses wonder and perplexity, while sometimes the world's preoccupation with it excites curiosity and concern. In the case of time the two motives for starting a study seem to me to coincide.

There is certainly plenty of external evidence for our world's pervasive fascination with time. In the decades close to us there is no getting away from observations to the effect that the rate of change of the human environment has increased stupendously, and this increase is usually expressed as a speeding up of time itself. "Innovation" is the incantatory term which people feel they must utter to keep time from outrunning them. Complementing this

general sense of the urgency of our situation there is also a flood of scientific work on time; for example, intriguing biological experiments on the temporal rhythms of animals and jet-setters, psychological studies of time perception and estimation, sociological accounts of time management in different cultures (e.g., Zerubavel).

But this overwrought sense of time's power did not arise only after the First World War. It had been in the offing, one might say, for two millenia, but it first broke out acutely almost two centuries ago, in Hegel's writings. It infected common opinion with the notion that the times are informed by a supraindividual force whose laws human science can divine and with whose ends human beings must, on pain of merciless punishment, cooperate. There was the widespread sense that this movement of time was coming to a culmination, either in an earthly paradise or in a man-made apocalypse. There was a passionate elevation of personal time in its vitality over space in its dead externality (Bergson, Note 27, 3). There were discoveries of the interdependence of space and time (Einstein, Alexander, Note 6). And, as was to be expected, an irritated reaction against this "time-mind" soon followed (Lewis, Note 7). But most weightily, there was the claim that the philosophical situation of our time forces us to view the ground of human being itself as temporal (Heidegger, *Logik* p. 267).

Although cataloguing the elements and sources of what everyone is saying is a dry and dubious business, I cannot help speculating, or rather summarizing the speculation of others, on how time, having been dethroned from its mythical majesty by Aristotle, returned as the demon force of modernity.

Four root references seem to me discernible, four causes to which the temporal preoccupation of late modernity is referable.

First and fundamentally this preoccupation is the secular residue of Christianity. Christian time has a beginning, an end, and an internal epoch. These are the Creation, the Final Judgment, and the birth of God as man. Our otherwise apostate world retains a secularized sense of impending doom, of a man-made catastrophe (which long antedates the concrete fear of nuclear annihilation), and, alternately, of coming salvation through progress toward a divinization of mankind or a return to an original creaturely equality in a terrestrial paradise.

A second cause is the simple fact that we come late in history, not in the sense in which Greek philosophers posited innumerable repeated cycles of the discovery and loss of art and wisdom (Note 13), but because we have behind us a minutely documented civilization, classical antiquity, uniquely brilliant and irrevocably bygone, to which we have a peculiar relation. For modernity begins with a self-conscious, systematic transformation of the classical categories of thought and conduct. Hence the shape of modern preoccupations is not quite intelligible without reference to their ancient origins. At the same time we



seem to have every reason for forgetting those origins as being superseded. For we have more power over nature and are, in the modern West, better governed than were our intellectual ancestors. Such forgetfulness, however, induces a vague feeling of discontinuity and leaves us with the contradiction of a chronic sense that our situation is utterly new.

Third is the temporal effect that goes with the sheer massiveness of modernity, its human numbers, information, organizations, wars, crimes, and instruments of pleasure. The motion of magnitudes so far beyond human perspective appears to us to be attributable to an agency less than divine and yet suprahuman; we call it time and consider its effects inevitable.

Finally, and most to my purpose, is the special modern propensity for a kind of psychological introspection which, in contrast to philosophical self-knowledge, consists of a prolonged pursuit of intimate affective subtleties. It seems to me to stem from two sources coincidentally: from that secularization of the anxious Christian interest in the salvation of one's soul which motivates Augustine's *Confessions*, and from that sophisticated reaction against the early modern view that human subjectivity is ultimately rational which is called romanticism and whose founding work is Rousseau's *Confessions* (Note 7).

Naturally such introspection—it is really an ingenious kind of musing—is especially rich in observations about the sense of time and ready to luxuriate in the aroma of temporality. Those of us who were born in the first third of this century participate in these affects by birthright. For then a sense of decadence and *fin de siècle*, climaxed by the First World War which realized all the worst forebodings and indeed closed an era in civilization, had worked the temporal sensibility into an acute state, which was the psychological complement of the new interest in the physical time.

Three novelistic masterworks of the early century which, although demandingly voluminous, found avid readers, are at once a sign and a source of this sensibility: The first is Proust's novel, literally entitled *Toward a Search for Lost Times*. It is an account of the ennui-infected author's quest for the catalyst of his art, which he finds in the last part of the novel, *Time Retrieved*; it comes in the form of an instantaneous, time-annihilating recovery of certain paradisaical childhood moments. The second is Mann's *Magic Mountain*. It is a book described by its author as intended to induce in the reader that same "sublimation of time," a warping of the sense of time in accordance with the intensity of life, experienced by its solidly bourgeois yet physically tainted young hero. The book contains several phenomenological expositions of time, including a whole "Digression on the Time Sense." Finally there is Joyce's *Ulysses*, an Irish odyssey, whose hero is a Jew, an ordinary man and an outsider, who enacts within one Dublin day the adventurous Mediterranean voyage performed over a decade by his Homeric original. Joyce

learnedly interweaves mythical, historical, personal time; the book is a recollection of European civilization.

\* \* \*

Let me describe some of these experiences of temporality—a mere personal sample of temporal affections indicative of our time—under the interlaced rubrics of *pacing*, *routine*, and *skewing*.

1. By "pacing" I mean the phenomenon that our internal time seems to undergo drastic shifts in tempo. We moderns are so acutely subject to these, it seems to me, because the rhythms of modern life are not long-breathed natural periods, punctuated by public ritual, but tightly scheduled stretches interrupted by private vacations. The characteristically modern art forms, like the novel and symphonic music, seem to me peculiarly expressive of our habituation to sharp changes in pace. We moderns are almost congenitally expert in the central temporal experience of the *Magic Mountain*—the periods of apathy, surfeit, distraction, and boredom which are long to live through but vanishingly brief in retrospect, "wastes" of time, poor in feature and welded in memory; they alternate with times of intense eventfulness, accomplished at breakneck speed, while depositing memories so close-packed and vivid, that today seems aeons from yesterday. A similar experience is that haunting sense of its expanded or contracted availability which makes time seem like money to be prodigally spent in one phase and anxiously hoarded in another, always with a guilty sense that one's lifetime is being mismanaged. Again there is that peculiarly modern drivenness which prevents us from ever "having" time—and its complementary lethargy when the possession of no amount of "free" time avails: our time devils either ride or bind us. There are, similarly, those occasions of wild anticipation when the present moment, overburdened with the concentrated desire that time should pass, stalls in a bad imitation of the "standing now" of eternity, and will not give way to the next second. Then again, though, time suddenly takes off and shimmies away, as in periods of nervous distraction. Perhaps the latter affections are not peculiar to our time, but here is one that surely is, the strangest and most characteristic of modern time experiences: our watchful subjection to that ubiquitous little face on the wrist which, through all internal tempi, equably shows *the* time. It is somehow, I suspect, the cause of our loss of temporal equanimity.

2. Next, "routine": Routine is that organization of our time economy which causes periods of time to be endlessly reflected as in facing mirrors, so that our memory can scarcely discern whether it contains an infinity of times or just one moment. Almost everyone who works in the modern mode, according to a nonseasonal repeating schedule, has some sense of the enigma of the time-constrained round. How are such calendar days additive? What memorable difference could be powerful enough to

distinguish *each* of the ten-thousand times of hastening up these particular brownstone stairs at the sound of the bell from every other? The memory is curiously cavalier about the routines of life. It abstracts one event and remembers that schema, modified by the mere knowledge of its multitudinous recurrence, its mere temporal heaping. The duties of each day, when done in the present, at the front of time, as it were, are vivid and absorbing enough, but when we turn around to face the past an enigma stares back: There has certainly been living but has there been a life, that complete shape which the Greeks call *bíos*, as distinct from mere vital process, *zoé*? Can a temporally bureaucratized life become a whole unless the routine is no more than the thorough-bass of some atemporal melody? Again, the complement of clock-bound business is the vacation, a vacancy of time, "free" time, and this whole temporal configuration of engaged and disengaged periods is subject to a curious inversion of background and foreground, as in certain optical illusions, such that work time, in which life's energy is, after all, primarily invested, feels like the mere backdrop to the periods of "off" time. No matter how contentedly we are enmeshed in the cocoon of daily absorption, let there be a break in busyness, and the inertia which is strong in the scheduled spirit exerts itself to resist not only all duties but all actions, and the released soul drinks deep draughts of diversion.

3. "Skewing" is my term for the overpowering sense which befalls us moderns especially in historical settings, the sense that space and time can be at cross purposes. I have been in Athens, at a place where my path crossed that of Socrates, not conjecturally but precisely, since archaeology, that quintessentially modern discipline, has fixed the exact location, for instance, of the court where he was tried. Nor was I on the spot in plane coordinates only, for again archaeology, which brings back the past by digging down, had laid bare the level of his time. I was, then, correctly located in all three spatial dimensions. I was in the right place but at the wrong time. That melancholic sense of the irreparable loss of what we have never had which is induced by written histories of bygone splendours—for histories induce memories of the never-experienced—that temporal nostalgia, is many times intensified when no space intervenes to compound the temporal distance, when here and now are directly at odds. It is, after all, to bask in such melancholy that we visit "historic spots."

The apprehension of this skewing of space and time invites much rumination. Take, for instance, the common inverse experience of the case above: being contemporaneous, even precisely simultaneous, with another cherished human being, but apart in space. How does the case of spatial distance differ from temporal separation? Apparently by the fact that the latter seems to be remediable; by an investing of available time in transversing space I can come again into the other's presence—incidentally itself the strangest business, this going into and out of another's

*now!* But is being in the same place at the same time so certain a remedy for remoteness? Can it not equally be its cause? Cannot the absent soul be more vividly a *presence* than the present body? One writer on time illustrates the common claim, that the feature which most distinguishes present from past is vividness, by referring to his colleague X who is, he asserts, more acutely there than Plato. I wonder, or rather I doubt it. On the other hand, there does seem to be a special bond of awareness—if only of disillusioned awareness—that links not only those who live in neighbourly contiguity but also those who coexist in spatially distant contemporaneity.

To extend the speculation from spatial to temporal relocation: If it is sometimes, though perhaps rarely, possible to go back to former places and presences, and to reenter their continuity, why should it be an interdicted purpose—as the common opinion of our age considers it—to go back to former times by internal recovery and an external reconstruction? Such a collective return, or rather retrieval, such a going back which means a bringing back, has, after all, been attempted, and always these renaissance times are also the newest of times. Similarly, why should not individual retrievals of our private lost times be a possibility? That is, after all, Proust's project—just as the Renaissance revives antiquity in grand vignettes, so Proust relives his childhood in paradisaical tableaux. Could it be, indeed, that such retrievals of time, public or private, are the modern replacements for the ancient periodic ritual enactments of mythical moments—these being the respective modes of bringing the then and there into the here and now and of undoing the skewing of time and place?

I have only described some time affections which seem to me particularly acute in modern life. But such diverse musings while expressing the mood and providing the material for the inquiry into time have no end and lead to no resolutions.

## 5. THE PHILOSOPHERS

What is left, in the end, for someone anxious to clarify and test certain intimations about time, is the way through the philosophers. It is, after all, their proper and specific business to ask boldly and set out coherently what Time itself is. The five writers I have chosen are those who seem to me to present the most deep-reaching, well-grounded, and mutually responsive thematic treatment of time.

Aristotle defines time as the number of motion. His is the first thematic treatment in the West, unsurpassably comprehensive and therefore the natural reference for all subsequent expositions.

Augustine, in his effort to comprehend the temporal creature's relation to his eternal God and Creator, discovers time as the "distension" or worldly dimension of the soul. His ardent and original inquiry first establishes temporality as at the root of human existence.

On this Augustinian discovery Husserl bases a phenomenology, namely a description, as presuppositionless as possible, of the internal appearances of time, that is, of time-consciousness.

Kant finds time to be the "inner sense," the sense in which the self becomes an appearance to itself; here time, as the form of human sensibility, is of the soul without belonging to the ultimate subject, the self.

Heidegger understands the very ground of human existence as temporality, inverting Kant's relation of the self to time and driving the notion of time to its most extreme distance from Aristotle.

There are, of course, other writers on time who are of great stature. Of these my chief omission is Hegel, whose writings, (except for the paragraphs on time in nature, Note 27, 2) are just not capable of a dis severed thematic treatment of time. For his system is the account of the spirit in its necessary appearances which is Time.<sup>8</sup>

Plotinus (20), Leibniz and Newton (4), Locke (24), Nietzsche (13), Bergson (27, 3) and Whitehead (16 and 32) are briefly treated in the Notes indicated. As for the absence of Plato, it is not really an omission because there is no extended treatment of time in the *Dialogues* except in myths (See Notes 12 and 13) and, significantly, none of these are told by Socrates himself—whose images are reserved for the atemporal.

Finally, I should say that it is not so much the gist of the theories here presented that is instructive for my purpose but the exposition of their motives and principles, the tracing of their explicit and implicit consequences, and the formulation of those oppositions and analogies which mark them as belonging to one tradition. Using the texts in that way, I shall in the last section (VI) try to formulate my suspicions against time.

## II. ARISTOTLE: TIME AS THE NUMBER OF MOTION

Time, *Chronos*, is endowed among the Greeks with vividly various shapes and widely diverse, even opposite, powers; he is monster, god, and heaven itself, all-seeing, healing, and all-destroying.<sup>9</sup> Sophocles, for example, says once that "omnipotent time" confounds and destroys all, and then again he calls him "a gentle god" (*Oed. Col.* 609, *Electra* 179). Time's attributes are evidently fluid, but he is always a potent being.

In the fourth book of the *Physics*, the first extensive thematic treatment of time, Aristotle suddenly and drastically reduces it to the lowest possible status. This epoch-making triumph of thinking over myth-making has not prevailed. Indeed, the dethroned god has been resurrected as God himself by Aristotle's modern counterpart, Hegel. So much the more, it seems to me, should the overthrow accomplished by Aristotle be recalled.

### 1. TIME AND ITS MEASURES\*

Aristotle begins with the suspicion that time is "either wholly not, or scarcely and obscurely" (217 b 34). For many perplexities arise if being is ascribed to time, chief of which is that some of it is gone and is no longer, some of it is to come and is not yet, while the now is no part of time at all.

He resolves the difficulty like this: Time is a mere affection or aspect (*páthos, héxis*, 223 a 19) of motion: "Time is the number of motion with respect to before and after" (220 a 25).

The Loeb translators comment that Aristotle "enters into no profound metaphysical speculation as to its essential nature" (I, 378). But the profundity of his speculation lies precisely in his showing that time has no essential nature; an interpretation of his treatment ought to show what the deep-lying reasons for this determined trivialization of time are.

Not only is time a mere aspect of motion for Aristotle—it is not even a necessary aspect, since *not all motions are temporal*. Two kinds of motion at least are prior to time. They are the motions at the two limits of the natural world, so to speak, and they are timeless because they are themselves the source and principle of time. The first is the ultimate, primary rotational motion of the heavens, the second is the motion of the soul apprehending time. I shall say more of these later, but I must mention right now that to identify these motions as pretemporal is by no means to say that they cannot be timed. We can clock the heavens and we can time our cogitations—but we have clocks only because of the regular continuous motions of the heavens, and we can tell time only because of the counting motion of our soul. Time is the measure of motion, and therefore motion can in turn measure time (220 b 24).

Up to the last book the *Physics* is about inner-worldly motions and these alone are the motions affected with time, the number of motion according to before and after. Where there is no physical body, there is no time (*On the Heavens* 279 a 16). Motion (*kinesis*) includes every kind of change (*metabolé*) of quantity, quality, place, and the process of becoming (218 b 21, though not becoming as simple coming into being, *Met.* 1067 b 32). How can motion possess number, that is, come in ordered units?

Motion has a quantitative aspect; it is a magnitude; we may say that it has extension. Motion derives its sequential extended character of before-and-after from this aspect which is merely a property in the motion although separable in thought (219 a 22; see Loeb I p. 384, n.b.). (Strictly speaking, as we shall see, the motion derives its magnitudinal property from the thing moved, the mobile.) In other

\*The section on Aristotle was worked out during a year of learning with and from Anderson Weekes, then a senior at St. John's College, Annapolis, who during that time developed a coherent and illuminating account of Aristotle's theory of cognition.

words, the category of continuous quantity is predicated of motion.<sup>10</sup>

To say that time moves is meaningless; rather motion is temporal, and from motion time derives all its properties and problems. As motion is continuous, so is time, and all the problems continuity offers to reason, time does likewise. First among these is its relation to the *now*, which is analogous to that of a point to its line. More of that later. A second difficulty is that since motion is continuous, so is time: Whence, then, come the unit measures, the periods, through which time can become the number of motions?

Time, therefore, pertains to motion insofar as motion is a continuous quality or quantity, which always has a before-and-after. The primary before-and-after, according to Aristotle, is that of place (219 a 16), and therefore locomotion is in all ways the primary motion: It is the condition of all other motions, and it is the motion of a completed being, and it is temporally prior to other motions since it initiates them (VIII, 7). But it would be false to conclude that motion is continuous because it is spatial, as if it were the covering of extended space by an indifferent point-mobile. That would be an importation of the modern physical view that a motion is sufficiently understood through its "quantity," which is called momentum and defined as the measure of the mass multiplied by the velocity of the moving body. Aristotle rejects the possibility of a motion indifferent to the nature of the mobile and its proper places.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, as was said, motion itself is defined in terms of the mobile, as *its* state. He says clearly that motion is continuous because the thing moved is continuous and not because that *in which* it is moved is so (*Coming to Be* 337 a 27). He does not, of course, mean the continuity of the present extent of the thing, for example, its length, but rather that continuity which a mobile has by reason of possessing a matter which remains continuous through change, the substrate or subject of the motion (*Met.* 1042 a 32, 1044 b 7). The magnitude of motion, and derivatively of time, is an affection of a divisible subject which is not the momentary present movable thing itself but "what was moved" (*Met.* 1020 a 32), which must mean the mobile *in its progressive changes of place*. In this continuing-through-its-phases the mobile displays that extension which is reflected in the motion and which, when counted, is called temporal durations. In brief: what is countable in motion is its continuously phased development, its "before-and-after."

It should be noted here that, accurately speaking, the magnitudinal affections are so-called "proper affections"; they belong to the mobile not essentially but yet necessarily, just as a human being is not essentially either a male or a female and yet is necessarily one of these. Temporal duration is therefore not of the essence of the mobile. From this fact follows the crucial distinction between Aristotelian and modern physics: To Aristotle the science that *leaves out* motion and magnitude is closer to essences, more intelligible, and therefore more accurate than that

which includes them (*Met.* 1078 a 12); therefore physics is a subordinate science, and not Science simply, as it is with us.

Locomotion, then, is prior in all ways to the other motions. Of locomotions, rotary motion alone is continuous in all senses: It has no beginning and it does not end through having completed its process, nor does it abruptly double back on itself; it can be regular, smooth, uninterrupted, and eternal (*Phys.* VIII 8-9).

The first heavenly sphere is the uniquely perfect embodiment of such rotary motion. It comes as close to being at rest as a mobile can be, since every point in a circular motion is equally a beginning, middle, and end, so that in a certain sense it has no before-and-after (265 b 1). It is in motion, but not toward an end; its movement is rather a steady state which imitates in its regularity the pure activity of completely fulfilled being, God (*Met.* XII 7). This is the motion which is the cause of all other inner-worldly motions, and so, indirectly, of time (*Phys.* VIII 9).<sup>12</sup> Beyond the heavens there is no time (*On the Heavens* 279 a 15).

The continual character of time, its endlessness and its uninterruptedness, is therefore derived from that of the ultimate motion. Because of the heavenly motion, time is one and the same throughout the world (*Phys.* 218 b 14). The discontinuous motions of the terrestrial world, which come to an end with the reaching of their goal, are all fitted into continuous cosmic time. And since everything within the world is mobile and subject to timing, time is in everything (223 a 17).

As the heavens are the source of temporal continualness, so they provide the measure of time. The cycle of rotation is the best unit of time, because it is easiest to count (223 b 19)—a continuous quantity must have a unit measure in order to be countable.

The unit measures of time in the terrestrial world of becoming are provided by the sun's oblique motion along the ecliptic. Just as the movement of the whole heaven is responsible for the continuity of motion and time, so the sun, the "generator," by its approaches and withdrawals causes each life to have its span: "Every life and time is measured by a period, though not the same for all. . . . For some the measure is a year, for some a greater and for others a lesser period" (*On Coming to Be* 336 b 13 ff.). Hence the period or cycle is the natural time unit (*Phys.* 223 b 28). God has made this somewhat irregular but uninterrupted cycle of becoming perpetual so that it may come as near as possible to eternal being (336 b 35); becoming approaches being in a kind of Eternal Return.<sup>13</sup> To tell continuous time over such annual cycles it would seem necessary that each cycle should differ somewhat from the next, as, because of the accidents of matter, it certainly will be.

Time, then, belongs, strictly speaking, only to the sub-lunar world of change, of becoming and of linearly advancing motion in which before and after are distinguishable. Such motion, defined in *Physics* III (201 a 11),<sup>14</sup> is to be understood through Aristotle's two fundamental terms,

potentiality or capability for being (*dýnamis*) and actuality, activity, or being-at-work (*enérgeia*; also *entelécheia*, fulfillment). Motion, then, is the fulfillment of a capability; it is the actual exercise of the potentiality that the mobile has for being what it was meant to be, for achieving its full form (*eídos*). Each motion is a unity, governed by its own end and ceasing when that end has been fulfilled. Its time is just the measured course of this activity of approaching full being. Since a terrestrial mobile, unlike the heavens (*On the Heavens* I, 3), has a corruptible material substrate and is subject to accidents, it cannot hold its perfected state. If it is an animal it will instead have generated a new animal, different in number but the same with itself in form. And so as a member of the species it will participate in eternity, in spite of the temporary life of each generation (*On the Soul* 415 b 4). Such generating is the terrestrial complement to the work of the generating sun: "Man is begotten by man and by the sun" (*Phys.* 194 b 13). The father as progenitor comes before the child in time, but because he contributes the form toward which the child is moving he is prior not only in time but also in being.

That toward which as an end the motion is, the actuality, is prior in dignity (*Met.* 1050 a). This priority is timeless. When a moving thing has come to the state of being-at-its-own-end or fulfillment it straightaway cuts out of the continuum of time and becomes, with respect to its being, timeless. What is actual, fully in being, is *present* (*hypárchon*, 1048 a 32), in a state imaginable as a kind of motionless vibrancy. One must say of it that it has been and is at once (1048 b 24); it is not temporally determinable or articulable. But just as for pure eternal objects "to be *while* time is is not the same as to be *in* time" (*Phys.* 221 a 19), so worldly things which are composites of form and material can have temporal duration in their actuality. For their having come into their own form does not preclude their informed material from being in time. Thus the men of Troy cannot be said to be either before or after us with respect to their form, and yet the Trojan War in which they served certainly occurred long before our day (*Problemata* 916 a 18 ff.).<sup>15</sup>

It is just because every motion is one and terminates in its own end that time is powerless as a cause. For this end is always discontinuous with the motion that leads up to it. Aristotle separates the concluding moment as no longer belonging to the motion but to its completion and fulfillment (*Phys.* 263 b 15). So while a motion and its time are yet in process, none of the moments of this continuous span is determinate or complete enough to be the sufficient cause of the next moment. When mere time intervenes between a cause and its end, that is, when the motion is not a completed unity, the end is merely contingent (*Post. An.* II 12). Thus, while a cause may be *in* time, it can never act *through* mere time: That means that there is no mechanical causation, which is a causation where each momentary state fully determines the next. Furthermore, Aristotle notes that the mere lapse of time is never respon-

sible for a thing being made new or beautiful. If anything, we say that time destroys, but only because motion itself is, from one perspective, "ekstatic" (a word Heidegger will raise to central importance), that is to say, it is a destabilization and a "standing forth" from the *status quo* (*Phys.* 221 b 1; 222 b 17).

Time is but the number of motion—the objective number, the countable parts themselves (219 b 9). Motion is potentially numerable, but it has an actual number or becomes temporal only when it is actually counted.

It is the soul that counts motion. How? By noting change, of course. When we have no awareness of change, as during sleep, we say that no time has passed, for we fit the earlier directly onto the later now (218 b 26). (Because of the continuity of motion the opposite case, that there should be no change to perceive, is apparently impossible.) So time depends on distinguishing *nows*.

## 2. THE NOW

If time is thought of on the analogy of a continuous directed line whose parts have an intrinsic order (though of position rather than of before-and-after, *Cat.* 5 a 30), the now corresponds to a Euclidean point, namely a point which is not a constituent element of a line but merely lies upon it (*Elements*, Def. 4). For the now, Aristotle is at pains to show, is not a part of time but its very "continuity" (220 a 19, 222 a 10), at once the pivotal link of before-and-after and the possibility of temporal division. This mathematized now reproduces whatever perplexities a mathematical point raises, and so, since time depends on motion and motion on the continuous magnitude of the mobile (219 a 12), time shares all the problems of geometric continuity. For example, the *nows* are the limits of segments of time without belonging to time and are therefore not attainable by dividing time, just as the point is a partless element which indefinite divisions of a line approach but do not reach. Further, the now is always the same in function but never in "position" (219 b 16), just as any point which produces a cut in the line is indistinguishable from another except by location; similarly, as a point divides a line everywhere potentially, but actually only when a cut is made, so the now does not divide time actually until a temporal cut is made.

How is that temporal cut made? As time accompanies motion, so the now hovers, as it were, over the moving thing (219 b 24 ff.) It is by the now alighting on an object that before-and-after in motion are first distinguished, for "the now is most apprehensible." We conclude that the now must be the *presentness of the perception*<sup>16</sup> of a moving thing, and that the cut in time is made by the act of perceptual attention to a moving object: "Perception is necessarily of a this and a where and a now" (*Post. An.* 87 b 30). Perception is "an innate distinguishing power" (99 b 36) which is actualized by the external and the particular

(*On the Soul* 417 b 21), and the now-cut in time is actualized with it.

But, on the other hand, how can there be perception of the point-now? If perception itself takes time, then how can it cut time except in time, which means, not at a now. But if, on the other hand, perception as the activity of the faculty of sensation (*On the Soul* II 5,12) is, like all actuality, essentially not in time (though it can be accompanied by time), then what does it have to do with the now which makes the temporal cut? What Aristotle says of the activity of pleasure exemplifies this problem: "It is a kind of whole in the now" (*Nic. Eth.* 1174 b 9; a 14).<sup>17</sup> Is this psychic now which is capable of atemporal substantial fulness formally identical with the now of physical time? Similarly for perception: What is perceived in the soul's now is the atemporal actuality of the object—the soul perceives its form through the sensing of its shape. How then can the soul simultaneously perceive the partless point-now of the mobile's temporal extension? Aristotle does not say. He does indeed try to make provision for the perception of lengths of time (see below, 3). But even then it will not be clear how the soul cuts time, and this is a crucial difficulty since "time is what is determined by the now" (*Phys.* 219 a 30). It is this difficulty which later philosophers solve by taking time into the soul so that the now becomes identical with its noting.

When the soul has pronounced "now" twice (however it does so), namely before and after a motion-stretch, we say that a certain time has passed (219 a 28). Since time is that by which motion has number, it must be possible to count the stretch between the termini, which requires reference to a standard measure. We have, as was shown, such universal measures given us by the heavenly spheres: days by the revolution of the starry sphere, years and seasons by the sun, months by the moon. With these natural passages and their more minute subdivisions we compare the stretch of time and, counting the bounding nows—for the now corresponds to the unit in number (221 a 16)—we count the substretches which they mark off.

There is no time without soul, for time arises where countable motion is actually counted, and only a soul, by means of the perceptive intellect (*nous*) can count (223 a 23 ff.). What, then, is counting?

We must cast loose completely from latter-day Kantian notion that counting is the articulation of an inner stream of consciousness, an internal time-flux. The soul, for Aristotle, has no original psychic time because it has no one continuous underlying flow or motion; nor does thought run through or touch on a continuum as it counts: "The motion of reason is not a continuum and in an underlying matter, as is that of a moving thing" (*On Invisible Lines* 969 a 32). When the soul thinks time it does not actually run through the temporal continuum but takes its sections atomically, as it thinks its successive thoughts discretely, like numbers (*On the Soul* 430 b 7, 407 a 9).

The soul, locomotive, affective, or rational, cannot well be said to be in *physical* motion (408 a 34 ff.).<sup>18</sup> But in some

other manner, never quite defined, it must be spoken of as moving. For example, thinking is motion for "without continuity and time it is impossible for us to think even those things which are not in time" (*On Memory* 450 a 8). Coming to know is a motion for it requires experience, repeated and remembered perceptions through which the universal is suddenly established (*Post. An.* 100 a 3 ff.). The attaining of a good condition takes time, for the human intellect, being composite, needs a continuous approach to perfection (*Met.* 1075 a 9). So there are psychic motions, but they are discontinuous, in fact in two ways: Motion is not always present and each motion proceeds discretely. I think it can be shown that the human soul does have an ever-presentness, namely its first actuality, analogous to the unintermittent thought of the pure intellect, but it is not the continuity of an ever-advancing, ever-incomplete homogeneous flux. The continuity of time is entirely external and physical. Its source is the heavenly local motion with which the intermittent inner motion of the soul has only this in common—that it, too, must be in a strict sense achronic; for how, without infinite regress, will the soul count its own counting?<sup>19</sup>

### 3. MEMORY

Without the now, then, there is no time, and no time without a now (219 b 34), but as we have seen, the now is not a part of time. Indeed its mode of being is quite different from that of time, which is to say that it comes under a different category. Time belongs to the category of "how great" or quantity; the now belongs to the category of "when" (*Cat.* 2 a 2, 11 b 12) along with "yesterday" and "tomorrow." Except for an isolated chapter on the usage of "when" words, nothing is said of this latter category in the *Physics* nor is it elucidated in the *Categories*. This most significant and strange disjunction of time and the now is implied by Aristotle's problematic theory of the role duration plays in perception and perceptible being: The perceptive intellect comes into contact with the continuously moving physical world always at a here and a now; the here may stay put, but the now passes on along with the motion, and from that, derivatively, arises the perception of time. But the now has another relation to time besides generating its perception: Each present now forms an impenetrable limit between all the nows that have passed and all the nows that are to come (234 a 1). Or perhaps since there are, strictly speaking, no past and future nows, one should say that the now separates time before from time after.

Therefore there is a past—or rather, we humans have a past (as do certain animals, *On Mem.* 450 a 15). The inanimate physical world has no past or future, although it has a before-and-after, which simply means that it is in a prior or a posterior phase of its approach to being. Nor has God a past, for having no sensory perception he has no now.

How then is it possible for us to have a past, that is to

say, passed nows? Aristotle deals with this most humanly interesting of temporal problems, the triune character of the category "when," in the brilliant little essay *On Memory and Recollection*. We know even beforehand that we must have a capacity for retaining nows drained of present perception. Without such an ability we could not tell time, since we could not interpret what we had counted up. Nor could we learn, since we could accumulate no experience. For it is many memories which make one experience, and memory is of past perception (*Post. An.* 100 a 4).

About the three "whens" Aristotle says succinctly: "Of what is present, there is perception, of what is to come, expectation, of what has been, memory" (*On Mem.* 449 b 28).

The present (*páron*, being-at-hand) is the perception-filled now. It is immediate: Of the now in the now there can be no memory (449 b 26). Enough has been said of it. Heidegger will subject it to a fundamental critique.

It is the *imagination* which makes the two non-present phases of time possible. The future arises when the soul, in present deliberation about what is to be, projects images (*On the Soul* 431 b 8). Aristotle observes that we appear to face *into* the future since the before of the past is more remote from the now than the after, while the before of the future is closer (*Phys.* 223 a 9). But beyond that he treats the future mostly from the logical point of view, asking what it might mean to speak now the truth about what will be. For if futural assertions are always either true or false, just like assertions about past and present, then contingency and chance are excluded—the future is determinate. But that cannot be, since both human choice and the vagaries of matter work to make future events contingent. So while it is certainly necessary that tomorrow there must be a seafight or not, it is impossible to say which of these is the case (*On Interp.* 9). Therefore, in order to judge of future propositions, one must know which things will be by necessity (either because they are part of a necessary cycle of becoming, *Post. An.* 95 b 38 ff., or because they are always or never), and what things are within human choice. Then one can say either "it will be" or "it is expected" (*to ésti, to méllon, Coming to Be* 337 b 3 ff.), knowing that these sentences really refer to two different futures—the foreknown and the merely anticipated.

But Aristotle never intimates that there is anything in the future *as* future, some innovation or fulfillment to be credited to mere futurity. What will be necessarily in the future is what has already always been (Note 13). Even human affairs run in cycles: "It is likely that art and philosophy have often been discovered as far as possible and perished again" (*Met.* 1074 b 11). So the future is of no great interest to him. It will be otherwise with Augustine to whom prophecy, as the foreknowledge of the apparently contingent, is a serious matter, and with Heidegger for whom the future will become the spring of time itself.

It is the past which Aristotle treats most significantly. There is a past because there is *memory* and memory is a mode of the imagination. There is a kind of motion in the

soul, resulting from the activity of perception, by which we have images (*On the Soul* 429 a 3). No human being, as a composite of matter and form, can think without images; for example, one cannot do geometry without at least internal diagrams. For the image is an accommodation of material objects to the thinking soul, a holding of their form and their continuity without their matter; the human intellect needs this form to go to work (*On Mem.* 450 b 31 ff.).

Memory and imagination, then, both belong to the same part of the soul, that "primary organ" of perception which receives deliverances incidental and common to all the senses, namely magnitude, motion, and, consequently, time (450 a 8 ff., *On the Soul* 425 a 14 ff.). Memory is the affection of this power when time has gone by (*On Mem.* 449 b 26), a kind of perception perpetuated past its cause. All things imaginable can be remembered (450 a 24); indeed it is hard to think what sense-derived image would not be, strictly speaking, a memory, since all images arise from perception as soon as the actual sensing in the sense organ has ceased.

Only what is no longer present can be remembered. But how is that possible? Aristotle never tells hows *imagining* works, except by analogy. He likens a memory-image to a seal impression, a simile which expresses the crux of his difficulty: Imaging compounds the mystery of perception: how can a material somatic organ receive the physical object extendedly and yet immaterially (*On the Soul* 424 a 18 ff., 427 b 29 ff.)—and then hold it through time ready for recovery?

But he does tell what it means to be an *image*. The memory recovers the perceptual trace or memory-image in the soul. However it is not the image we remember but the thing itself, and therein lies a problem. Aristotle resolves it by pointing out that that is just what it means to be an image: to be all in one an affection present *in* the soul and a likeness *of* an object, just as a picture is before us both as a physical object and as a likeness of a person. Aristotle is here prefiguring one of Husserl's central conceptions, that of "intentionality," which is the defining characteristic of consciousness as always consciousness *of* something.

We have a past, then, by virtue of memory, and we have memory by virtue of our threefold receptive power. These are its facets: 1. perception (*aísthesis*), which is responsible for the actual present sensory event; 2. imagination (*phantasia*), which is the capability of being affected by the continuities of place and motion abstracted from their matter; and 3. memory (*mnéme*), which permits retention of images and their revival together with an awareness of the time elapsed since perception (452 b 23). Aristotle supplies a not quite intelligible explanation of how such elapsed times are gauged (452 b 7 ff.): Just as one estimates a great external object not by actually reaching for it but by representing it in a proportionate figure in the field of the imagination, so one does not actually go back a long time to estimate the age of a memory-image, but one represents it proportionately in a speeded-up motion—for ex-

ample, by running through a decade in a second. What is hard to see is how such a scaling of time can give more than a very impressionistic comparative judgement of its length, since temporal extent cannot be panoramically surveyed in the imagination—for it does not appear—so as to give some sense of a scaling factor. As I have said, the chief difficulty in Aristotle's account of time is his insistence that duration itself can be perceived and imaged.

Aristotle, nonetheless, summarizes: "Only those animate beings who perceive time remember, and by that part by which they perceive time" (449 b 29). This might seem to be a circular outcome: We have a past, because we have memory and memory because we have a sense of passed time. Yet with all its difficulties it sets the terms for future debate—the past can be only for animate beings who have an imagination with a temporal dimension, that is, memory.

What is entirely missing in Aristotle's founding account is any sense that our triple temporality is humanly significant. The reason for this omission is that not time but timeless actuality is life in the full sense. This view is plainly expressed in this passage from the *Nichomachean Ethics*, which may serve as an epigraph:

Pleasant is the activity of the present, the hope of what is to come, the memory of what has been. But what is truly pleasant and lovable in these is their being in the way of actuality. [IX 1168 a 13]

\* \* \*

The vulnerable places in this magnificently detailed and dovetailed theory of time which can be culled from Aristotle's various works are patent. They occur, I have argued, at its outer and its inner termini: the continuous celestial revolution which is the cause of all motion and the perceptual now, which is the point of tangency of natural motion and the soul. Happily the central thesis, the reduction of time to an affection of motion, is not, I think, exclusively bound into Aristotle's terms. (See Sec. VI 2.)

Before going on to Augustine, who fully makes good Aristotle's lack of temporal pathos, let me at least refer to the intervening grand psycho-cosmological theory of the Neoplatonist Plotinus. (It is briefly sketched in Note 20.)

### III. AUGUSTINE: TIME AS THE "DISTENTION" OF THE SOUL

Time and the soul's temporality is transfigured in a created world. Augustine burns with curiosity, expressed in ardent language, to know how the temporal human creature can reach beyond creation to the creator so as to find God's will "before" the world. He begins by throwing out

an impetuous barrage of time quandaries and reflections (*Confessions*, XI 14–19). What is time? How can there be a past when what is gone is now no longer and what will be is not yet? And yet, did the present not pass, it would be eternity. Again, how can I say that is, whose cause of being is that it shall be? And how can I measure times when those gone are no longer and those to come are not yet available? If I do it, it must be while it is passing. But then what of the "three times"—how can I preserve them concurrently?

Augustine thus begins, in some faith of getting satisfaction, with just those questions which Aristotle cites as perplexities arising from the error of giving time substantial being. In the course of his passionate inquiry some truths do come clear to Augustine. He thinks he can affirm boldly that if nothing were passing there would be no past time; if nothing were coming, no future; if nothing were, no present. So there must be a motion of the world; God's creation has passage. Further he sees that he always faces time: It does not come up from behind and out of the past, and he cannot, like Aristotle, go along with it, but it comes toward him from the future. As Aristotle, in Greek, calls the past "that which has become" (*genómenon*), so Augustine calls it what has gone by (*praeteritum*). For there is a real future, not merely a necessitating cyclical return, but events-to-be, contingent to human apprehension, yet revealed to the prophets through God's omniscience. A real future is the human consequence of God's foreknowledge.

However he approaches the perplexity, Augustine is sure of this—and here begin his wonderful resolutions—that past, present, and future, wherever they are to be found, *are only as present* (20). There are not, properly speaking, three times (Aristotle's "whens") called past, present, and future. Rather there is "a present of what is past, a present of what is present, and a present of the future."

Such three are indeed in our soul (*anima*) and elsewhere I do not see them. The present of what has gone by is memory, the present of what is present, eyewitness (*contuitus*), the present of what is future, expectation. [20]

Augustine is not describing an Aristotelian faculty for sensing what is before us, for reviving images with their accrued times and for projecting them in planning. He is speaking of time itself, and he is placing it within the human soul.

The problem of measuring this psychic time leads him on (21–22). His mind "is set afire" by it, by the burning perplexity of the dispersal of time into its three phases—how to lay them together for comparison, in what space, in what dimension to do the measuring. For time is not the measure of a motion but what is itself to be measured: While the sun stood still, time yet went on for Joshua.

"New," he exclaims, "is the discovery of these things!" The discovery is this: "In you, my mind (*animus*), do I measure my times" (27). Times can be measured in the mind



because they are co-present there, and hence comparable. Thus is resolved the great puzzle of primary time measurement: unlike a length of space whose rigid measure can be transported intact and made congruent with another length, times and their measures flow away and are incapable of superimposition. (One must keep in mind that clocks measure and compare times only derivatively, through motion.): *But in the soul times do coexist.*

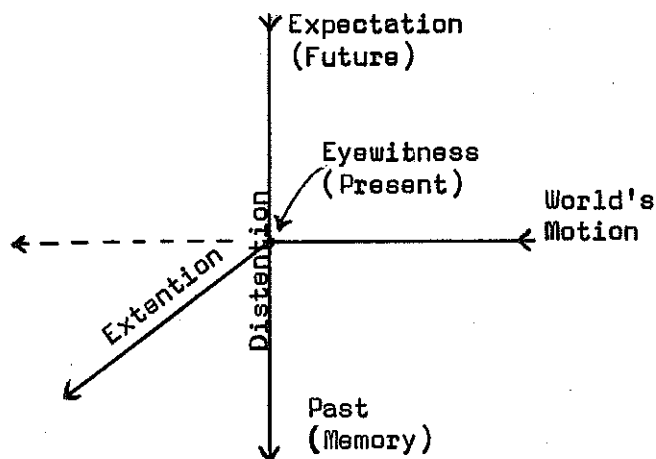
The soul's collection of all times into its present proceeds, I infer, as follows. Worldly motion passes, so to speak, under the attentively apprehending soul. The soul perceives each moment as it goes past and absorbs it into its own temporal dimension, its memory. Thus the now remains fixed in its context but sinks ever further down as new moments of motion are perceived. At the same time that the soul remembers, and at the same juncture of the world's motion and the soul's present, it also expects. The difference between remembering and expecting is only this, that whereas present moments drop *into* memory, future moments drop, as it were, *out of* the dimension of expectation into the world.

The future, therefore, is not a long time, for it is not, but the long future time is merely a long expectation of the future. Nor is the time past a long time, for it is not; but a long past time is merely a long memory of past time. [28]

Augustine has referred to this co-temporaneity of the times as being *in* the mind. But now he goes further. *Time is the dimension of the soul.* Here is how Augustine puts it: "... It seems to me that time is nothing else but a stretching out in length," [*distentio* is his word] "but of what I know not, and I marvel if it be not of the very mind" (26). Note that here time is not *in* the mind but it *is* the mind, or rather the dimension of the mind: The soul is the "space of time," that is to say it is drawn out into a temporal longitude along which memories, perception, and expectations are copresently arrayed.

This "distention" can therefore be visualized as a kind of vertical elongation, an ordinate in a diagram. The horizontal axis represents the world's motion coming from the future towards the soul's "eyewitness." That moment is the origin, the perceptual present, where the soul's "distention" intersects, or sits astride, the world's motion and turns its sensation-events into memory images. These continually drop down, preserving the order of entry, into the memory segment of the soul's distention, falling deeper with every passing moment. At the same juncture expectation or foreknowledge is drawn down from the upper segment to meet the real moment, to become realized in a perceptual present. The whole ordinate, the expectation and memory segment joined in the point of perception, constitutes the soul's triune present.

The diagram expresses three significant elements of Augustine's temporality. First, since time is the soul's vertical dimension, the world's horizontal axis is timeless. It is



indeed implicit in Augustine's understanding that the external creation has events but no temporal succession; it is the world as God sees it, all at once. It is the "standing now" (11) which becomes fluid only to the finite creature:

Whatever God doth, it shall be forever. . . . That which hath been is now, and what is to be hath already been, and God requireth what is to be. [*Ecclesiastes* iii 14-15]

Second is the real futurity of the projections and previsions of the expectation segment; prophecies, as God-given visions of what is to be, meet their own realizations in the world, when the moment of their juncture with it arrives.

Finally, the diagram points to the plenitude of memory for Augustine. He has indeed already devoted a most beautiful book (X) to its power, its "ample and infinite inwardness (*penetrable*)," its "fields and spacious palaces," whence he can make present to himself by their images things he has seen and learned, including himself as he was, and which he traverses to come to God (8, 9, 17, 25).

Augustine's passionate interest in temporality has its reason in his faith. He wants to discover the condition under which a temporally dispersed being can approach union with God. Having collected time from what might be called its horizontal extension into the vertical dimension representing the cotemporaneity of the phases of time, he has achieved a human present which is analogous to God's "standing now." But he prays further that his soul's stretching apart, its "distention"—William Watt's vivid translation of 1631 says "distraction" (Loeb)—should be gathered in, so that he might be not stretched apart in time (*distentus*) but stretched forth (*extentus*), not in distraction (*secundum distentionem*) but in concentration (*secundum intentionem*) toward the delights of the eternal father "which are neither to come nor to pass away" (29). This "extention" out of and beyond the world is represented by the third dimension in the diagram.

Temporality, then, is the worldly dimension of the created soul, namely its capacity for taking in and containing the world, that is, was, and will be. And so time is also the soul's "distraction."

## HUSSERL: THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF TIME

Husserl's abstruse, intricate, and subtle description of the sense of time, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, begins with the praise of Augustine as the unsurpassed master of the problem of time. Indeed, Augustine's "distention" furnishes Husserl with his guiding schema, and Husserl may be regarded as Augustine's expositor, with this difference: Husserl's analysis is intended to require no act of faith or philosophical thesis at all since he aims to write a phenomenology, a presuppositionless description of the phenomena of temporality and of temporal appearances. He therefore requires a rigorous "abstention" from all substantializing assumptions. He suppresses what might be called ontological greed, not in order to gaze about aesthetically, but to develop a penetrating analytic insight into the deep constituting structures of phenomena seen *as* phenomena, namely as they appear to consciousness. To put time before oneself strictly as a phenomenon hence requires the exclusion of objective or world time insofar as its existence is posited, and a transfer of attention to the fundamental phenomenon of immanent time, the flow of consciousness from now to now. This flow is the "temporally constitutive flux," the "originary" stream, in which temporal phenomena and, remarkably, the consciousness of time itself are *simultaneously* constituted (par. 39). In the end, to be sure, this flux is interpreted as consciousness itself, as absolute subjectivity or self (36). But that is a leap beyond simple phenomenology, forced by the irrepressible human need for more than merely descriptive accounts.

The early section, entitled "The Analysis of Time-Consciousness," is, however, rigorously phenomenological, and from it I shall sketch some findings: apt new coinages, illuminating discriminations, and, as the centerpiece, a diagrammatic synthesis of the elements found in the analysis.

### 1. RETENTION

Although each now is a source of fresh perception and the spring of the living present, temporally enduring objects are not perceived in a pointillistic mode, but in longer presences. This is a fact of temporal phenomena seen as phenomena. They have enduring presence, even though the flux of time has an instantaneous leading edge. (To overcome the perplexity associated with this observation,

which Aristotle had left unresolved, namely how anything can be perceived in the partless point-now, the so-called "specious present," an unintelligible notion of a finite, enduring now, had been introduced,<sup>21</sup> but Husserl admits no such constructs.) How is an appearance, say of a melody, which develops over time as a unified object, to be understood?

The term "intentionality" was mentioned in reference to Aristotle's understanding of the memory-image as an image of a thing. Husserl develops intentionality into an indispensable element in the description of consciousness. Consciousness is always also consciousness of something: it is always intentional. "Truly . . . it pertains to the essence of the intuition of time that in every point of its duration . . . it is consciousness of *what has just been* and not mere consciousness of the now-point of the objective thing . . ." (12). Every now-consciousness is also a yet-consciousness, like a comet's tail of a previous perception. Thus besides the veritable perception, the content present *in* consciousness in its own right, there is also a consciousness of the time gone by—not a faded perception but something quite different: a past tone present *as* a past tone. This mode is distinct from ordinary memory, and Husserl calls it *retention*, or primary memory. It is the consciousness in the present of what has just been, discovered through the analysis of the phenomenal fact that an experience has duration *within* the immediately superseded now. Every present impressionistic consciousness "shades off" into an everfresh retentional consciousness of the temporal object's immediate past. But when the spring of tonal impressions gives out, the melody is over and sinks back to a vanishing point, passing into ordinary, or secondary, memory.

Secondary memory is distinguished from primary, or retentive, memory by these features: Perception has the distinguishing character of "self-giveness" which means that it stands there, uncalled-for, in its own right. So too is "originary" time-consciousness self-given, for one cannot inhibit time's running-off. What we *can* do is to re-produce or re-present sections of temporal experience. Husserl employs the term "representification" (*Vergegenwaertigung*), "making present again" (Appendix II). Retention, then, yields the immediate past which is present; memory yields the remoter past which must be made present again. Husserl makes numerous other acute observations about memory phenomena (See Note 22).

Memory is a mode which posits, that is to say, requires, a previous perception. The intentional reaching for the past is fulfilled in the presentification of a perception which is no longer self-given. The phenomenon of memory as a whole is precisely that of a present givenness of the past as past—but it is no longer a question for phenomenology how the past can *be*.

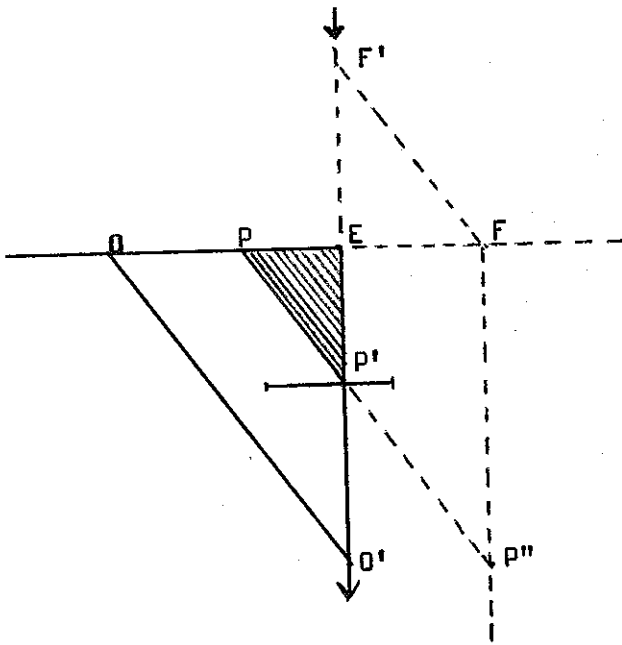
Thus the present is characterized by perception, the past by an "intention" or a reaching for a previous perception, and the future by a "protention," that is, an expecta-

tion of fulfillment in a perception to come. Protention is therefore inverted memory: Perception succeeds protention but precedes memory (24-28).

## 2. THE DIAGRAM OF TIME

Husserl's famous "Diagram of Time" (10) displays the phenomena of these three phases of time in their conjunction with the phenomenon of the "running off" or coursing of time in a coordinate schema which had been suggested by William James (Ch. XVII, end). One might say that it accomplishes the junction of Aristotle's two distinct categories of "when" and of "how much," or duration. Husserl is careful to state that the diagram is not a representation of objects as they appear in time, that is, of temporal appearances, but rather of the phenomenon of temporality itself.

Here is an elaborated composite version of Husserl's schemata:



The horizontal axis represents the originary flux of now points in consciousness. E is the now. PE is the span of the temporal flux of one temporally perceived object, for example, a melody, and it is therefore one retentional episode whose beginning was at P. O is some now before the initial now of the melody and belongs to the time of an event now past. F is a future now.

The oblique lines PP', OO' represent the "shading off" or "sinking away" into memory of the consciousness of P

and O as the perception-filled now has advanced to E. The line FF' represents a protention to be fulfilled in a coming perception at F.

The vertical axis F'EP'O' stands for Augustine's "distention" of the mind, namely present consciousness encompassing perception, memories, and expectation. Into it flow the oblique parallel memory and protention lines which fix past events and future expectations into the memory and expectation order of the present. The present therefore contains a continuous and unperturbable time-order; the latter feature is schematically guaranteed by the parallelism of the oblique lines. EP' is the present retentional memory of the temporal event-object which occurred over PE. The triangle PEP' is the whole melodic episode in its "double continuity": the horizontal line represents the continuous flux of ever new perceptual nows, while the broadening triangular surface composed of parallel paths which fall out, as it were, from the flux, stands for the continuous memory lines of past nows feeding into the present memory.

The horizontal through P marks a variable threshold between retention and secondary memory, below which the melody would have outlasted the retentional span of that consciousness and would cease to be a unified temporal object. When F is now, the melody will have to be deliberately or spontaneously recalled, being by then a secondary memory at P.

Husserl's diagram differs from the schema I have drawn for Augustine in that the horizontal axis of the former stands for the internal temporal flux rather than for the external motion of the world. Husserl regards that inner flux as the fundamental temporal phenomenon; an external time-consciousness would be for him a contradiction in terms, because to be conscious of a phenomenon temporally is just to constitute the temporal flux in consciousness. Therefore Husserl uses one time coordinate to represent the simultaneous presence of all the phases of time in consciousness and another to stand for the advancing temporal flux whose front is the now-consciousness. But whether this flux is really a *primary* phenomenon is just the question. (See Sec. VI 1.)

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Aristotle's understanding of time as the number of motion counted by the soul follows from his theory of motion as actualization. Augustine's view of time as the dimensionality of the soul follows from his desire to relate the three phases of human temporality to the eternity of the Creator. Kant's theory of time will serve to ground the new science of dynamics, particularly its causal relations. Insofar as the temporal relations of nature are contributed by a faculty of the soul, its formative sensibility, Kant is Augustine's heir, but it will be more interesting to see his theory in terms of an antithesis to Aristotle.

## IV. KANT: TIME AS INNER SENSE

### 1. INNER SENSE

The first and all-determining discovery Kant presents in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is a truly revolutionary understanding of what it means to *sense* ("Transcendental Aesthetic"). Recall that Aristotle had said that time is sensed, or better, perceived, in the primary sensory organ, because whatever is sensible also has duration. Now Kant claims that time is not sensed but is *the form of sense*. That means that the sensibility is not only a receptive but also a formative faculty; and the first form it gives sensation is temporal form.

What is behind this claim? The immediate purpose of the *Critique* is the grounding of the knowledge of nature, above all of the new science of motion, Newtonian physics. "Grounding" means setting out the conditions of possibility of such a science, which guarantee its necessity and its universality—which make it *certain*. Aristotelian physics was the science of individual motions by which an indeterminate material, which is only potentially, is formed into an independent, fully actual, natural substance. Newtonian science, in stark contrast, studies the motion of a system of bodies homogeneously constituted of massy matter and moving inertially through space unless deflected by interactions with other masses, interactions which are governed by universal mathematical laws of force. For the former, time was the counting of the actualizing motion, for the latter it is the independent variable in the expression of natural laws.

Kant assumes that knowledge of this system of nature requires the cooperation of two faculties. One is active, law-giving, spontaneous (which means that it originates with the human subject itself); it is the thinking function, and the faculty is called the *understanding*. The other is a receptive power which must be affected by something given to it from outside; it is the *sensibility*. The latter is needed because human thinking is for Kant purely formal, that is to say, it has a merely rule-supplying function. Therefore it is incapable of conceiving its own objects of thought without being supplied with matter; for it to try to do so would be like a hand grasping its own grasp—less than an empty form. Therefore, thinking requires that a material be given to it, and the faculty in which such givens are received as representations—since Kant considers everything before consciousness at all a representation—is precisely the sensibility (B 33). Kant also calls this receptive faculty the *intuition*, and he applies that same term to the original pure content which he ascribes to it and into which sensory affection is received.

Now all physical experience in fact occurs in terms of space and time, and these are understood to be the primary dimensions of physics. Therefore, if it is to be a certain science, there must be neither absolute, independent,

external substances in space nor adventitious developments through time. For both of these could be known only *after* the fact of experience, and that means they could not be known necessarily or universally. The only knowledge which can be certain is that which is conditioned from the beginning through the observer himself—which is, in Kant's term, *a priori*.

Therefore, not only the conceptual side of physics but also the invariable components of its sensory aspect, namely space and time, must proceed from the knower. Accordingly Kant assigns to him an original *formative receptivity*—on the face of it a contradiction in terms, but an unavoidable one. This actively receptive capacity is Janus-faced. One face is turned outward and shapes sense material into spatial configurations; the other looks inward and forms what it receives into temporal sequences. The sensibility, then, is dual; it has an inner and an outer sense.

Kant presents the outer sense first, significantly, as it turns out. This sense receives in the mode of outsideness, in two meanings of the word. First it receives those sensations which are alien and adventitious, which come to us as they will from outside ourselves. But then it also receives them in the mode of outsideness, of externality, namely as spatially extensive. The outer sense is therefore the reason why external sensations always assume spatial form. Furthermore, because the spatial form has inherent formative characteristics, namely those of Euclidean geometry, spatial appearances are certain to be amenable to geometric treatment. Hence the outer sense guarantees the applicability of mathematics to science.

The inner sense, on the other hand, faces toward the innermost parts, the very subject or referent of all representations, the Self. The inner sense receives the self as if it too were a given, namely as it presents itself to its own intuition. Within the inner sense the subject itself becomes, by definition, an appearance, for whatever the sensibility receives and forms is called an appearance. The inner sense is called *time*. It is not that time is an inner sense, but that the inner sense, and the self appearing within it, are temporal in character. In so presenting inner sense Kant is therefore not saying what time is but only why it is the inevitable form every appearance takes. Nevertheless, a new understanding of the nature of time will come out of Kant's discovery, one aspect of which has already emerged: Contrary to Aristotle, for whom time is not an affection of motion, Kant will argue that motion itself is possible only under the form of inner sense. Indeed it is only under the form of temporality that motion is even conceivable for Kant, since it is only the succession of time which fluidifies the law of contradiction so that opposite predicates can, at different times, belong to the same object—that being the much reduced post-Aristotelian concept of motion (B 48).

But why is the inner sense given the name of time? And what does it mean to say that the self appears within it? The paradoxical fact that the self, the ultimate subject of

representations, is somehow also an appearance to itself is taken as given, and, Kant says, is equally a mystery in all theories (B 68, 152). But to learn how it happens we go to that part of the *Critique* which deals with thinking (“Transcendental Deduction”).

## 2. UNDERSTANDING

All conceiving is steadfastly accompanied by an “I think,” a kind of pervasive prefix to all thinking, which is, however, purely formal in that it adds nothing to what I think. Furthermore, the prefix tells me at most *that* I am but never *what* I am (B 157). Kant calls this consciousness “apperception,” a term that had previously meant self-consciousness. He, however, indicates by the term not self-knowing but only the inmost subject or self of a rational being, the ultimate knower. The apperception is “transcendental,” which in Kantian terminology means that it is a faculty, not an object.

So Kant does not mean that the self is self-conscious in the sense of having itself as an object; it is not, like Aristotle’s pure intellect, thought thinking itself. Nor is the self *my* self; indeed its self-hood is not in the ordinary sense personal. The self might as well be an “it” (B 404), for it is simply the hidden subject underlying all thinking functions. (Heidegger will criticize the lack of “my-ownness” in the Kantian self.) Moreover, the transcendental subject *cannot* be known to itself, because its strictly formal, that is, rule-giving thinking functions cannot, by their very character, become objects of thought to themselves (A 402).

Collectively these conceiving functions (the word “function” is taken statically, as in mathematics) are called the *understanding*, which is therefore the self as it is diversified into certain definite enumerable functions or “categories.” Each of these accomplishes certain syntheses or unifications proper to itself. Besides these operations the categories are nothing and mean nothing. What do they synthesize?

Sensible givenness is assumed to be in its very nature manifold, spread out, various. Accordingly, the sensibility must be capable of receiving such a manifold. In the case of the outer sense there must be ready a transcendental space for its reception. This sense therefore contains a “pure manifold,” the pure intuition mentioned above, which is the form-giving content affected by sensation—the pure space of geometry itself. The nature of this pure content of inner sense will be addressed presently.

It is this pure content of the sensibility that is unified, or determined, or structured by the understanding in definite ways, as many ways as there are concept-categories. What the understanding determines first is the content closest to it, so to speak, namely that of the inner sense. That is how the thinking functions first obtain their required object, although a pure, not a sensory one.

Objects represented in the sensibility and unified by the understanding are called phenomena or appearances (A 429 ff.). Kant claims that when the pure content of inner sense is determined by thinking, the resulting appearance is that of the apperceiving subject itself. Kant takes the word appearance seriously—only that which is not itself on the scene can have appearances. So the self, which cannot know itself *in* itself, appears in the inner sense, and since every appearance is an appearance *for* the subject, the self appears *to* itself. The primary example of self-appearance is the act of attention, in which thinking, having determined the inner sense according to laws of connection contained in the categories, appears as a succession of moments (B 155)—our ordinary awareness of the now-succession.

The transcendental self, then, the inaccessible rational source of thinking, can determine another part of the soul, and though it cannot know itself, it can at least represent itself to itself as an appearance. Note, however, that the situation is peculiar in that the self can hardly be said to affect the sensibility as sensory material could affect it: it cannot materially fill but only determine or unify the inner sense.

The motive for establishing an inner sense is, on the face of it, to ground the temporal or causal dimension of physics, but its deeper role is that of providing for self-appearance. The reason why this sense, or rather its content, is identified with time now emerges. This content is the steady, unceasing, underlying flow which we always come to in self-inspection: “Time does not pass away but in it passes the existence of what is changeable.” Time itself is unchangeable and permanent (B 183), for it is the original flux-content of the inner sense itself; it is this flux-content which our thinking determines and structures.

The thought-determined inner sense *is* consciousness, but it is emphatically not self-consciousness in the sense of self-knowledge, since the self has not affected the inner self so as to produce the kind of real knowledge Kant calls experience. For experience requires more than that the subject should work on itself: it requires a material object (where “material” refers not to physical matter but to a real sensory content).

## 3. IMAGINATION

The configurations to which thinking determines the inner sense are the work of that most central power, “an art hidden in the depth of the human soul” (B 181), the imagination. For Aristotle, the activity of the imagination, identical with that of the primary sensorium, is not hidden in the depth at all; it is, in fact, on the interface of soul and nature and has a physical base. Kant rightly considers his discovery of the original contribution of the transcendental imagination quite new (A 120 n.). For him thinking and sensing are too heterogeneous to come together without

some intermediate agency; it is the imagination which is the meeting ground of the two.

It performs what Kant calls a "figurative" synthesis (B 154), which produces schemata through which thinking can determine sense and accomplish the mystery of empty, meaningless thought interpenetrating with pure inner flux. The schemata are essentially rules for sensualizing concepts or, equally, conceptualizing sense content. The imagination makes time thinkable or, as we have seen, conscious. But much more importantly, it does the inverse: *it makes thought temporal*.

Here are just two examples of the schemata which are the work of the imagination. (Oddly, and significantly, this work is always presented as picture or figure-making, although it is supposed to be primarily temporal.)

1. The inner flux, the pure intuition of time, is, as was said, assumed to be an even, primary flow. (Recalling that Kant's project is the grounding of Newtonian physics we can recognize in this flux the internalization of Newton's equably flowing absolute world time.) Kant calls it the pure picture of quantity, applicable to all objects in general. The first schema or conceptualization of this continuous forward flow of inner quantity is number. Number is the imaginative scheme of a countable succession of units, that is, of articulated, measured internal duration. In counting, the understanding is continually unifying the undifferentiatedly fluid manifold of pure Time, and generating pure, conscious, temporal succession, or the pure sense of passing: counting is not so different from the pulsing of mere consciousness itself. (The spatial analogue to the difference between Time as flux and concept-determined time would be that between Space as a whole and measured space.)

2. Another imaginative configuration brings together pure inner intuition with the concept of necessary connection in the schema of before-and-after. Thus is added to conscious advancing time a necessary, unperturbable time-order, the ground, for Kant, of the principle of cause and effect in nature.

All the schemata together—there are as many as the understanding has concepts—circumscribe thought-informed temporal flux, or speaking more familiarly, temporal thinking. It was, after all, to be expected that when the rational self cast itself into inner sense to become an appearance the result should be thinking in time. What are its features?

#### 4. TIME AND SPACE

For Aristotle, the external world with its continuity of places defined by movable substances is clearly prior to being in time, which is merely the countable aspect of motion.

Kant, on the other hand, at first, at least, presents time as *the sense of senses*, the first formal condition of all ap-

pearing objects in general, both self and nature. Time receives all representations, everything which is there for consciousness at all; it is the ultimate relating receptacle and the condition of all connectedness. Space, on the other hand, is the condition of outer appearance, namely of nature, only (A 99, B 177). The reason is that time belongs immediately to the soul and is the place of consciousness itself, while space must wait to receive material from the outside.

But then, in a crucial section added to the second edition of the *Critique*, the "Refutation of Idealism" (B 274–279), Kant totally inverts his new order in a doctrine surprising in the context but also quite unavoidable. Space is again the condition of temporal experience.

In the "Refutation" Kant explicitly aims to prove that mere consciousness of one's own existence—thought-determined inner sense—proves, in being affected by outer sense, the real existence of external objects in space. Implicitly, however, he shows that objects in space are the necessary condition of self-experience.

The internal flux of unfocused attention, he argues, is absolutely featureless, indeterminate, a mere fugitiveness. To determine time and give it steadiness it must be projected on something permanent; it must be represented in terms of perceived permanence in space. Spatial appearances seem to stay put while time has no aspect that stands but its flux itself. Time supports only the alteration of determinations, but no determinate steady object; in the soul "everything is in continual flux" (A 381). Therefore the representation of time is always spatial; if time is to appear at all it must be in a spatial form, most appropriately as a one-dimensional straight line (B 156): Time appears as space reduced by two dimensions. It is now also clear why the self cannot really properly appear in time. The inner intuition admits no material affection except through space. (Indeed, it is only this geometrization of appearing time which makes possible the primary measurement of physical motion, namely velocity. For velocity is conceivable only as a ratio of homogeneous magnitudes, namely space lengths and time lengths. But as I said, that means that time, insofar as it is apprehensible at all, which is to say, insofar as it is representable, is only a dimension abstracted from space: Bergson has a point when he accuses Kant of confusing time with space (*Essay*, "Conclusion").

Yet more follows: There can be no full consciousness without the appearances of three-dimensional externality. For the linear representation of the determinate inner sense, while it may be formally adequate, is also utterly poverty-stricken and unrevealing (*Foundations of the Metaphysics of Nature*, Preface). To appear to itself, the self must put the inner sense in the way of spatial appearances which then represent to it its own formative powers and that of its sensibility. The system of such revealing thought-informed spatio-temporal appearances Kant calls nature and its science is Newtonian physics.

Inner experience is, then, only mediately possible through space. That is why, I think, space is treated before time in the "Transcendental Aesthetic" and why the imagination is fundamentally figurative. Time began as the formal (or better, formative) condition of all appearance whatsoever, but space turns out to be the condition of the appearance of time. A self having only an inner sense would have no representations of itself at all. If it were conscious it would be conscious of nothing; it would be at most a forever-idle capability of a possible experience.

## 5. TEMPORAL THINKING

To recapitulate: 1. Self-consciousness: Of the self which underlies all thinking and sensing there is no knowledge. There is no immediate representation of it; it cannot become an object to itself beyond the indication given in the universal prefix "I think." There is therefore no self-consciousness in the sense of reflective self-knowledge. (It is one of the mysteries of the *Critique* how any of the reflective terms necessary to critical analysis of the self obtain their meaning.) 2. Consciousness: Consciousness, awareness, belongs to the thought-determined inner sense, or better, is identical with it. That time is in the soul and that the soul is in time are converse propositions (A 362). Both claims mean that the self is ready and able to receive an external material. But to be merely aware in this way is no more to know oneself than it is actually to experience an external object. Time, even when determined by thought, yields no formed object but merely the schemata of relations of possible representations within the soul (B 50). It is the mere capacity for thinking objects. 3. Self-experience: If self-knowledge in the reflective sense is impossible to the self, it can yet experience itself, that is, its own powers, in inner sense—but only if that sense is spatially represented and determined by real objects. Then the self can appear to itself as a temporally thinking subject and behold its formative faculties constituting nature. Self-experience begins<sup>23</sup> when temporal thinking, namely the time-informed categories, such as number, permanence, and causality, is exercised on spatial material.

A great question arises. The explicit motive of the *Critique* was to find what the human constitution must be if physics is to be a science. From this point of view the temporal sense was established primarily to secure the causal ordering of motion. But is it plausible that Kant's view of the soul should be so altogether a mere consequence of this motive? Indeed, there might well be other ways to ground physical causality than by means of the original flux which, as has been shown, is in itself insufficient to account for self-conscious thought.<sup>24</sup> A deeper reason, namely Kant's thinking about thought itself, seems to me to be at work. It is best phrased in terms of the consequences following from his very modern rejection of Aristotle.

For Aristotle knowing is a motion of the soul, an actualization, which achieves actuality as the intellect achieves its end and becomes the thing thought. That final activity is true life. For Kant, knowing, as the conceiving of material objects, cannot be such a motion, since motion is itself generated by thinking, when it determines space through time (B 155, note). Nor can it be an activity, for thought is not fulfilled in its object: It simply determines or unifies the manifold and, so to speak, fits itself about the object and constitutes it. Truth is no longer the simple luminous identity of the intellect with its intelligible object, but rather the "adequation" of thought with the material object (B 82).<sup>25</sup> Therefore Kant's thinking has neither motion nor life; it has no actuating principle.

The pure flux of inner sense can now be seen in the light of a deep though inexplicit need. *Time is needed to float thought*, as it were. It gives thinking a spurious kind of motion, a pseudo-activity. In themselves the thinking functions are merely empty, static forms; cast on the stream of inner sense they assume fluidity. Time is the animating principle of that kind of thinking which has no end in itself, and the *Kantian temporality is the substitute for the lost life of thought*.

\* \* \*

Kant's treatment of time is the focus of Heidegger's deep, engaged, but also strained reading of the first *Critique*. Heidegger calls this kind of interpretative reading a "recovery" or "repetition" (*Wiederholung*). It is meant to bring to light the unspoken, and for the author unspeakable, implications of the text. It attempts to reveal not what the author meant and failed to say—an author worth "repeating" is quite able to express himself—but rather the inexorable ultimate outcome implicit in his thought. This interpretation yields very striking—if not quite persuasive—results especially with respect to an aspect of time markedly missing from Kant's account, namely its three phases. Heidegger reconstructs these from the first, superseded version of the Transcendental Deduction. (See Note 26 for a summary of Kant's text with reference to Heidegger's interpretation.)

I have just argued that Kant has deep reasons for making time the primary sense, namely to vivify the inert functions of his concepts, but that his almost inadvertent, yet inescapable tendency is the spatialization of time. However, Heidegger, who sees in Kant his predecessor, views the whole critical enterprise as centered on the unexpressed fundamental temporality of the human being. Heidegger understands that hidden art of the imagination, to which Kant assigns the function of temporalizing thinking (or, equivalently, of thought-determining time) as the "temporalizing," the time-origination which is the being of human existence. Kant drew back, as it were, from an opportunity he was not ready for, the possibility of seeing the imagination not as a third and mediating faculty, the

meeting ground of thought and sense, but as the common root of both. He could not yet abstract from its figurative character to see it as transcendental temporality simply. Kant's failure to explain the "my-ownness" of the self, together with his inability to see the imagination, the meeting ground of self and time, as anything but a mystery are Heidegger's clues to a new understanding of human existence.

Heidegger owes debts also to Hegel and Bergson (see Note 27), and most certainly to Augustine (paras. 9, 81 end), who anticipates him in the essential temporality of the human being and in the primacy of the future among the time phases—indeed one might almost call Heidegger a godless Augustine. But he goes beyond all of them, as far as one can go, I think, in the exaltation of time. If for Kant the inner sense is a mysterious mirror for the unknowable self, for Heidegger time will be the very meaning of being human. The answer to the question "What is time?" will fall out of the analysis of human existence.

## V. HEIDEGGER: TEMPORALITY AS THE MEANING OF EXISTENCE

### 1. ECSTATIC TEMPORALITY

Heidegger's starting point in *Being and Time* is the old question concerning Being. However, he does not ask: What is Being?, since he considers that question a fateful wrong turn into metaphysics. He rather asks: What is the meaning of being?, What makes a being possible?, What is the being (*Sein*) of Being (*Seiendes*)? Assuming that there are different beings, he chooses to pursue the question by analyzing the being most expressive of the inquiry itself, the being that *exists*. To exist means to position oneself beyond oneself so as to understand one's own being. The being that so exists is also the being that is *there*, that finds itself involved in the world, not merely present in it. It is, further, that being which is in each case *mine*, which has "each-his-ownness," in contrast to the unowned Kantian subject. Heidegger names it by the ordinary German term for existence, *Dasein*, "there-being." It is the human being.

The larger first part of the book is devoted to an "existential analysis," an interpretative description of the phenomena of existence which will reveal its basic structure. These original modes are called "existentials," and the structure so revealed is called "care." The "meaning" of care, that is to say, that which makes it possible, will be *temporality*.

In the following abbreviated account of "care," the prodigious originality and ingeniousness of Heidegger's analysis will perform be blunted.

Care has a threefold constitution: 1. The being that cares, understands. Understanding—sharply distinguished from theoretical knowing—is its ability to project before itself its own possibilities. It is aware of being able to be (not that it *has* that possibility but that it *is* that possibility). The being that exists is always "ahead of itself." For *what* it is, its essence, is just *that* it exists, that it understands itself as a being that is able to be.

2. This being, *Dasein*, also has moods, "existential moods," which are the ground of ordinary, familiar moodiness. These moods are testimony to the condition in which it already finds itself (*Befindlichkeit*). They attest to its "facticity," to the bald fact that it always finds itself already cast or thrown into an alien world. Heidegger calls the existential condition of existing always already in the world, "thrownness."

3. In this world *Dasein* is always already preoccupied with what it finds there, alongside itself, namely other existences and things. It is its lot to sink into a state of self-forgetfulness or "fallenness" as it busily "takes care" of this world. This state of "inauthenticity," literally: "un-one's-ownness," is as genuine a possibility of existence as its opposite, authenticity; Heidegger disclaims any invidious connotation in these terms.

In sum, then, the being that cares is a being ahead of itself in projecting its own possibilities, which finds itself involved in a world along with other existences and entities, and which can lose itself in being busy about them.

Now Heidegger asks what it means for *Daesein* to be in this way. This question belongs to a deeper, that is, an ontological, level of analysis, for here is discovered the meaning of care, namely the condition of its possibility. The answer is: *temporality* (Second Part, Chps. 3–6).

The existent being is one about whom there is always something yet outstanding, something still to come, namely its death. So also is it an "ecstatic" being. "Ecstatic" is a word used by Aristotle in his chapters on time (*Phys.* 222 b 17) to describe the self-unsettling of motion. Heidegger uses it for the primordial "being out of itself" of *Dasein*, namely its temporality (par. 65).<sup>28</sup> The word has, of course, the connotation of being transported and rapt away.

*Dasein* is "out of itself" in three ecstatic phases, each of which accounts primarily but not exclusively for one of the aspects of care in either its inauthentic or its authentic version. Hence the ontological analysis covers a large number of combinations, of which I shall sketch only the primary ones, reversing Heidegger's order so as to begin with the ecstasis to which Heidegger assigns the least standing (par. 68).

1. The self-forgetfulness of fallenness is in its nature always inauthentic. It is the mode of—note well—actuality, of fact, of mere presentness and nowness, greedy for satisfactions which hold no further possibilities. The ontological ground of this existential mode is the ectasis of the *present*.

Heidegger understands the present not in the tradi-



tional way as the phase of perceptual vividness, but as a derivative mode, abstracted from living involvement—the mode of “presentification,” the grasping attempt to turn the possibilities of existence into present actualities. The ecstasis which yields the present, the phase which is traditionally the front or fulcrum of time, is the one most dependent on the other phases for its authentic version (68 c).

2. Just as in English there is a periphrastic past perfect “I am gone,” so in German one says “I am having been” (*Ich bin gewesen*). Human existence always is as having been, for it always finds itself already cast into the alien world. It is this fact which makes it moody. An existential mood is a condition in which *Dasein* finds itself coming back to or brought before the mere fact of its own existence.<sup>29</sup> Heidegger gives as a cardinal example the authentic mood which he calls dread or anxiety (*Angst*; the inauthentic counterpart is ordinary fear). In anxiety *Dasein* discovers the world into which it has been thrown as uncanny, unhomy, unmeaning, unamenable to being taken care of. Anxiety brings *Dasein* back to the fact of its own isolated thrownness, and this “being brought back to itself” apprises it that it can return to itself; that it has the possibility of “recovering” or “repeating” itself. What accounts for the possibility human existence has of finding itself already in a state of mind or mood and what brings it face to face with its own recoverableness (*Wiederholbarkeit*; sometimes translated “repeatability”) is the ecstasis of the past, in which *Dasein* goes out of itself to be as having been (68 b). Through this ecstasis human existence comes back to itself as an ever-antecedent fact whose possibilities can always be repeated. Therewith is also revealed the possibility of authentic existence. It demands the introduction of a future element into the repetition of its past.

3. Therefore the primary ecstasis of primordial authentic temporality is the future (65). This future is not an indeterminate “not yet.” It is, as the German *Zukunft* suggests to Heidegger, that toward which *Dasein* goes, but it is also the terminus from which *Dasein* comes back into the situation in which it finds itself, to face the present resolutely. The future thus comprehends and makes possible the other two ecstases. Futurity accounts for the aspect of care called understanding, since to understand means to project one’s own possibilities. Future means anticipation; rather than being propelled by present urgencies that need to be taken care of, futural *Dasein* cares authentically: It lets its own possibilities for being come toward itself. The future, too, enables the human being to repossess its past properly; it is in facing its possibilities that *Dasein* is brought back to what it already was. The futural ecstasis of coming toward oneself accounts for authentic existence (69 a).

The dominant case of authentic futurity, understood as resolute anticipation, is *Dasein*’s facing of its own death (46–63). The human being is that being which lives as a being which is going to die. *Dasein* discovers among its ex-

istential possibilities the ultimate one of *not* being, and this discovery makes it focus on the wholeness of its existence. Death is what it escapes from in the inauthentic present; death is what it is already inescapably saddled with; death is what it resolutely anticipates. Death therefore has the threefold structure exhibited by care and time, and conversely. The inference follows that our temporality is finite and that primordial existential time comes to an end.

What then of ordinary time, the common time human beings have, spend, puzzle about? Heidegger undertakes to show that, strange though it seems, *time is temporal*, namely that ordinary time falls out of primordial temporality (79–82).

*Dasein* finds itself in the world, and it is in dealing with its “gear” or “equipment” (*Zeug*), in circumspectly taking care of its affairs, that ordinary time shows itself. Affairs in the world can be dated: “Later, when . . .” or “now, that . . .” or “formerly, when . . .”—that is the language of worldly management. This datability of the world is derived from ecstatic temporality because “later, when” can be said only on the condition that there is possibility, “now, that” only if there is presentification, and “formerly, when” only if there is repeatability. So Heidegger has grounded *anticipation*, *presence*, and *memory*—for that is what he is talking about—in the primordial temporality which is human existence.

Precise public datability must refer to universal occurrences, originally to the sun’s rising and setting. People say, for instance, “now, that” the sun has set it is time to turn in. This public reference enables people to make and set clocks, and thence “vulgar,” worldly time comes to be what the clock tells. What the clock shows is a perfectly levelled and indifferent equable succession of jerks called *nows*, going forward from what is no longer to what is not yet, and spawning many puzzles. Such time passes rather than arises; the very use of clocks is witness to the attempt to hold on to the not-yets and the no-longers by making them all in turn present, as the clock’s hands are followed while they tick off the *nows*. What is worst of all for Heidegger is that this meaningless derivative clock time is theoretically infinite: It is the time of fallen, inauthentic humanity because it masks the radical finitude of mortal human existence.<sup>30</sup>

## 2. DIFFICULTIES

Here is the extreme of opposition to Aristotle. Actuality, fulfilled presence, is interpreted as human fallenness. Possibility, a notion even less determinate than potentiality (which is always a specific “potentiality for”) is raised to being human existence itself. Time, which was for Aristotle merely the measurable aspect of a being’s actualization, is for Heidegger the very meaning of existence. And,

finally, time ends in actuality for Aristotle, but for Heidegger, in death.

*Being and Time*, in its potent and coherent originality (though originality in the pursuit of being may well be a disability) deserves at least the tribute of not being treated like a lending library of terms and notions; one must enter its world or stay out—the latter I think. The reasons are sketched below.

1. The first is a mere intimation of a possible argument: That actualizing motion has temporal duration which is measurable by the soul, or that time is a dimension of the created mind, or that the lawful causality of nature has a ground in the observer's temporality—these theories of Aristotle, Augustine, and Kant respectively can be apprehended and judged directly, although their context illuminates their motive. It is otherwise with Heidegger's understanding of time, which is more inextricably and originally implicated in his approaches: in the problematic formulation of the question concerning the "meaning of being," in the doubtful insistence that the human being is the being of choice for such an inquiry, in the interpretation of human being as existence, in its analysis in terms of care, and in the grounding of care in temporality. The doubts one might have about any of these elements or about their concatenation would make questionable the notion of a primordial ecstatic temporality.

2. The interpretation of human existence as the being which is its possibilities leads to its essential futurity, the ecstasis which accounts for living in possibility. *Dasein's* ultimate possibility is that of being able not to be: it is death (50), the extreme possibility. In requiring of the human being that it face at every moment this end as its own, Heidegger deprecates—I am disregarding the pretense that these are not terms of judgement—as inauthentic and fallen the perennial wisdom of humankind that the dread of death must not dominate life. The question arises whether the stark and unspecific resolution to face one's own death can at all be the basis of public decency and even inner dignity. I shall argue that the future is of the three phases the most impotent for human action and that our death should be allowed to exert its power only as a remote and indefinite limit of life.

3. The greatest problem and the one with most bearing on the final section of my inquiry has to do with Heidegger's treatment of the past. Human existence has a certain self-antecedence which is grounded in the ecstases of "being as having been." The defining characteristic of this mode is that it brings *Dasein* back to the "repetition" of its own possibilities and to authentic being. This ecstasis naturally plays the chief role in the constitution of "historicality"—although the most fundamental role is still played by the future. For true historicity ultimately arises from a repetition of the past which is motivated by the resolute projection of a life span dominated by "being-unto-death."

*Dasein* can explicitly repeat possibilities of existence that have been handed down. Such repeating "is explicit

tradition, that is to say, the going back into a *Dasein* that has been there." Authentic repetition means that "*Dasein* chooses for itself its hero" on the basis of an anticipatory resolution. What *Dasein* thus recovers is a possibility, not a state (74).

*Dasein* takes over such possibilities as its heritage. How? Heidegger begins his analysis of the historical past with a discussion of real antiquities, the objects of archaeology. These are things which were once "to hand," by which Heidegger means functional, in a world that is gone. They are now present in our world. They are not genuinely but only secondarily historical because insofar as they are "equipment" they are not in the past but in this world. As the being of their own world was wholly conditional on that of a past *Dasein*, so its passing is wholly a matter of human temporality.

Now here is the difficulty: If *Dasein* is to recover its heritage, the possibilities of an existence that has been, it must do so by way of the surviving "equipment" of the past, through ruins, pots and manuscripts. Heidegger suggests no other way (73).

But how does it recognize these as testimony of antecedent existence? The ecstasis of the past was formulated in terms of the individual, unique, and separate being. What can it mean to recognize in the stuff "to hand" in the present world the possibilities of other, past existences, not to speak of making them one's own?

The problem points to what seems to me a crucial lacuna in Heidegger's account of the past. The ecstasis may be the *necessary* condition of ordinary temporality but it does not seem to be a *sufficient* condition. The "ontic" consequences, namely human beings with their past, do not immediately fall out of the "ontological" ground of past being. To lay down that *Dasein* must have a past because it is in its being temporalizing does not tell *how* the individual human being comes back to itself, that is, *remembers*. And yet, the additional element that is needed to complete the account, namely what is ordinarily called memory, may change the whole complexion of the account.

Since Heidegger considers existence to be possibility he cannot ascribe a nature or faculties to human beings. Indeed, in his "recovery" of Kant he had suppressed the figurative, primarily spatial, imagination, Kant's faculty for having objects without their presence. But how is the reconstruction or recovery of one's own possibilities, or of the possibilities of the past world of historical remains, to take place without such a faculty for reconstituting remembrance of the past, personal, or historical?

One final point: Repetition, the authentic appropriation of past possibilities, seems to be most practicable for written works, records of past thought. The mode of resolute purpose, however, in which such a recovery is to be carried on seems to invite a certain wilfulness of interpretation which leads to highly pointed constructive readings. Such repetition may be incomparably more serious than a his-

toricistic approach, but it is also very constricted, since, being grounded in the stark mood of the past ecstasis, it excludes less harsh modes of pastness. In particular, there is no authentic mode of panoramic revery or imaginative contemplation,<sup>31</sup> though these, I shall argue, are of primary importance in human temporality.

\* \* \*

So I now come to some reflections of my own about time. Naturally, I shall draw on the philosophers just studied for the terms of the inquiry, for insight into the contexts implied in certain answers, and for examples of what seem to me fertile errors. Since I shall argue that time has no being and that to think otherwise has harmful consequences, I should not attempt to present a theory of what time is, but rather an intimation of what it is that induces the illusion of temporal being. And, of course, I should explain why, for all that, I think of the past as the prime phase of time.

## VI. TIME AND THE IMAGINATION

### 1. THE NON-BEING OF TIME

The beloved text of writers on time is Augustine, *Confessions*, XI 14:

For what is time? Who is able easily and briefly to explain that? Who is able so much in thought to comprehend it as to bring forth something in words? Although what do we more familiarly and knowingly mention in speaking than time? And we understand surely when we speak of it; we also understand when we hear someone else speaking of it. What then is time? If no one asks it of me, I know; if I want to explain it to the one that is asking, I do not know.

At first thought, Augustine's observation seems to be no more true of time than of any other matter: Questioning always makes the familiar strange and precipitates perplexity. Yet there is this difference: Though we sometimes quarrel about the management and the worth of time, we deal with its ubiquitous appearances not only with perfect, practical aplomb but also without anxiety to defend a doctrine concerning its being. I think that is because we have an intimation that our dealing with temporal affairs and our speaking in temporal terms has, as it were, nothing to it, no object of inquiry whose name is time. We sense that the bold question "What is Time?" itself drives the answer implied in our unimpeded behavior out of sight.

But from another aspect, what Augustine says seems not quite right. We really do not know what time is when we are not asked; we only know how to live familiarly with watches and words and our sense of time. And therefore we do not know it less when we ask ourselves about it. On the contrary, there is not even any Time to know until we

try to capture its being, though time-terms there are aplenty. For, I claim, time as a distinct object of inquiry, or rather our sense of its being one, comes about when we block our usual mental activity and try to concentrate on time itself:

#### *Die Zeit*

Es gibt ein sehr probates Mittel,  
die Zeit zu halten am Schlawittel:  
Man nimmt die Taschenuhr zur Hand  
und folgt dem Zeiger unverwandt.

Sie geht so langsam dann, so brav  
als wie ein wohlgezogen Schaf,  
setzt Fuss vor Fuss so voll Manier  
als wie ein Fräulein von Saint-Cyr.

Jedoch verträumst du dich ein Weilchen,  
so rückt das züchtigliche Veilchen  
mit Beinen wie der Vogel Strauss  
und heimlich wie ein Puma aus.

Und wieder siehst du auf sie nieder;  
ha, Elende!—Doch was ist das?  
Unschuldig lächelnd macht sie wieder  
die zierlichsten Sekunden-Pas.

Christian Morgenstern, *Zeitgedichte*

#### *Time*

There is a good and proven way  
To strongarm Time and make it stay.  
Just take your wrist-watch by the band  
And concentrate upon her hand.

Then she goes slow enough to keep  
The pace, as of a well bred sheep—  
Goes step by step, as mannerly  
As any high-bred miss could be.

But if you daydream for a while  
The shrinking violet with guile  
Makes off on legs of ostrich length  
And with a puma's stealthy strength.

Now you look down just as before—  
O wretched watch! O curious chance!  
With guileless smile she steps once more  
The very daintiest second-dance.

E.B.

What we find when we concentrate on the passage of time is the repeatedly frustrated impulse of *our intention to perceive time*, indeed an iteration of attempts, orchestrated by the beating of our hearts and the coursing of our blood—a kind of internal perception

called by psychologists prioperception, self-perception. As soon as we leave off trying to find in ourselves empty time we see images of spatial passage. Indeed even Kant finally admits that inner sense, to be actually affected, needs spatial appearance. The pure underlying flux seems to me, therefore, a philosophical construction which is the result of ulterior motives, and a phenomenon which is the effect of self-interference. So when Husserl claims such a flux for the first phenomenon of time-consciousness he is observing accurately—his own observing. Internal time flux is the first effect of attempting a phenomenology of time-consciousness.

What of external time? Newton is alone in positing a genuine external time flux, absolute, equable time antecedent to all motion, physical, yet not apparent—a notion whose motives are as understandable as the concept is confusing. All the others who appear to believe in physical time turn out always to mean either some designated physical process or the “passage of nature” as a whole.<sup>32</sup> It seems to be impossible for them to point to time itself or to refer to it except by spatial metaphors.

From the physical point of view, time appears with as many natures as there are motions and ways of studying them: It is a discrete quantity for quantized micro-motions, a covariant of space for remote places, an anisotropic progress for irreversible processes, an independent continuum for the local motions of bodies, and a numerable dimension for motions which are developments. I do not think it is possible to decide which of these conceptions should primarily determine our understanding of motion and thus time. It may just be impossible to give a single account of physical time, and therefore it may be best to say that various kinds of time seem to occur in the world, depending on where our attention is fixed, whether on the statistical conceptions of aggregates, or on signaling to remote clocks, or on watching the formation of completed beings, or on the comprehension of human affairs.

This last perspective raises yet another possibility. What if time were worldly but not of the world, not one of its physical dimensions, but rather the very life and moving principle of the world? Such a doctrine makes the appearances coherent, as the monolithic grandeur of Hegel's System shows, but so thoroughly coherent as to put an end to human freedom understood as our possibility of thinking and choosing independently of our situation in time. It seems to me pernicious.

The claim is that the appearances of nature as well as of human thought and action are manifestations of the substance of Time. Now the chief property of appearances is usually thought to be that they are a *becoming*: variable in themselves, perspectival for us, in alterable passage, contingent. If, then, the being behind them and expressed in them is itself a primordial be-

coming such as Time must be, the variability of appearances must be governed by that deeper becoming, Time; appearance is the manifestation of the logic of becoming. But that means that we must give up the thought of a loose connection, of room for play between the world and its grounds, which supports our efforts at independent thought and free action, and submit to our time-determined fate. Human beings and nations must fulfill the historical role assigned by their time or be consigned to parochial impotence. Time is a tyrant, and the philosophy of time is a tool for tyrants: our time has seen the consequences.

These, in sum, then, are the charges against Time: As an internal flux it is a philosophical or psychological illusion, as an external elapsing it is no more than the measure of motion, and as the fated logic of becoming it is a coercive myth.

Aristotle, who first wrote a sustained exposition of time, also introduced its most radical de-substantialization, more complete even than that of the later great relativist of time, Leibniz, for whom time is at least an idea in the mind of God (Note 4). In that dethronement of time, in the claim that time is only the counted measure of motion, it seems to me that Aristotle was simply right. But why, we must ask ourselves, if there is time neither within nor without, it is so copious a topic of talk, and whence comes our ever-fertile feeling about time?

The related words *time*, *tide*, and German *Zeit*, appear not to be specifically temporal in their etymological origin. They are connected with Greek *daïomai*, “I divide or distribute,” which has to do with all sorts of divisions, like that of the people, *démōs*, and the portioned meal, *dais*. Originally “time” seems to refer quite neutrally to the dividing of certain passages of nature into stretches, just as Aristotle says. The time-figures of poetry and ordinary speech, on the other hand, are usually strongly affective. Let me take as examples two complexes of time figures which seem to me best to reveal why we speak of time with feeling.

First, phrases like “the womb of time,” “the ripeness of time,” “the fullness of time.” The Greeks have a word, *kairós*, which although sometimes used interchangeably with *chrónos*, has the specific meaning of a special, critical, or opportune moment.<sup>33</sup> There was a famous statue by Lysippus, showing Kairos with a long lock over his brow and the back of his head shaved, as a figure for the fact that foresight is needed to seize opportunity by the forelock and that once gone it cannot be pulled back. In the *New Testament* the word has assumed great theological gravity; it means both the individual time for turning or doing the appointed deed, and the day of judgement: “The *kairos* is near,” the fullness of time is at hand, John says in the opening of his *Revelation* (1,3). Leaving aside theological elaborations, what do such phrases betoken? They seem to me al-

ways to mean at bottom this: We feel that there is something in the world's becoming which peculiarly concerns us, that something is in the offing, something to monitor, to watch, to prepare for.

The second example is quite opposite in flavor, namely, the image of time as a tread-mill or a conveyor-belt on which we plod or are wafted willy-nilly past scheduled events and holidays to an unscheduled but sure cessation. For terrestrial beings this coursing of time has what biologists call a "circadian" rhythm, the natural twenty-four hour periodicity of the sun's circuit, imaged on the faces of our watches and iterated by the predesigned routines of our business lives. It is the pathos of the daily round—no matter whether it whirrs or grinds—that makes us time-conscious, conscious, that is, of a fleeting stillness in the countable accretion of our accomplished motions, of a flux that stays while it flows, since it ever bears the same event. Were our lives either totally mutable or totally monotonous we would, I imagine, attain neither to a sense of time nor to intimations of timelessness. The tread-mill figure of time, at any rate, expresses the mood in which the passage of life seems at once inexorable and aimless, fugitive and onerous.

Time, these figures show, is our word—and this is the meaning elaborated by Heidegger—for the world's passages insofar as we *care*. We speak of time often, because the world continually concerns us; we speak of it variously, because our mood or concern shifts; and we speak of it always in figures because there is no other way to give shape to our sense of the world.

## 2. TIME AS NOTICED PASSAGE

Time, I say, is *noticed passage*—besides that it has no being of its own. Perhaps I might have said that time is our noticing of passage, but it seems to me better to locate our sense of time where we feel it, in the changing world itself.

But what is this "passage"? When we speak of the passage of time we cannot mean (although we say) that time passes, but rather that something, something primarily spatial, is going on. Indeed, passage is not, to begin with, a temporal word. It means a passing, a going from here to there, as in "pacing"; there even seems to be an etymological connection to "space." It has a meaning similar to, but even wider than, Aristotle's "change," *kinesis*, which is itself a wider term than locomotion, while preserving its spatial undertone. I am using the term to express my understanding that appearances in their variability, however caused and however regulated, are as appearances *spatial*.

Two views of motion seem to me paramount: Aristotelian motion, which is the actualization of the thing moved, and Newtonian motion, which is characterized by the time rate of change of a body with respect to space. For Aristotle the individual mobile is everything—the substrate

which undergoes the motion and the substance which is the aim and completion of the motion. For Newton the mobile is qualitatively indifferent to the motion it undergoes, though as a mass it figures at once as the cause of change in other bodies and as the cause of resistance to change in itself. Thus for both motion is dynamic, that is, it is regarded in terms of an indwelling cause: form for Aristotle, force for Newton.

But consider that there are, to human discernment, apparently aimless motions which, like motes in sunlight, show some pattern only in the aggregate, and also that it is possible to regard bodies as moving not because of their own inertia or gravity but by reason of their location in a force field. In some of its appearances, motion is neither compellingly Aristotelian or Newtonian. So as a kind of exercise, let me try a wider view of passage and of time, a view less focussed on mobile and cause and more on field and configuration, a *spatial* view.

By space I here mean not the abstracted infinite continuum of geometry but our extended human environment, ground and figures equally. I think of it as just that which is such as to be capable of being passed through and of containing passages. But even before it is the scene of passages, it is the opening, the room for appearances, the place for patency, what Keats calls "the *World or Elemental Space*." The Greek word for the appearances, *phenomena*, means what shines out, and the appearances seem to me to have these four connected characteristics: They *shine out*, they *spread out*, they *vary* and they *are for us*. Patency, extendedness, multifariousness, and perceptibility—that is what makes space. The spatial scene is in its very nature variable, and variable in the *n*th degree. Its spread-out, variegated conformations themselves vary variably or differentially—and those are the passages of space. Some passages are lawfully developing fulfillments, some negotiations of distance, some random dances—these are the varieties of the variation of spatial variable-ness. It is not becoming that causes this display but just its remaining what it is—various; and our discerning and noticing only make it more so.

We commonly think of the present configuration of space as being an aggregate result, the outcome of many separate paths of becoming. The world is full of forms which seem explicable by their genesis. Space and its figures, appearing space, seems to be the frontal face of becoming, the advancing surface, so to speak, of the temporal succession.

But now let us cut the world in another way, as it were, across the line of advance rather than lengthwise along the lines of its genesis. Then the passage of time no longer appears responsible for the configuration of space nor is its history what makes the world appear, but space with its present and passing appearances lies fully there and openly displayed before us, in all its immediacy, a panorama which is not the result but the scene of time. I mean that the appearances are not apprehended as the current

state of temporal becoming, but the reverse—that the world appears as a space, a room, a theatre of events and happenings. These goings-on may be recurrent or continuous or periodically culminating, fascinatingly lawful or astoundingly unique. But the study of these passages tells us only the route, not the reason for the panorama of appearances and directs us only to its elements and not to its integral sum. Let the contemplation of the world in this mode (which is analogous to the field notions of physics) be, to begin with, an exercise of the imagination in concentrating on the phenomenology of spatial passage.

Accordingly I describe motion-passage now more particularly as *discerned variation*. I do not figure such motion to myself as being borne forward by time. By “being borne forward by time” I mean the sense we allow ourselves to entertain that each and all motions ride on some primary vehicle (describable, to be sure, only by spatial metaphors such as the flow of a river) which, when related to space by a ratio, yields their rate of change or velocity, for example 55 miles per hour. In such a rate we normally take time as the independent variable, precisely because we think of it as the steady ubiquitous reference—spatial location varies in three dimensions and two directions, while time only advances. But to the time-disencumbered eye, motion is not *through* space in time, but time, no longer equably universal, arises in different places and tempos as this or that passage is noticed: felt in the observer or referred to other motions, for instance to that of our natural clock, the sun.

A passage can be noticed by us, in the sense that we care about it, when a distinguishable variation has been discerned within the variegated field of appearance. Such discerned variation, or perhaps better, differential variation, of course always requires that the observer be himself in the picture,<sup>34</sup> an appearance among appearances. Consequently certain kinds of passage arise from the relation of the observer himself to the appearances. For example, he can stay still and concentratedly look into the field, search it by scanning, or himself bodily pass through it to obtain varying perspectives. So, for example, little children sometimes gaze into the world pressed up against their grown-up and sometimes run out to circulate and inspect.

The world, on its side, also offers to observation various configurations of motion: There are distinct and isolated motions that occur against a still background: runners running along a ridge. There is the scene which vibrates everywhere with localized variation: the town-square on market day. And then is the still center of an indifferently varying field: the cynosure of one's eye in a crowded room.

We are moving or still figures in a still or moving landscape of appearance, and all passages can be distinguished in terms of the various combinations between the discerning viewer and the passing scene, and, if we wish, timed by means of some designated accompanying motion.

This primarily spatial way seems to me a particularly apt way to come upon the world. To begin with, there is the evidence of a common experience, namely that temporally

extended acquaintance dims vision, while sudden, panoramic sights make for poignant perception.

Then there is the unfailing testimony of our spatial time-language. A “moment” of time is really a “movement,” as of the clock; the “passing” of time is a “pacing”; the “space of time” is never converted into the “time of space,” and the words “time,” “past,” “present,” “future,” themselves all have spatially interpretable etymologies.

Again, we have external organs for sensing all sorts of spatial motion, sights, sounds (which come out of space), and internal organs for sensing our own spatial position, and we have a capability for perceiving perspectival transformations. But we have no discernible organ or power for perceiving the mere elapsing of time. Our estimate of time depends on the spatial passages from light to dark, from fresh to worn, from full to empty, and if we are deprived of their sensory evidence our sense of time becomes totally confused.

Moreover, time is somehow more accessible than space. We can “spend time” to gain space. Time serves to pass through space:

Now when Joseph had named his underworld name to the Ismaelite, and had indicated to him what he wished to be called in Egyptland, these people trekked on, some days, several and many days, at an indescribably comfortable pace and full of serenity concerning time, which would one day, they knew, manage to overcome space, if one cooperated but a little—and would do this most surely if one didn't fuss but just gave in to its progress, each of whose advances might be of no account but which would, quite incidentally, run up a large sum, if only once carried on and reasonably maintained one's direction. [Thomas Mann, *Joseph in Egypt*]

One may even recover, in some sense, one's former place in space. But it is only in a figurative way that one can regain lost times by going down through space, as in archaeological exposure of earlier levels of life. Then, too, time's effects can be fugitive—a moment of bliss can sometimes obliterate a season of suffering, but a ravaged place cannot be healed without the investment of laborious motion. In brief, spaces and places contain the passages that concern us, that is, they contain time, but not the reverse.

I take all that as suggestive, though of course merely circumstantial, evidence that time is not even coordinate with space, as a form of appearances, not to speak of being prior. Proof of such an assertion there cannot be beyond its possibly convincing consequences. But I can, at least, in concluding my brief collection of the evidence against time and for space try to invalidate the chief presumptive mark of their separate and coordinate standing. That is the supposed difference between the *here* and the *now*: The *here*, it is said, is repeatable; the *now* is not.

The claim certainly holds for the mathematical representation of space and time, though merely by definition. In a graphic coordinate system with a time-axis the space coordinates can return as often as you please, while the

time coordinates must increase monotonically. But is it so plain in life that the *now* never returns? Is it so certain that a *déjà vue* is always a pathological incident? But even if, in publicly corroborable fact, no *now* is indeed ever repeated because chances are overwhelmingly against the world's passages ever returning to the same state, yet it is imaginable that we might, by a slightly different route, come back to the same moment. For if events had the cyclicity of a circle, as Nietzsche claims (Note 13), every *now* would be antecedent to itself and to all others, and if events moved as in a figure eight, the same *now* would be on different approaches. Whether we then said that it was the same *now* because its perceptual content was the same, or a different *now* because it had different antecedents, would depend on our desire to make the configurations of the world tell time or to make the advance of time distinguish its configurations. In principle and in imagination a passage which is an extended *causa sui* is not impossible, and therefore neither is the return of a *now*. I leave out of account here that unmodern "defence against Time" (Eliade) constituted by the celebration of the timeless, original, and ever-repeatable moments of myth.

Similarly, as far as the *here* is concerned, is it so obvious that we can always come back to it? It seems to me that there are three kinds of here: There is the local mathematical point given by an origin and three coordinates, which is exactly repeatable but is only the abstraction of a here. There is the physical situation determined by reference to a system of moving bodies which can be only relatively recovered as one system moves with respect to its next larger containing system (as does the cluster of people on the boat on the ocean in the solar system, and so *ad infinitum*). And finally, there is the human place of our lives which probably cannot in effect be regained because, no matter how stable, the world's passing affects its colorations and conformations, as well as the mood of the returning perceiver.

Therefore it seems to me that, insofar as they are separable notions at all, the *now* can be as repeatable as the *here* and the *here* as irrecoverable as the *now*—which is to say that time and space are not distinguishable, at least by that mark. That melancholy of the missed rendezvous described above (Sec. I 4), when we come to the right place at the wrong time, is, then, not the unavoidable consequence of the inherent skewness of space and time, but rather a temporal affection, a mood of diminution, the ebb tide of our awareness, when we can take notice of nothing which does not flaunt itself in front of our eyes. For if time is noticed passage, the vitality of our sense of time and of our sense for times past and times future will depend on the scope of our receptivity.

The object of the foregoing exercise in suppressing our image of time as bearing onward the shapes of space was to quell our propensity for insinuating time into our speech as an occult nature and into our lives as a flux bearing us from oblivion to oblivion on the narrow raft of a

present floating out of the mists of time gone into the murk of time to come. It seems to me that the world so purged of time is a more patent world. In it shapes pass by us, but also we, at will, pass by them. Sometimes it is in our power to *recognize* appearances; we are able to turn back, to revisit the scene, to follow its figures as they pass by or to ascend to a higher viewpoint so as to survey the whole panorama simultaneously. Appearances which carry that possibility we call *spatial*. Some variations, however, we can only *remember*; they go past us and are beyond perceptual recovery. They back out of our sight, so to speak, by changing not so much their place as themselves, so that we can no longer train our sensory vision on them at will. So the golden solids of late afternoon plane out into the dusky silhouettes of early evening, and no one can hold them. Such perceptually irrecoverable passings are usually accompanied for us by a sense of loss or relief or, at least, of watchfulness. These we call *temporal*. But if we do not care enough about their passing, not even enough to glance at a watch, then, there being no one to feel or tell time, the passages remain untimed. Of course, to attempt to imagine this untimed world is a contradictory undertaking, that of trying to attend while not attending.

Nonetheless, we *could try* to reach untimed passage. It would amount to thinking about appearance in its variability as distinct from being involved in it. It would mean being on the approaches of the mystery of Appearance. Here, it seems to me, would start the real pursuit: What appears? What principles of self-sameness and ever-otherness can account for the determinate shapes appearance manifests in its endlessly varying variety? Must appearance be perceived to appear? Is it nothing or something in itself? And what is perception? What is space, that field and frame in which, or perhaps, as which, appearance shows itself? What rules, causes, ends govern that distinguishable variation of appearance called motion or passage?—This is the great battle ground to which leads the skirmish against time.

The results of a substantial reflection are sometimes a bit bizarre, and their justification lies in their intention. Mine is to give an account of the three phases of time which lend to human life much of its pathos.

### 3. THE PHASES OF TIME

Let me begin by readmitting the absurdly unavoidable thought which I had earlier proscribed: that if things had not come to the present juncture they would not be here. Sequences of appearances commonly seem to have, if no humanly ascertainable drift or even much recollectable continuity, at least a certain longitudinal connectedness. But how do we know of that connection? Space lies open before us in brilliant extendedness. It has no before and after, being, all that there is of it, *there*. How can it also display the past variety of its passages? How, in short, does

the present world bear witness to those of its states that have passed, to its past? What lets us interpret a fossil as testimony of life's evolution? What compels us to ascribe a tender babyhood even to the most desiccated adult? What makes a place revisited a place almost regained? What reconstitutes the sherd at the bottom of a Greek well into a goblet from a world gone by?

The answer is that *we* do it, we give the world its past because we have the power of *memory*. For itself the grandest mountain range, which to us expresses in its majestic presence the dignity of having been shaped by the passage of aeons, has no past and no world, and neither does the little loom-weight which once put tension on the warp of Penelope's loom. The depth of space is ours because we have memory. *It* makes time and its phases possible. Not as the poet says:

... only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,  
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,  
The moment in the draughty church at smokefall  
Be remembered; involved with past and future.  
Only through time time is conquered.

T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton" I,  
from *Four Quartets*

but the opposite: the moments of memory first constitute past and future.

What is memory? The past-making memory is of the imagination. (I omit consideration of rote, short-term, motor, and verbal memory, and of those electronically stimulated, hallucination-like replays of the "memory-tape" which attest to the physical basis of the human activity of remembering.) The imagination I understand to be in the first instance the power for absorbing the world's variety into assorted shapes and coherent processes, a discerning receptivity not at that point distinguishable from the power of perception. It is, in this aspect, a faculty universally and subconsciously exercised. (Kant, in his own context, calls it the productive imagination because it first produces those unities of thought and sense which he calls "phenomena.") Secondly and properly speaking, it is a capacity for holding the form of things without their matter, as Aristotle says, or the object without its presence, in Kant's terms; both formulations come to the same thing when one recalls that for Aristotle the material is a required element of the substantial presence of a physical object. Its dematerializing power is indeed what makes its holding capacity plausible. For one psychic space (leaving aside the physical basis of memory) seems able to contain myriads of memories. I am not speaking of psychic space altogether figuratively but describing the interior experience of imagining which seems to be primarily visual, or better, pseudovisual, presumably because sight is the sense most adequate to the extendedness of space (cf. Note 35). And although images are extended, they do not seem necessarily to displace or occlude one another; images are, so to speak, transparent to images.

How the imagination (and thus the memory) might do its work is a question Aristotle tacitly sets aside and Kant answers by saying that it is a mysterious power hidden in the depth of the soul. It seems to me of all philosophical questions the most engaging, but for another occasion. (See Note 35 for a formulation of its aspects.) In the meanwhile I will mention one—most crucial—feature of its work: In holding objects without their presence it is always *intentional*, for the retained form is an image *of*, or intends, the once present thing, and therein precisely lies its memorial power, its ability to re-present, to present the absent. (There may indeed be moments when remembering passes into reliving, when the memory-image intends its object not as an object that was, but as a present object, but such states are, like hallucinations, extraordinary.)

How does the memory-imagination bring about the three temporal phases or present, past, and future?

#### a. The Present

The *now* is also called the present, and *nowness* is associated with presence. A "presence" (Greek: *parousia*) means a being that is *by* us, a confronting being which is immediately there. Let us call it perceived being, leaving out of account here the whole problem of perception itself. In this phase the imagination works as the involuntary power described above, which shapes sensory material into perceived appearances, though some argue that the world itself delivers fully shaped appearances (Gibson). People whose imaginative power is exhausted in this first function accordingly live in the present and prefer adventitious stimulation to memories and projects. It is this *now-present* which Heidegger combats.

Being perceptible defines what is in the present, but I think its marks are *not* those usually stated: vividness, self-givenness, uniqueness. For the present can be dim and dreary, like a city parking lot on Sunday; and sights of things by no means present can come to us unbidden and adventitiously as do phantasms and hallucinations; and many a present scene is worn out with repetition.

What is peculiar to the present, then, is that it is perceived, that it declares itself to us through the conduits of sensation with a normally bland—though sometimes stunning—immediacy. Indeed, it is one of the mysteries of perception that our intermediary senses can leave us with so strong a sense of the immediacy of appearance. Besides being characterized by being right there, before us, perception also promises a certain completeness of perspective and detailing. The present picnic includes those garbage cans behind the bushes and the proverbial ants on the blanket which the past idyll has simply occulted.

If the present is defined by the immediate presence of appearances and their passages, we should speak of the *now* not as an ever-new moment, but rather as the unvarying condition of being and having a present. This *now* is



our ability to be in and with the world. That ever-other, ever-same now of the time-flow which is thought of as being at once the leading edge of time and also the cut between past and future arises when we stop the passages of appearance to take notice of our relation to their passing. The present becomes a flux-now when reflection brings the world up short—the now arises from self-interruption. This is the *now* which our mathematical reason is compelled to whittle down to an unextended point. Perception, on the other hand, insists on its elongation. From this conflict arises the bastard notion of the “specious present”: When we consciously represent our time-consciousness, we do it by means of a line which underlies a set of dimensionless points, while we observe that our actual perceived present is an extended “space” of time, composed of a braid of retentions of just-passed passages. (That the actual present “takes time” accords with common experiences, for example the curious exchanges of present and past at the moment of receiving sudden bad news; the shocked consciousness oscillates for a while between the apprised now of the present and the yet unsuspecting now of the immediate past.)

In sum, when left to its own devices, the present is not now but always, or better: It is always the present. This ever-present present acts nonetheless as a pivot between the two other phases of time because through it come the images which stock the memory, although the memory itself integrates and frames the scene. All that we have there by way of distinct forms came first through the senses. (Or perhaps not everything: Augustine regards the memory as a space furnished not only with likenesses of all the world, but also inhabited by imageless memories of intelligible objects. The question really comes to this: which domain is the larger, imagination or memory? All images, it seems to me, are at least in their elements memories, but Augustine must argue that some memories are not image-like, namely those belonging to intellectual learning. It seems to me a question not here soluble whether such learning is *essentially* memorial and I have therefore left it out of account.)

In going on to the past, let me say something concerning the relation of flux-time and phase-time. Flux-time, current time, whose being independent of our attention to passage I am denying, is precisely *not*, and for just that reason has no power to bear off lapsed passages into nowhere, it flows not into the past but into oblivion. Instead, phase-time supervenes: As soon as passages are beyond perception and out of sight, they come to a standstill, so to speak; they are laid away and accumulate as the permanent stock of the memory-imagination, available for recovery, and the more readily available the more we cared at the time. The hidden work of their consignment to this permanent mode, called “consolidation,” seems to demand the intervention of other passages, that is, it seems to take some time, apparently for physiological reasons. Consequently the recent past is often inchoate compared to more re-

mote events, especially if it has been a monotony of minute differences. What, then, accounts for the being of past passages, for a passing that has ceased to pass?

#### b. The Past

The past is the work of the imagination proper. Had we no such power we would have no past—there would be no past. It is what Kant calls the “reproductive” imagination. It makes a world of re-presentations, of secondary occurrences, which are distinguished from perceptions first of all in this: We move and have our place within the world of perception, but the world of the imagination is felt to take place within *us*. (Though there are memories which approach the sense of presence of a perception; they are usually triggered by one of the two contact senses, smell and touch, whose deliverances, as it happens, are also hardest to make into memory-images.)

Aristotle thinks that we sense time, and therefore that the imagination, which holds memories, also holds their times. The difficulties of this view seem to me insuperable. (See Sec. II 3). For first, it is hard to conceive what such a time storage might mean. Does it mean that to reach a memory we must recount the time back to it, so that to remember a childhood scene we must reproduce the intervening decades? That would make remembering in principle impossible, because while we were working our way back into memory, the present would carry us forward at a clip equal but opposite. Does it mean that we have, as Aristotle claims, an internal time-scaling capacity, a kind of speeding up of the inner temporal flux with an index of its ratio to the actual time? Not only is there, I have argued, no such flux, but pure time (as distinct from its count) is, unlike space, incapable of proportionality because its stretches cannot be compared to each other by congruence. Precisely that mysterious property of the memory-imagination which makes it capable of containing the world, namely that its spaces can, so to speak, continually be rescaled, that very property makes it incapable of containing the world’s time, which cannot be scaled.

Besides, the phenomena of memory are all against a temporally flowing memory medium. Memory is notoriously discrete. The forgettable, a mere temporal stretching, is forgotten. Memory-images float up or flash on in isolation, and time is remembered, if at all, not by being condensed but by being excerpted. At any rate, although the physiological basis for recalling every instance of our life may exist, it would not only be impossible in principle, as I argued above, to recover the continuum of our lifetime, but it would be in practice a waste of our present to try to recover even parts of our past temporally. Indeed, I think it is plain impossible to remember the passage of time through time.

Consequently, the time-keeping performance of memory is, in fact, quite unreliable. Between the first and the

final instance of a daily routine we merge the recurrent events into one schema; it is that summary foreshortening of an orderly life which is the source of so much distress and so much comfort. We lose days from our calendar, but we also multiply moments and think that we did often and long what we did skimpily and briefly—exercises, for instance. The shades of the remembered dead are nearer than the persons of the unregarded living, and in old age our childhood is closer than our middle age. By the public clock our unchecked memories can be relied on neither for the length or the continuity or the unperturbed succession of time.

How then do we through memory constitute our past? Primarily the past is, I think, a series of timeless scenes, obtained by eyewitness or borrowed, acquired immediately by our own perception or through material images, for instance, pictures of historical events. These inner, immaterial sights, animated perhaps by unheard sounds, are marked as memory-images by our awareness that they are of a once present perceived passage, which has done what passages do—gone by. That is why memories, unless we deliberately mobilize them by passing them before our inner vision, have a certain immobility. What T. S. Eliot says of history holds *a fortiori* for memory: It is "a pattern of timeless moments." We remember not the coming and going of a motion but a representative frame—it might be called its configurational gist, something like in feeling to pictorial representation of motion by means of flow lines.

Memory-images do possess, secondarily, succession, and duration, which are therefore characteristics of the past. Memories have succession because passages leave various, usually discrete, traces, which we retain in their context. Certainly not every memory is well and accurately fixed, and its relations are subject to outside correction by those who have better recorded, more coherent, memories. But by and large memories lead into each other or hang together. It is this context character which makes recollection possible. Aristotle in *On Memory and Recollection* distinguishes between this methodical recovery of a memory and remembering itself, which is conspicuously capricious, illuminating and occluding scenes uncontrollably. Remembering seems to be dependent on fortuitous associative triggers (once much studied by Humean psychologists); the most famous literary example of such a memory trigger is Proust's taste of a tea cake dipped in a tisane which retrieves for him the bliss of childhood.

The second temporal effect of memory is that of duration, which it achieves by means, so to speak, of its thickness, its lamination. This way of marking a long or a short time is, of course, highly deceptive by the clock, since—this is the time theme of *The Magic Mountain*—full and eventful but fast passages leave thickly layered images, while passages long drawn out but eventless leave only sparse scenes. Of course, the order and the measure of memory time is subject to correction by correlation with external clock movements and with others' memories. But

the pacing of the original *past*, our past, can be made equal only by extrapolation and abstraction, since it is constituted in the most inhomogeneous of spaces, our imagination. (I want to add that the reason certain animals show very precisely paced behavior seems to be not that they have, any more than we do, an original sense of time but that they *are* themselves clocks.)

The memory-imagination, then, is what is alone responsible for the past, for the past as a whole is what is potentially remembered, what the soul has noticed and *could* recall. The memory-imagination is where the world's passages find permanence and whence the present can learn of its own perpetuity; through the memory, space can testify to time. But even if space were devastated, if the accumulated treasury of civilization were annihilated, if the present were a void—as long as human memory survived the past would exist.

It should be clear that to say that the past is our doing by no means implies that it is our invention, to be manipulated for pleasant or pernicious ends. What is our doing is *that* there is a past, not *what* is past. The above-mentioned intentional character of the memory makes that distinction possible. A memory-image intends that thing or event of which it is the memory. What our memorial capacity contains is in one sense something of our own, namely insofar as it is simply a memory, but in another sense it belongs to the object remembered, namely insofar as it is a memory of the object. This double-sided character of memory is just what makes possible—and therefore obligatory—the effort to remember truthfully, an effort which feels, at least, like trying to pass through the memory to its intended object. Something similar holds for that reconstitution of public memory called history. Historical truthfulness seems to me to consist of scrupulously using the evidence to construct a history-image which is compellingly of something, namely of the way it was. An analogous effort, finally, seems to play a part even in poetry, for memory is said to be the mother of the Muses.

Before I conclude by arguing that the past is the most humanly defining and consequential of the three phases of time, let me dispose of the future.

### c. The Future

The future is said to come toward us, and we are supposed to face it. This seems to me to be a misleading figure of speech. Wherever we face, we confront the present, and nothing is coming at us or by us but that.

The future, I say, is entirely derivative from the past. Husserl describes it formally as the inverse of memory. The future is that mode of the memory in which the image anticipates a perception, whereas in the past it follows. The future is *projected memory*. How is that meant?

There are, it seems to me, at least four ways to think of the future. The first defines the future as the realm of con-

tingency. On the hypothesis that there "are" indeterminate events, the future is that part of the world about which it is in principle impossible to make true-or-false statements. This is the future understood in terms of the use, in the present, of the future tense. (If, however, the future is supposed to be predetermined, that is to say, if all passages have an absolutely tight nexus, then future and past are indistinguishable: It is in principle possible to make true statements about either and in fact extremely difficult.) The second way is that the future is an imageless, calculated projection of present trends, a way as necessary as it is fatal to bureaucratic planning; this future is the present elongated according to rules of conjecture. The third is the "futuristic" future. Its imagery bears the marks of a forced attempt to represent the never-yet-seen, the absolutely novel. This future, which comes out of a wilful subversion of the past, is usually antiseptically inhuman and terrifyingly technical. (Note, for example, that recent futuristic space movies, like *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, tend to be humanly hollow and visually weird, while space movies in a contemporary setting like *Close Encounters*, *E.T.*, and the *Superman* series are suffused with nostalgically homey, lovingly comic, all-American romance.)

All these futures are, of course, present thoughts and images marked, as it were, with a future index. I cannot even conceive what it might mean literally to think future things, that is, to be with one's thoughts in the future.

There is a fourth future, our lived human future. It is the projected past, and thus also the past as a project. This future is always a possible image—not an image of possibilities, for that is an impossibly indeterminate notion; nor a formulation of possibilities, for that is merely a logical exercise; nor even a prospectus of possible images, for that is conjecture and contingency planning. The actual future with which we live is a settled envisioning of a scene we deem the world capable of harboring. Such a scene always comes from memory, not only because without memory there is no experience with which to judge what visions are capable of realization, but also because memory is the space in which diverse perceptions are first transformed into coherent patterns. For it is from memory-images that we shape our aim-images. Indeed, Bergson claims that memory is *primarily* action-oriented, though that "to call up the past in the form of an image, we must be able to withdraw ourselves from the action of the moment, we must have the power to value the useless, we must have the will to dream." However, I hope to show that memory has even deeper work than future-dreaming.

Such memory-projections may come to nothing and return to memory, closed out and abandoned:

Footfalls echo in the memory  
Down the passage which we did not take  
Towards the door we never opened  
Into the rose-garden.

T. S. Eliot "Burnt Norton", I

But if they are held desirously and vividly enough, they immediately go over into projects: Every real action in the world, no matter how modest, has as its formal and its final cause an image, and those actions are most felicitous whose projected image is at home in a Golden Age. A small but apt example is the making of a garden—every garden is conceived as a corner in the Garden of Eden, though its beginning be with the loan of a pickaxe. (I might add here that it is a blessing for us that every terrestrial paradise requires continual maintenance or we would fall into the taunting melancholy of the completely fulfilled imagination.)

One more observation about a projected image which seems to be kind of a limit of our living future and which concerns the one event sure of realization, our death. We come on our death, it seems to me, in various ways, for example, as a shapeless terror before an unimaginable termination or as an imagined scene in which we are called on to play a leading role. That ultimate image will be and ought to be the occasional subject of meditation. But why should we, as Heidegger demands, face resolutely, at every moment, the fact of our own death, understood as the possibility of our not-being, in order for our existence to be authentic? That death is the end of our being is a mere surmise, and it is an open question whether the imagination, which like Dante's journeys in the middle of this life to bring back visions of the next, is delivering phantasies or memories. Be that as it may, the aspect of the great futural fact of our death which is most effective in life seems to me to be that notorious gift of Prometheus, namely our blindness concerning its *exact date*, and that is how our end governs our future. For death has us on an elastic tether, with give enough, we may always hope, for the well-paced play necessary to the perfection of any project, and with tautness enough to snap us eventually back from diversion to work.

Before proceeding to the past, I want to forestall an objection which might be raised—that in considering the future as projected past I am attributing the order of my awareness to the order of worldly becoming, with the antic result that things receive their futurity from my projection, for instance that an old place to which I now first envision visiting is therefore a place of the future. But it is not the sequence of knowing and being that, as I argue, makes the future, but my present apprehension of a sequence of modes of awareness: I call future what I *expect* to perceive. This view, to be sure, detracts from the pathos of futurity, from both its inexhorableness and its contingency and implies precisely that there is no future-being. Indeed such being is an unintelligible notion, for what will be *is not*. By being in the future can be meant no more than this: that the image is posited as coming before the perception, where "before" is not a temporal relation at all, for the "coming before" is now; it is in my *present* "expectation".

To give the future no being is, however, not to deny that

“shall” and “will” have a strongly effective meaning. To resolve that “it shall be” is *now* to recover in the imagination an image-appearance, perhaps to modify it, and to will to bring it to perception by the proper action. When the perception becomes actual it is future no longer but present. To prognosticate that “it will be” is *now* to anticipate an external appearance and to have well-grounded expectation for perceiving it. We are warranted in such anticipations because the passages of the world usually show a certain symmetry about the pivotal present, a symmetry we establish by attending to each memory specifically as a by-gone present. The shape of ordinary passages, we then conclude, is distorted very slowly about the perceived present. In fact, most passages which are important to us are either cyclical or monotonic, and therefore continuously predictable. There are, of course, moments of crisis, catastrophic discontinuities which teach us that every “logic of becoming” so far discovered is unreliable. But it stands to reason that were the variations of appearance either totally monotonous or totally multifarious, we would have no sense of a coherent future at all.

What room, one might ask, does this view of the lived future as projected past leave for newness? The present is in a superficial sense always novel, because no matter how accurately it was foreseen or how effectively it was planned, the world’s passages *will* bring out in us and will bring before us the unexpected and the adventitious. The question really concerns a deeper newness: not whether human beings can put into the world what has merely never been before, but whether they can establish a well-founded new way, a *novus ordo seclorum*. The vision behind such an epoch cannot help but come from the imagination. (I leave out the element of thought because it is so doubtful that thought is rooted in the phases of time at all.) The imagination finds the materials for such a vision in the storehouse of memory, but its affective shaping seems to come from the power of phantasy. Now both aspects of the imagination, memory and phantasy, are past-oriented. The memory is the very source of the past, while phantasy characteristically works—as a matter of observation—in the mode of “once upon a time,” of primeval, ancient patterns. Therefore genuinely imagined new beginnings, as distinct from those that are light-headedly contrived, usually take the form of a rectification, renewal, rebirth—in sum, of a return to “that time” (*illo tempore*) which is to be recovered in a new paradise, a new Golden Age, a New Jerusalem.

#### d. The Past as Paramount Phase

Memory-image and phantasy-image, the image arising from perception and the image made in the imagination, are distinguished from each other by certain marks. The intentionality of memory is that of being of an original perception of which it is precisely the memory. A phantasy-

image lays no claim to being the memory of a once-present scene except in play, in the well-circumscribed space, whose proper phase, I have claimed, is the past, of “once upon a time.” (This distinction between the reality claims of phantasy and memory can, of course, be confounded in very fascinating ways.) Consequently memories have a fairly fixed temporal context, while phantasy and fairy tales take place in a floating time frame.

But in certain fundamental characteristics, memory and phantasy are the same: Both are representations without the material presence of the world and subject to the same transmutations that such absence sanctions. With that deep bond between the realm of phantasy and of the past in mind, let me now enumerate reasons why the past, constituted in memory, is the humanly preponderant of the three phases of time.

First, the past is, of necessity, thicker in texture and longer in extent and therefore weightier for us than our immediate present. For while we have indeed always a present, not everything that we have is always present. Why then should we be willing, having put ourselves to the trouble of living, to lose our life to oblivion? Even more, the past contains not only all our own accomplished passages but is indefinitely extended by the memories we absorb from the common store, from that derivative memory called history. The past can be an ever-widening panorama, so capacious and so vivid that it may sometimes seem as if it were, after all, not within us but as if we wandered in it, as in our own interior space. That is how Augustine speaks of it:

I come into the fields and spacious palaces of my memory, where are the treasures of innumerable images drawn from things of whatever sort by the senses. . . . And yet do not the things themselves enter the memory; only the images perceived by the senses are ready there at hand. . . . For there I have in readiness the heaven, the earth, the sea, and whatever I could perceive in them. [X 8]

Whether we think of our memory-past as an increasing freight or a widening space, it must inform our life in action and conversation. The past is present as those select memories which the present has called up to comfort, goad, or illuminate it. From these memories are distilled not only the projects of the future but that experience which enables us to envision the transformation a project will undergo in the course of realization and its unintended consequences: most unsound judgement is, after all, a failure of the latter aspect of the projective imagination.

Besides being the source of experience, memory-past has secondly a clarifying and shaping power. It is often said that the present is fact, the future possibility, and the past is necessity. Presence may be called bald fact, though *what* the fact is, is rarely known in the present. The future may be thought as possibility, but it is lived as a vivid picture. And the past may be in certain gross features unalterable, but the inner sense of passages is revealed as memory pro-

gressively revives and reviews them; just as in space proximate objects are invisible until we have gained perspective on them through distance. So if the past is the necessary, meaning that of which *memory* cannot be otherwise (for we cannot say that past *things* are necessary, since they are not at all, being gone), it is so first of all insofar as it has been laid to rest, as when we say, "let bygones be bygones." Indeed it is yet another power of memory, to forget the best-forgotten, and the price for not exercising it is the paralyzing repetition of a worn-out present. (I do not mean that we can expunge the brute fact but that we can deprive it of its effectiveness. The religious term for that effort, when it concerns our own deeds, is "repentance," which "seeks to annul an actuality," Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, "Interlude 3, The Past.") And secondly, the past is necessary as far as the grossly designatable events and their calendar dates are concerned: for example I believe it was Clemenceau who observed concerning the shifting interpretations of the Great War, that whatever is said, no one will ever claim that on August 4, 1914, Belgium invaded Germany. With respect to such brute facts, memory merely records.

But for most past passages, memory, when it is called upon, shows itself to have been active. It has purified the once-present of its obscuring passions and clarified its patterns. It is this shaped and rectified past which most strongly colors and directs the present. It is what the poet means when he speaks of

Time which takes away  
And taking leaves all things in their right place  
An image of forever  
One and whole.

Edwin Muir, "I have been taught"

It is our frequent experience that we do not realize what is going on before our eyes, that the present is shapeless and imperfect, that appearances must reappear in memory to show what they were meant to be. What is ongoing has presence merely, but what is past shows its essence.

Third, the panoramic, projective, and purgative capacities of the memory-*imagination* make it *the* great propaedeutic power for philosophy. For example, out of its store are fashioned those cosmic visions which complete the arguments of reason, as do the myths in the Platonic dialogues. Again as the room which holds the world without its material presence, it provides the field of a first encounter with immaterial form. And further, because of its rectifying, schematizing, canonizing tendency, the memory acquaints us with ideality, whether in the schemata of geometry or in the types of excellence. Finally, the memory is a training ground for philosophizing, because concentratedly pursued remembering, or recollection, has features analogous to searching thought.

Fourth and last, the memory-past has a power of transfiguration, of enchantment. Its force is such that those under its spell may melt with nostalgia even for hell on earth.

In this mode memory saturates with feeling what it has purged of passion. Now its scenes float up fragrant with an illumination of inexpressibly familiar mystery and its settings are suffused by an enigmatically musical aura. Proust describes these atmospheric colorations as turning the memory-world into a hieroglyphic of happiness whose decipherment is an enthrallingly exigent task.

Proust is both the painstaking initiate and the exploiting connoisseur of the magic of memory. His acute temporal sensibility presents him with an absorbing problem: He has discovered that on the one hand, "the true paradises are the paradises we have lost," while on the other, only the immediacy of perception can add the last perfection, that of real existence, to these paradisaical memories. He finds that he can succeed in his search for lost time only when a sensory trigger perceived in the present, and identical with some element of the past such as that taste of the teacake, revivifies his memory. Then past and present become one and the past is literally relived. This fusion of temporal phases he calls "pure time."

There is something fascinating and something repellent in Proust's self-immured pursuit of the past not as a template for the future but as means to momentary bliss. What he describes is, as it happens, the most magical of temporal experiences—when the past lies upon the present as a luminous transparency, or behind it like a vibrant backdrop, or within it like animating music. In spite of, or better, precisely for the sake of, the magic, it seems to me sounder not to importune the past for golden moments but to let them come as they will, and when they come to let them do their proper work, which is not only to bring delight but also to be the source of ardour for a worldly project.

So profiting by Proust's case, we should probably avoid too direct a preoccupation with our paradise-producing power. Otherwise much more might be said, particularly about its close relation to music. For music is the most memorial of arts. It occurs only minimally in the present and the whole burden of its being is on memory, since the apprehension of a musical whole depends on retention, as Husserl has named the quasi-perception of passages just now past, while the recognition of its intention depends on the memory of all the music heard before. But most to my point here, music is the art which best aids and intensifies the significance-producing function of our memory-*imagination* because, as can no other art, it suffuses space with feeling and vivifies it with intimations of schemata of the body which stand for gestures of the soul.<sup>36</sup> But of such musings there is no end.

\* \* \*

To conclude: The soundness and the fulness of our existence seems to me to begin with a right relation to the three phases of time. Of these the present with its passions is loud enough in its own behalf, and when it is dimmed it

is very often because of our improvident preoccupation with the future. Here I have brought forward the past and its images not only because it is the forgotten phase of our time,<sup>37</sup> but because I really think that it has the dignity I have ascribed to it: It is the depth of the present and the shape of the future.

The wholeness of life and half of its happiness comes—and its coming depends on good fortune and work, and above all, on single-minded desire—when the present world is perceived against a deep, luminous background of memory, which is at once also a prospect into the future and a project. That temporal whole (it cannot rightly be called a present and I have no name for it) will sometimes—not often—submit itself to thought and invite contemplation. That is, I think, the complement of temporal completeness and a consummation of human happiness. Let my witness be, one last time, Aristotle, speaking of that human being—perhaps a little beyond our means—who will be the best friend and live the happiest life (*Nic. Eth.* IX, on friendship, 1166 a 14 ff.):

He is in harmony with himself and has the same desires throughout his whole soul . . . Such a one wants to be in his own company since he makes it pleasant for himself. For he has delightful memories of what he has done and good hopes for what is to come, and finally, his mind abounds in objects of contemplation.

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### III. COLLECTIONS

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### IV. TIME IN SCIENCE

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G. J. Whitrow, *The Natural Philosophy of Time*, New York 1963.

Most of the collections contain articles on time in science. In particular, *Voices of Time*: H. Dingle, "Time in Relativity Theory: Measurement or Coordinate?", p. 455 ff.; O. C. de Beaugregard, "Time in Relativity Theory: Arguments for a Philosophy of Being," p. 417 ff.; M. Capek, "Time in Relativity Theory: Arguments for a Philosophy of Becoming," p. 434 ff.; R. Schlegel, "Time and Thermodynamics," p. 500 ff.

1. A supporting curiosity: the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* reveals a 24:1 ratio of time to space sayings. (*Study of Time* I; p. 313).

2. Merleau-Ponty (p. 411) presents an analysis of the puzzle. If time were like a river it would indeed appear, on its own, to flow from the past into the future, namely from the source toward the distant mouth, in the direction a twig floats. But a river unobserved really has no events or temporal direction, for these require an onlooker's perspective: "Time presupposes a view of time." So no unwatched river can represent time. Now introduce an observer, and the "motion" of time is straightaway reversed: The waters flow from the source at the observer and pass him, so that time comes toward him as he expects it and passes out of sight, that is, it flows from future to past.

3. Findlay, p. 41

4. Newton distinguishes "absolute, true, and mathematical time," which is a condition of motion, from relative or apparent time, which is the common time measured by motion. His physical motive for positing absolute time appears to be his belief that rotary motion is absolute, an assumption criticized by Leibniz in *De Motu*.

Leibniz speaks of mathematical time as "ideal." It is nothing in itself

but an idea in the mind of God (*Seventh Letter to Clarke*), namely that of the order of mutually inconsistent possibilities (as space is the order of possible coexistences); it expresses the order-relations of phenomena which cannot be simultaneous but are connected—note well, the relations of phenomena, not of the substances themselves. His chief reason for objecting to absolute time is the principle that contingent truths, i.e., truths of fact, must have a sufficient reason. Now if time were absolute and instants existed in themselves, one might reasonably ask why God did not create the world a year sooner, and claim that by choosing this particular beginning he acted without reason, arbitrarily. But if time is a mere relation of phenomena, the world made a year sooner is in every respect indiscernibly different from the later world, and the question is obviated (*Third Letter to Clarke*).

Augustine partly anticipates this argument: If any giddy brain should ask why God forbore creating the world for innumerable ages, the answer is, God does not in time precede time (XI 13). Time arises simultaneously with the creation, or better, with the creature. See Sec. III.

5. Of course, physically speaking, to ignore the finiteness of the speed of light reduces relative to classical kinematics.

6. Alexander's work, *Space, Time and Deity*, a very large book of lectures given from 1916–1918, has as its beginning thesis the interdependence of space and time: "There is not an instant in time without a position in space and no point of space without an instant of time." (I, p. 48). Although Alexander had read of relativity theory, his treatment, which is purely philosophical, is quite independently conceived.

7. Wyndham Lewis interprets the preoccupation with time in all departments of human activity as a romantic reaction; he understands by romanticism a fluid, indeterminate, sensation-seeking, sophisticated rebellion against distinctly formed reality (Ch. 1).

8. *Phenomenology*, Preface, par. 45 (Miller, trans.). In the passage Hegel draws attention to the fact that there is no temporal counterpart to geometry. Space is the existence into which the Concept writes its distinctions as into an empty, dead element. Time, on the other hand, is the pure unrest of life, absolute differentiation and negativity.

9. See "Chronos," Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopaedie*. Cronos, the father of Zeus who devoured and later disgorged his own children, was sometimes identified with Chronos, Time.

10. Simplicius is right when he shows at length that time does not move, but mistaken when he gives that as the reason why Aristotle does not include time among the categories in which motion occurs (on *Phys.* 225 b 5). Aristotle does in fact include the category of "how much" or quantity, in which time, as it happens, belongs. What he omits is "when," which is the category not of time but of timing—of which more below.

11. Aristotle discusses his analogue to space, i.e., "void" just before motion (213 b ff.). He regards its pure infinite dimensionality as a physical absurdity in which all motion becomes impossible for lack of any natural direction toward a place. For Aristotle things are contained in demarcated places, not spread out over a continuous substrate of infinite extension.

12. When Timaeus—not Socrates—tells how time arose, simultaneously with the heavens, as a moved image of "eternity" (*a-ion*, the un-going), a "likeness of the ungoing, going according to number," he is giving the mythological antecedent of Aristotle's treatment of time in terms of the number of motion and of the heavenly motion as providing the measures of time.

13. The logical possibility of such necessary cycles is given in *Post. An.* (II 12). Those cycles of becoming are non-contingent whose events imply each other.

Aristotle's cyclicity is indeed a forerunner of Nietzsche's "Eternal Return": "That everything returns is the most extreme approach of a world of becoming to a world of being: Summit of the inquiry" (*Will to Power*, no. 617). In the Eternal Return the impossible is accomplished—to be in the same now twice and so to be *causa sui* (if causation is temporal). Consequently every moment is, so to speak, a discrete eternity, composed of all the previous identical moments, and the future comes at the now out of the past. The difference from Aristotle's theory is that this cycle is not conceived as an approach to God and has no final cause beyond itself, but is intrinsically necessitated.

In the *Statesman* (269 ff.) Plato lets the Eleatic Stranger tell of a yet

more curious cyclical sequence. It is a time-fable playing on the possibilities of time reversal. In the primary age Cronos, i.e., Time (see Note 9), takes the tiller of the world. Human beings spring grey-haired from the earth and grow into childhood, fruit ripens without culture; animals are tame and human beings understand their language; there are no families and no cities. In our present age the god has let go and the world unwinds itself. We are no longer the wards of the god, but are humanly generated, meagre, and exposed. Prometheus and Athena have given us arts and wisdom to make this life bearable. The Stranger declines to decide which age is happier since he does not know what was the disposition of the Cronians with respect to knowledge and philosophy. The fable means that the era of human independence is more diverse and more difficult than the cycle guided by the god and that its temporality is, as it were, fallen and inverted since the phases of imperfection are prior to the states of perfection. Yet the fable also implies that in the Cronian age philosophy may be an unwanted superfluity, while in the human age it is an ineradicable need.

A story of immense cycles, repeated through an "infinity" of time, a serial sequence of development and destruction in human affairs is told by the Athenian in *Laws* (676 ff.)

14. For a fine exposition of Aristotle's definition of motion see Joe Sachs, "Aristotle's Definition of Motion," *The College*, Jan. 1976, pp. 12–18.

15. Cunnell, p. 232

16. I use the term perception to distinguish the work of the faculty of sensation from that of the sense organs. As Aristotle does implicitly, so Whitehead explicitly distinguishes between the point-now which he calls "moment" and the duration yielded by sense perception. The "moment" is defined in terms of "abstractive sets" of duration. An abstractive set is all the nested durations converging to the same limit, and a moment is defined as the class of all such sets converging to the same limit, each set being a different "route of approximation" to the same moment (pp. 57–62).

17. The relation between time and eternity is similarly quasi-contemporaneous; in distinction from the temporality of human thought, divine thought is the same with itself through the "whole" of eternity (*Met.* 1075 a 11).

The scholiast on *Nic. Eth.* 1174 b 9 wrongly but understandably speaks of the now as an "atom of time," that is, a minimal of time, a moment. This is a notion Aristotle takes pains to reject (*Phys.* 220 a 27), though he does speak of the limiting point of a period of time as "indivisible" (223 b 34).

18. Aristotle refers to motion "in" the soul in the absence of sensation (*Phys.* 219 a 6), to imagination and opinion as "a certain kind of motion" (254 a 30), and to "changes" of mind (218 b 21).

19. Interestingly enough, such double consciousness is just what Husserl observes in that internal time flux which seems to him the basic temporal phenomenon (par. 39): While we are conscious of the passing of a temporal object like a melody we are also conscious of the time flow itself.

20. Taking his clue from Plato's *Timaeus*, the Neoplatonic Plotinus elaborates a grand ontological cosmology in which time plays a role quite the opposite from that in Aristotle (*Enneads* III 7).

The two relevant elements from the *Timaeus* are these: The cosmos is an image of being and the soul encompasses it.

Time, says Plotinus, "fell out of eternity" (11, 7) because of an original flaw in the soul, a kind of grasping busyness which keeps the soul from abiding in self-sufficient quiet and causes it always to look to the next thing, to something beyond the present. For the soul is itself a variable and discursive image of the intellect (Beierwaltes, p. 54). Hence it falls into a sort of motion, a kind of self-displacement. As it accomplishes a stretch of its journey, time is produced as an image of eternity. Speaking less metaphorically, the soul "temporalizes" itself (*echronesen*, 11, 30), making time instead of eternity. Within time it produces the place of variability, namely the sensible world as an image of eternity. Therefore the world, which moves within the soul, is, not altogether metaphorically, in time and serves time. Time, in opposition to Aristotle, is not the number of motion but that in which and by which motion is possible (8; 9, 4). Since time comes from a kind of greed for continual self-exceeding, it is in its very essence futural; the soul looks ahead and draws the future through the now, which by nature always goes out of itself, into the past;



it is continually cancelling the now. This passage defines time: Time is the life (*zoé*) of the soul in a transitive motion from one life-phase (*bíos*) to another (11, 44). But as time is only an image of eternity, so temporal life is merely homonymous with the eternal life of the intellect (11, 49). The time of the world soul and world time are the same, and since all souls are one, the same time also appears in each human soul (13, 67).

The first question about time must be: Is it of the soul or of the world, is its source consciousness or reality? Plotinus' grand scheme, in making time the life of the soul and making the soul the animating generator of the world, collapses this distinction: It is precisely in being of the soul that time is in the world.

21. Whitrow, pp. 78 ff.

22. For example: that we can reach a memory, either randomly, by a "glancing ray," or systematically, by a process of attention (a distinction roughly the same as that made by Aristotle between remembering and recollecting, *On Memory and Recollection* II); that the clarity of a presentified object is distinguishable from the clarity of the presentification; that there are memories of memories, and also memories of objects we have never perceived such as historical scenes; that every memory is fixed in an unalterable temporal environment even as it runs off from the present; that the perception of time and the time of perception correspond; that memory is distinguished from phantasy by a factor of "positing," i.e., by being given a definite temporal position with respect to the present.

23. I have omitted in this account that connecting of concepts called judging, which is required to complete experience (B 187 ff.).

24. Locke, for example, presents a theory of time in which there is succession without an underlying flux. Our mind contains a "train of ideas," a succession of objects of thinking, from which we derive our idea of duration by reflection. Duration is "fleeting extension," the perpetually perishing part of succession (*Essay* II 14, 1). The theory neatly takes a middle ground between Aristotle's psychic counting of external motion and Kant's original, undifferentiated inner flux.

25. Aristotle distinguishes, under somewhat shifting terminology, between thought or intellection (*nóesis*) which is the immediate apprehension of form, and discursive thinking (*diánoia*, e.g., *Met.* 1027 b 25). In a comparison with the Kantian faculties, pure intellect (*nous*) would be contrasted with the transcendental apperception or pure reason, human *noesis* with conceiving or understanding, and *dianoia* with judging.

26. In the original Transcendental Deduction (A 98-102) Kant distinguishes three phases of the unifying synthesis performed by the apperception and assigns to each a faculty: 1. The synthesis of *apprehension* in intuition, an original taking-up into awareness and temporal ordering of the manifold of sensation. 2. A synthesis of *reproduction* in the imagination, an original associating or connecting of representations of objects in their absence which makes remembering possible. 3. A synthesis of *recognition* in a concept, by which what is successively sensed and then remembered is recognized and united in one concept.

On the face of it the distinctive temporal phase—if the syntheses are indeed to be temporally interpreted—would seem to be the past: cumulative apprehension, reproduction, recognition. Nonetheless Heidegger makes a fascinating case that Kant has implicitly prefigured his own account of the origin of all three phases in the future by showing that the syntheses correspond exactly to his three temporalizing ecstases of human existence: The apprehensive synthesis corresponds to "originary presentification," the reproductive synthesis to "repetition" of what has been, and the synthesis of recognition to the "anticipation" of understanding (*Kant and Metaphysics* par. 33; Sherover, pp. 186 ff.; for Heidegger's reinterpretation of the imagination as understood in the *Critique* see Sherover, pp. 142, 150).

27. 1. Plotinus anticipates Heidegger in the central notion of the self-temporalization of the soul, and in regarding the future as the essence of time (See Note 20).

2. Hegel's abstruse dialectical exposition of time in the *Philosophy of Nature* (paras. 257-260) is meticulously but critically interpreted by Heidegger (*Logik*, par. 20; *Being and Time*, par. 82 a). Its gist is as follows.

In his dictum that "the truth of space is time," i.e., that space in being thought reveals itself as time, Hegel is opposing the commonsense apprehension of their disjunction. Space, for Hegel, is the indifferent mutual

externality of the manifold of points: "Space is punctuality." Each point in this manifold is a negation insofar as it discriminates a difference in space, although the point is not distinguishable from space. That is how space represents itself to us, to begin with.

Now when the point-space is subjected to thought, when it is not merely represented but actually conceived, that is to say, when its truth is brought out, the point, or rather each point, is determined. For thinking is determination, i.e., delimitation and distinction. So each point is distinguished from the manifold and set for itself: It is this point, not that point. Hence negativity, space, has in turn been negated. This negated negativity is the "truth" of space, namely the point conceived, and it is time. For in being so determined for itself, the point's indifference with respect to other points is cancelled; it steps out of its own indifferent condition, although it maintains its indifference to its neighbors. Thus it no longer lies in a paralyzed quietus of space but, so to speak, gets a move on, rears itself up, outdoes or succeeds itself: It becomes a now. And the successive determination of this now and that now, the continual negating of spatial negativity, that is time. "In time the point has actuality," namely as now. The complementary positive concept of time is "intuited becoming," by which Hegel means the disappearance of specifically experienced nows.

Heidegger is critical of Hegel's understanding of time as the mere now-succession of which his own work is a critique. (See Sec. V 1). He does note that time as negating negativity is formally identified by Hegel with subjectivity (self-overcoming), but he fails to mention at all in the *Logik*, what in *Being and Time* (omitting reference to the later lectures on the *Phenomenology*), he discounts as a mere formality, namely that in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, which goes beyond the physical time of the *Philosophy of Nature*, this identification raises time to an all-encompassing stature: Time is the existent Spirit itself, the Spirit externalized. Here time is no longer a mere succession of nows; indeed, the notion that time is subjectivity is at least a way station to Heidegger's temporality as the ground of human existence.

3. Bergson gets short shrift (*Logik*, par. 21), but he too anticipates Heidegger in certain elements: A first such anticipation is Bergson's emphasis on the essential temporality of human life which is in accord with his understanding of time as a vital, non-discrete, non-numerable qualitative and interpenetrative heterogeneity called "duration proper." A second is in Bergson's understanding of the origin of quantified, countable time as externalization, that is to say as a spatialization of true duration, brought about when consciousness introduces succession into the dead simultaneity of spatial phenomena. (Spatial phenomena, even when so modified have no vitality of their own; they only have an unaccountable property of presenting to consciousness change at successive moments.) But above all, Bergson precedes Heidegger in the notion of an externalized variant of life which is permitted to unfold in space outside rather than in time within, and in which "we speak rather than think, we are enacted rather than ourselves act" (*Essay*, Conclusion). This externalization of time is surely an anticipation of "inauthenticity."

4. Because of the complex transformation of the meanings I merely mention Kierkegaard's theological terms "repetition" and "the moment." (For Heidegger's acknowledgement of the latter see *Being and Time* II 4, n. iii.)

28. Plotinus, who has a way with words not unlike Heidegger's, uses the word *diástasis*—distance—as a designation precisely of that quantitatively apprehensible succession of time through which its qualitative nature, the unity of its phases, is also displayed as the future continually passes into the present and the present into the past (Beierwaltes, p. 65). In the word *ecstasis* Heidegger expresses the denial of this diastatic or sequential unity; for him there is no temporal continuum since past and present both come directly from the future, though of course not through a temporal succession but through an ontological derivation.

29. Bollnow (Ch. IV) criticizes Heidegger's existential interpretation of mood because it posits the "depressed" moods as exemplary and takes no account of the elevated moods. He seems to me to be right, because the understanding of "moodiness" (*Stimmung*) as a disclosure of "having been" is entirely derived from the interpretation of anxiety as a being brought back to one's thrownness. But why should the other moods be similarly grounded in the ecstasis of the past?

30. Heidegger claims that the concept of this vulgar, infinite now-time which he has established is nothing but the existential-ontological interpretation of Aristotle's definition of time (par. 81). This critique gives no weight to the fact that this countable continuum is for Aristotle only an *aspect* of motion understood as the actualization of being and that its infinity and its now-present are precisely regarded as expressing the approach of becoming to being, to its eternity and its presentness.

31. The lack of an imaginative mode shows up especially in Heidegger's discussion of the relation of practice to theory (paras. 15, 69 a, b). Each has its own temporality, but that of the latter is entirely secondary to the former. *Dasein* finds itself always already involved in the world and bound into a context of instrumentality, of "equipment," which is "ready to hand" for use. Heidegger gives the example of a hammer: The less the hammer-thing is merely gaped at, the more *Dasein* seizes hold of it in a primordial relation much more revealing of its being than any contemplation would be. Only later, usually when some deficiency is encountered in the tool, does that speculative stance arise, in which *Dasein* "presentifies" objects to itself as things independent of their use, so that they are merely "present at hand." Recall that the present is the least prestigious of the ecstases. Thus practice is a more primordial mode than contemplative theory.

The phenomena seem to me to be misobserved here. From the wide-open receptivity of a baby's eyes to the slow contemplative inspection which precedes any proper tool-using, every appearance of satisfying human activity seems to begin with imaginative viewing.

32. Whitrow, a very perspicacious writer on natural time, concludes that from the viewpoint of natural science time is real (pp. 288-290) on the grounds that the past is determinate, that the present is the moment of determination or becoming, and that the future is a mathematical construction subject to correction by observation. Then "time is the mediator between the possible and the actual." However, I cannot see why this mediating power is called time, rather than, for instance, becoming or the passage of nature (See Sec. VI 2). Whitrow himself names numerous writers among scientists who deny the reality of time. The general difficulty is that in most of these treatments time is either already defined so as to enter the discussion as real or that the issue of its reality is not even raised.

Whitehead, on the other hand, is careful to refrain from using the word time for his "fundamental fact," the "passages of nature," which includes spatial as well as temporal transitions. The passing of a temporal duration is an "exhibition" of this passage of nature, which is also responsible for the uniqueness of each act of perception and for the terminus, i.e., its object (pp. 54-55).

33. The etymology of *chrónos* is unfortunately obscure. Both Greek words for time are masculine, and so, naturally, are the representations. In English, time, perhaps under the influence of feminine German *Zeit*, is sometimes given female attributes: "the womb of time," "sluttish time" (Sonnet 55), though we also speak of "Father Time."

34. A difficulty about making perceived motion precede time might seem to be raised by the well-known discovery in the physiology of perception that there are quanta of perception, i.e., minimal times, below which events remain unregistered or subliminal, and threshold speeds above which the individual position of a mobile cannot be discriminated and its path appears as a streak. These temporal effects might seem to imply that time underlies them and is their condition of possibility, were it not for the fact that this time is itself measured by micro-motions observable to artificially refined perception.

35. The literature concerning the imagination, physiological, psychological, and philosophical, in this century is enormous. Of the last the most interesting writings seem to me to be those of the phenomenologists. They take their departure from Husserl's *Ideas* (1913, especially par. 111). The fullest and most original treatment is Sartre's *Imagination* (1936).

The chief and most absorbing questions about the imagination are: Is it a faculty? How can it hold sensory objects without a material substrate? Are images likenesses? Whence comes their special affectivity? What is spatiality such that we can have an inner space-consciousness? Why are images primarily spatial and visual? What is the relation of voluntary to involuntary memory-images? And above all, how is the imagination related to thought: as object, product, instigator?

36. For a lovely study of the dance types of music and how they convey bodily schemata which in turn express the soul, see Wye Jamison Allbrook, "Dance, Gesture and *The Marriage of Figaro*," *The College XXIV*, no. 1 (April 1974), pp. 13-21.

37. The past is not given priority, at least not by any philosophical writers on time that I know of. For Nietzsche it is the future with its possibilities that conditions the present, since out of it come all valuations, including the true as that which is destined to be. So also it is in the future that Heidegger grounds authentic human existence. However, for the most part some kind of present is favored. For example, Sartre transforms Heidegger's analysis so as to place the ontological present at the center. He understands it as the phase in which consciousness makes itself present to all non-conscious beings, thus originally uniting them as co-present in a world (*Being and Nothingness* II 1 b). Hume gives primary place to the vivid presence of sense impressions, of which memory and imagination are but pale residues (*Enquiry* II).

As for the ancients, Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine, they honor an atemporal present, and of them Aristotle with the most authoritative explicitness: Speaking of the divine intellect he says (*Met.* 1072 b 14-18):

Its way of life is like the best we have for a brief time. For that being is always in this state (which is impossible for us), since its actuality is also a pleasure. And because of that, wakefulness, perception, intellection are most pleasant, and because of these, hopes and memories.

This view of the phases of time as reflecting divine eternity is of course compatible with the claim that the past is primary in human life.