

THE BUTTERFLY



DIALECTIC

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This series of interviews of The Poet and Le Fou has been taped and typed, touched and retouched, and sent into the perspectives of time and the shapeliness of space by the Editors. These imaginary conversations were found in a rowboat, abandoned, in the lilies at the end of Lost Lagoon, along with this sonnet in the hand of The Poet:

THE MUSIC OF DONIZETTI AND ROSSINI

*Makes me imagine the open country, green
lawn and arcades hidden in a word
and arches of roses, alexandrine, and
waterfalls where the maiden, Time,
bathes without a shadow it seems.
The English Language cannot do mercy
to the melodies of dawn, playing again,
in the labyrinths of Merlin and Marvell,
and Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream.
O music, O Italian pines in the mist.
Your outlines are the ribbons on the wheel
of a car that carries me to the land
where these melodies are. Directly,
forgetting the names of animals and star.*

We regret we cannot publish the full text, and the gaps in which the poet lapses into code, and that Le Fou's sleeves in the margin couldn't have been more scented for the bees of the readers' senses. For the readers are truly the bees of the invisible. Perhaps the final details of these swallowtails of time have been omitted to save them from the collection of literature — another wing lost behind the screen. But the fluttering butterflies become backdrops, incidental now, in the reader's affair with the word.

Question Marks

THE POET: The problem with poets has been that once language has assured them of eventual failure, everything works itself out for them en route, as if in a dream. To be conscious of this dream, to be fully conscious of it, to be aware of its circumstances, to need to reaffirm one's existence in a Venetian mirror as Mallarmé did, in order to think. The question obviously is, what would existence be without language? The various poses of this question unlock the words of almost every literature. What would existence be without the threat of becoming Nothingness again, a threat that implicates one as soon as he tests the boundaries of the word. After all, history entered the world as writing, history as we know it, and tragedy entered the world as history in the Greek dramatists. There is a lesson to be learned there.

LE FOU: My dialectical response to that, off hand, would be that it is impossible to test the boundaries of the word, that you only think you're doing that. Nothingness is an ideal, an ideal negation of the mirror of thought. We fall into the convention of tragedy, like Artaud.

THE POET: There are three types of dialectic which can be easily differentiated in all poetic writing. There is the image dialectic of the surrealists, the objectivists, the vorticists and the projectivists — and this assumed dialectic has traced an entire tradition of writing right down to the present. There is the dialectic of metaphysics, which includes another entire tradition, including such writers as Rilke, Baudelaire, Novalis, Whitman, Blake, and among others, Lowell, Eliot, Borges, Valéry and Williams. And then there is the third, logocentric dialectic which includes everything from Dante, Milton, to Olson and Pound. All of these can define a certain quality of the idea, certain intellectual perorations, certain aspects of self-consciousness, certain styles. Lesser poets cannot shift their diacritical gears, and thus are caught between or inside the thought created by another dialectic.

LE FOU: I think you identify some of the cruxes of poetic thought.

THE POET: You mean the “chiasmas”?

LE FOU: Whenever I hear that word I immediately think of chasm. I think it came to be as a Cinvat Bridge to cross over the Nothingness dominated by the lack which you have spoken of as styles of dialectic, and which I think are actually the dominant syntaxes under whose signs of organization poetics has been devoured. You remember death and sin make the bridge in *Paradise Lost*, and the only interesting fault in that text is where Milton says he’s blind like the devil.

THE POET: Some pioneer work has certainly been done, now, on the deconstruction of grammatical categories, which is an outside view of poetics. The bridge, and even to be Mandaean about it, and I mean a bridge of a bridge, which is what Mandaean culture actually is — a voice that is held in suspension, the middle voice as it has been studied — is in fact a dialectical voice that has disappeared. The “bridge” in Mandaean cosmology is the alphabet — which certainly presents us with another dialectic entirely. Do you know what they thought when they first saw an airplane, that it was the creation of the goddess of love, Liwet.

LE FOU: A disappearance charmed by the mind. Blake’s contraries, for example, are actually cutting elements of syntax, fixed ends for bridging from the ground across to an imaginary cosmos. I don’t think he’s right when he says only mental things are real. Or speaks of the “negative” which negates heaven and hell. His heaven and his hell create the chasm which is bridged by the sentence: the cosmos. And it is already made.

THE POET: Blake does change syntaxes in midstream though, and one can think of *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. In another order of dialectic, the imaginary, which is an "end" of the sentence, is located in another topographic site entirely. By ending the use of stylistic devices, even the elementary poetic ones, like alliteration, Blake sent the imaginary out of the sentence. The disappearance of the imaginary in the sentence certainly corresponds to the emergence of the large anthropomorphized figures of the Revelatory text. The product of this is *The Sea of Time and Space*.

LE FOU: The Jerusalem of the Large Glass. This is the mirage of the imaginary, the city enclosure of humanism, reflection.

THE POET: Even in your sentence there, the "mirage" of the "imaginary," one can get a sense of the doubling of the undialectical theory which has been injected into some recent poetic texts.

LE FOU: Dialectical writing would throw a curve through that glass house. It is a fragile construction of crystallinity, protected by a syntax of topicality, a Utopian sentence dominated by the sign of the subject: every syntax is a theology.

THE POET: Not any more. "The Crystal Cabinet" in Blake's convex metaphysics certainly shows that the difficulty of the sentence had surfaced in his time. "The Songs of Innocence and Experience" are amongst the finest examples of a dialectic in poetics that we have, and what, in fact, constitutes their dialectic is the absence of a hidden philosophical mythology that underwrites the text and obscures the self-critical or self-deconstructing work of the real dialectical sentence.

LE FOU: It is the “lack” in those poems, the “tantric” of the Freudian underwriting, which is full of gaps and none of them are occluded by mythological covering. He doesn’t know where the text is going. There is an absence of syntactical formulae as distinct from an absencing of deified order.

THE POET: By that notion of deified order I understand that you are referring back to the “transcendental sentence” we were outlining. This sentence uses certain types of order, captured relations between the signifier and the signified, not easy to see without a program of deconstruction. One characteristic of the metaphysical sentence is that it does not erupt or invert the characteristic subject relations of the text/reader; it does not change the received order, the way the text can be received; it simply follows the order of another code or a code of the Other logocentric and veiled — subject to the metaphor of veiling/unveiling, which characterizes metaphysical writing. There is no displacement of the textual chain, the chain of signification in the text — almost a first priority of dialectical writing — yet, it cannot, as can the logocentric dialectic, hold onto the nature of the reference. The referent, too, is veiled. And when it is not a grammatical gesture, the person of that writing is ideological — a characteristic *found in almost every metaphysical text*. Dialectical writing has the background of its own exteriority, outside-of-itself. It is not “unconscious” writing, because the unconscious is not susceptible to contradiction.

LE FOU: The unconscious without topicality. Every one of the typologies in literature is a syntax, a topicality, a typology written beforehand, which is meant to heal the difference in a text, and so, contraries come as a pharmaceutical cure of the pathology of truth. It is the sickness of the difference, wanting unity, which escapes the concept or theology of the lawful and predicated sentence. The sickness of the Fisher King is imaginarily healed by the dictation that is received in the perfect poetics. Every search has a wound.

THE POET: This problem, this exact equation, of the Fisher King and dictation, is found in the work of Spicer.

LE FOU: The line is in search of the Holy Grail. The writer welcomes these pieces which cover the gaps in his text and which are meant to eliminate the play of writing. The first word dictates the last. All the differences of distinction are veiled by the owner of the text in order to "make a world." The world is a mirage in each instance, as present, future, mythological, imaginary, ideological. It is the sexual quest for Utopian fulfilment of desire in typologies dictated by the Father. A sentence is sentenced, underwritten, as a footnote to the already concluded and dictated cosmos of the text. The capability to do otherwise is certainly negative.

THE POET: And poetry goes on a merry-go-round of these master games and master words. These master words are the first thing one should analyse in both one's own language and that of other writers, because they are the conditions which extend, obfuscating real play from the beginning to the end of his enclosure. One can think of a thousand examples of terms and ideas, theories and subjects, which, while maintaining the limited play of the subject erase the chance of any non-identity or of ever changing the way the text can be received. The examples in current usage form a circuit of worn phrases, as Mallarmé says, which have been rubbed through all too many palms to have their message come out with any value. And these phrases, which are the conditions of repression of many modern texts, including the most ideological, from the newspaper to biology, give the reader the metonymic level upon which the text is meant to be received. It is a translation which could be called "inter-subjective" if it weren't for the gaps and missing links which are crossed over and crossed out in every instance. It is this process which is being mapped as the circuit of the letter from its first debut in the object relations of the mirror stage to the lack of relation to death.

LE FOU: The covering cherub of ownership, so that logography leads to accumulation of concepts, garments, capital. The worn phrases are capitalized upon as insights which are really hermetic prescriptions from the drugstore of language.

THE POET: Or a phenomenological language whose intention it is to reach out for a "being in latency." Yes, it is a televised sentence that comes back to you through the intermediary of the subject-at-large who, like an image in a revolving door is supposed to be all subjects, but one, for whom all pathologies are still available in the form of repression. The crossing of the circuit that is known as Justice, the Name of the Father, etc. How do you think the message comes across if it isn't through a form? That is how the question of language is posed. But it is not adequate. The message is not transformed, has escaped the code, is emitted by the code, and has escaped the form. The message is unsignified.

LE FOU: Every high *arche* is a televue, distanced from a tell star, reflected across the world-at-large. The types of phenomenology can be covered by Plato's love, Newton's Absolute Space and Time, Hegel's Absolute Spirit, and Ernst Bloch's Astonishments (*realstau-nem*) — of an alchemical *veritas* to come, though from which ideology we are writing from heaven only knows. Because we are not on the outside of language. There is no outside. We are not receiving messages from Mars, coded and decoded blips, gridded, which turn out to be banal magnifications. The concept is, after all, a projection from materiality which reflects its own inadequacy in any case. Yet western metaphysics makes messages into cornerstones of thought. I don't think the ultimate sentence comes from Mars or Venus, any more than from here.

THE POET: *Difference in general is already contradiction in itself.* And this problem in the sentence goes back at least as far as the first grammarians in Sanskrit. Their attempts to purify the sentence is an example of how far they had already gone from proximity to the code itself. Heraclitus in Fragment 67 shows us the problem was also Greek, the contradiction between pure writing and history writing. In that fragment there is the question of the name, question of the origin, the necessity of a transformation, and a metaphor for the crossing of boundaries.

LE FOU: You can tell from a sentence all of its relations — who is the father, the grammatology of the third person singular, who regulates the first person plural “we” embodied in the presence of the singular which is an authoritarian communication called “intelligibility.” As you were saying, almost all American writing can be defined as kinship relations (Williams, Pound, Olson, Duncan, Creeley, Sanders, Spicer, Dorn, McLure) whose structures are a kind of foreplay in the tribe of the father, easily traceable in an exchange fathered by a group of identities.

THE POET: Each attempts to capture the name of the father in order to sanctify his position in The System of relations. We then interpret it as a tradition. If you think that criticism is the work of Oedipus, you should see the scene of writing.

LE FOU: Hide and seek the father. Whose totem and whose taboo?

THE POET: What we are looking for is not the substitution of cosmological “faults” for linguistic and anthropological ones — all writing that professes cosmologies, sacred geographies and structures of mythology is immediately suspect. They are suspect because they all originate *on the other side of the word* — and their sense of adventure is the articulation of a gap which cannot be stated inside their own ideology. In effect, mythological readings give us back only what we give them, they are not capable of interrupting their own cycles. The gaps in our reading of mythological texts are read into the present by architects of the word, like Sir Arthur Evans’ reconstruction of Knossos to resemble a Hilton Hotel. There isn’t any mythology anymore, unless it be this myth of deconstruction itself.

LE FOU: What mythology hides behind are incests of syntax and the ownership of language as eccentric property, recovered in idea fetishisms and linguistic spells. I don’t believe intelligibility is governed by permissions or need be sheltered and shielded in the genotext, as an hereditary crossover. The dwellings of myth, cosmos, image and idea are only identification marks. I am looking for the renegade correspondence, but not outlawry.

THE POET: I can certainly see why Rimbaud said he had had enough of "those birds." Nietzsche faces the question: "let us give up the notion of 'subject' and of 'object', then that of 'substance', and eventually that of its various modifications, for example, 'matter', 'mind', and other hypothetical beings, eternity, and the 'immutability of matter'." What he points out here is that the oppositions encoded in the sentence are the ones that have to be remarked; it is the transgression of these concepts that is at stake here. Dialectical writing means nothing more or less than the writing of dialectical sentences. The shape of the sentence determines its possible operations, such that the quality of the idea is found in the type of sentence where it occurs. It can be said of the dialectical sentence what the surrealists said about image: that its efficacy increases with the differences of its terms. There is always an arrested relation which can be seen in the way it splits the sentence, or predicates the thought, and this predication is the dialectic which crosses itself only to erase itself. There is no dialectic in most poetic thought, there are only signs, because the structure of signification is not changed by the operation of language that situates them in a metaphysical field.

Azure Echoes

LE FOU: Sometimes it seems that buying automobile parts is life, and this is the meaning of existence.

THE POET: Like Cocteau at the Academie Francaise. He thought he was going to an academic convention, and found himself in the middle of the room, surrounded by a bunch of garage mechanics.

LE FOU: Picking up spare parts; fixing a machine.

THE POET: The machine is dead; it is death. Death, not because we risk death in playing with machines, but because the origin of the machine is in a relation to death. Representation is death; which may be immediately transformed into the following proposition: death is only representation. A pure representation never runs by itself.

LE FOU: What is this called? Is this death in the machine, then?

THE POET: Death and the machine, I guess. We are in a scene of writing, which insofar as one sees its metaphysics disappearing into the machine as expressedly as a letter into the mail — yes, this is the problem of interpretation and representation. Abandoned to itself, the multiplicity of the layered surfaces of the apparatus, namely the text, is a dead complexity without depth. Life as depth belongs only to the wax of psychical memory, the delays which compose the subject. From Plato to Freud, metaphysics continues to oppose hypomnemic writing and writing *en tai psychai*, itself woven of traces.

LE FOU: What does *en tai psychai* mean? A post script to the psyche?

THE POET: In the psyche.

LE FOU: And Freud opposes that?

THE POET: Apart from the machine being an absence of spontaneity, its resemblance to the psychic apparatus, its existence and its necessity bears witness to the finitude of mnemonic spontaneity, which is thus supplemented. In other words, memory is self-pollinating, not cross-pollinated by the "bees of the invisible." The machine, and consequently representation, is death and finitude within the psyche.

LE FOU: Derrida's talking about celestial mechanics there, in the old sense, protected by a garden closure, and an invasion of that garden closure.

THE POET: A Renaissance enclosure.

LE FOU: A rebirth enclosure which isn't a rebirth at all. Which is a kind of humanism that is ornamented by epicycles always moving in retard, always going backwards to an image which can be constructed and held in the machine.

THE POET: Since we have developed a view of writing which takes it all the way back to the writing metaphor in Freud, and the mirror stage in Lacan, at which point the subject begins his appropriation of language "at the mercy of the Other," certainly we should remain in the Game until we have solved, for ourselves at least, the problem of a language unable to free itself from its relations.

LE FOU: The machine of the father. The machine seems to be a proposition always.

THE POET: In writing, the subject is aware that the alienation of his work comes from within. How can real intimacy be produced with a language that includes all the possibilities of the transcendent relationships with the Other? What we are examining is the relation between the scene of writing, the language that is caught up in it, in the context of representation. Namely, the psychic machine — the either/or: the memory trace machine. So in effect what we are trying to reinscribe instead of the machine is already given by the nature of the metaphor. We are trying to reinscribe the metaphor; we are trying to reinscribe the inscription. Which is not the same as the metaphor.

LE FOU: So, the metaphoric apparatus becomes like the machine, where the principle it's operating upon is mechanic, or a perceptual faith.

THE POET: The ideal virginity of the text is the ideal virginity of the machine. For example, in the American myth, the virgin capitalism, the machine is a relation of signs that signify it as if it were without origin, sex or memory. In another instance, the self-embracing virginity in Mallarmé's *Herodiade*. The virginity of the self-enclosed eroticism, the erotic enclosure of the text, the interdiction. The real is only equal to the mirage; you can become anything from Ada to Adam. Empty and erased, our own reading has become the text of a deathwish.

LE FOU: Which involves exclusion of the reader, and the writer, from the text and his desire to keep the property of the text clear by not entering into its purity. And therefore establishing ways of reading which hold the fashion of virginity.

THE POET: I think the writer is fashion conscious in his relation to the reader, because of the mediation of representation, that is, death. A famous instance is in the thirteenth chapter of the *Vita Nuova*. Dreams which follow former frayings; the scene of writing in the Freudian perception. I don't believe in dream writing because I don't believe in the subjective writing.

LE FOU: Are we talking about the virginity of Narcissus who falls in the pool he embraces as the mirror of the world, reflecting himself alone? This presence of the self in the I and thou of humanism? I mean Spicer's "sole", the *solus ipse*, the writer in love with his own sentenced self? The way Dante sees himself in her eyes? And she is the body of his soul.

THE POET: It is interesting to me that you return to Dante in the context of the sentence. We find him returning to St. Hilaire for a vocabulary that can account for image, and returning at various points in the *Divine Comedy* to the structure of image, basis, and gift, elucidated in the writings of St. Hilaire. This constellation gives him a syntactical model which goes beyond the levels of exegesis in the Can Grande letter. Image is Beatrice, Basis is Mary, and Gift is St. Lucia. He identifies them at various points. In this manner image is sensitized to presence, and the sentence as a structure of presence arises, in the theory of the Annunciation.

LE FOU: What has the Annunciation to do with his poetics?

THE POET: In the Annunciation it is easy to see how the reader becomes a perception of the text. The Annunciation has the structure of a sentence, and its "presence" is written into the structure of the Trinity, which unfolds in the Annunciation. A study of the Annunciation would reveal that the structure of desire, of metaphor, of metonymy, of the relation to death, the primal scene, eros, and to the visible and the invisible are all written in.

LE FOU: They are written into the structure of the Annunciation?

THE POET: The cycle of the letter is initiated in the "closed garden," in the garden "close locked," as it appears in the Songs of Solomon. The eros is the principle of the *raptio*, of the rape of the Virgin by the angel Gabriel. The sleep, the unconsciousness of the Virgin before this is a primordial sleep, a sleep without language, without logos. The desire of the Virgin is the metonymic principle which grounds the angelomorphosis in the primal scene. The constellation here established gives the reader a syntactical basis — there is a reversibility possible; there is an anagram, an initiation into the imaginary. The letter slides, unconsciously, after which it can only be located as a trace.

LE FOU: It takes into account the signifier and the signified?

THE POET: The signifier is effaced in the "descent" of the logos, in the incarnation of transcendence. As Merleau-Ponty argues, it is transcendence which explains. The Annunciation tells a story, which has no story — there is nothing behind it, but a pure myth of the relation of relations which constitute the society as well as the sentence in the poem. The structure of image, basis, and gift, which Dante uses, is this structure of the Annunciation. And to go further, there is also a contradiction; a contradiction of man, of the metaphor of man, which constitutes man in the structure of a logos brought about by an eros.

LE FOU: What kind of event is this, how can you differentiate it from ideology?

THE POET: There is the event of a non-event, of a non-signifying event. It is this aspect which Levinas has argued is the sphere of eros. The essentially hidden throws itself into the light without becoming signification. The Annunciation is the erotic enclosure. Henceforth, there is "presence" in the form of a trace: there is history.

LE FOU: History and writing.

THE POET: It depends on the way the Other is seen to modalize the system. The Annunciation provides for both the sentence and the society — rules for the crossing of boundaries. Dante, in this sense, sees Beatrice as the body of his soul. But the reverse is equally true. But the recognition of death, beginning in the *Vita Nuova*, is quite strange, as Singleton has remarked. It is here that his poetics has a fault. The incorporation of the signifier into the signified exists in relation to death — the symbolic exists in relation to the body, as Jones has shown. The Annunciation functions in a similar way as the Mirror Stage in childhood — it brings into Dante's poetics the fact that desire is the desire of the Other. It does so in such a way as to give a substantiality, a physicality to the sentence, and to the verb. It is a non-signifying event which establishes the relations with the signifier, the rules for the crossing of boundaries. And we are at this point again in poetics.

LE FOU: We are talking about the virginity of the classical subject, and then of the Renaissance subject?

THE POET: Essentially, we are locating the problems of mimesis and castration in language. The subject is annunciated through a system of relations. The virginity, or writing only relates to a hermeneutics of the representational, a reading which demands that the text is entirely free of insemination. But there is not a single text — there is a multiplicity of texts, all given, in the same sense that there is a diversity and multiplicity of signs all constituted on their ability to function as negations of the other. In Dante's poetics, there are four readings, which make four texts, depending upon your propensity. But because of the multiplicity of texts, the search for origins is a reduction.

LE FOU: The origin is given as inviolable, a dictionary, un-inscribed, set apart and adored. We have encultured the protection of the virgin text.

THE POET: Yes, the "pearl of great price." There is something at the end by which all relations are fixed: death.

LE FOU: Is it the question of the native land, in which not only man, but the essence of man is lost?

THE POET: The other side is censorship, which binds a writer to his own writing, giving him, in effect, the illusion of a context. Mallarmé for example in the "Après Midi," in the dialogue of the faun comes around to this illusion.

LE FOU: But Derrida is trying to replace writing with what used to be called "being."

THE POET: Yes, there is psyche and text, each text being another text, until there is no psyche, only text. And this is where poetics is, and why it cannot be read.

LE FOU: It seems there are extreme difficulties here, arising from substitution. But I do agree with him that there is no perception, because seeing is always through the identity of a center, that is, a model which prescribes one's own visibility.

THE POET: And the machine of this visibility is the sentence, the location of presence in the sentence. This is the machine of mystification. It is ideological because it is capable of numerous homologies. The opening of these homologies is dialectic, especially in the semio-logical space of the letter.

LE FOU: And this is the ultimate machine in the garden.

THE POET: Let's isolate it again. In a representational narrative, which most are, unless they are otherwise, both writer and reader are enscribed on the surface, through metonymic orders, through metaphorical orders — floating on the surface of the difference, which foment, surges, but which, from the outside, appears to have stopped. The present text is viewed as a supplement.

LE FOU: Yes, the supplement of difference, cancelling the same. The narrative we are holding onto, and why literature may disappear, is that difference is the supplement upon a similarity which is already disguised.

THE POET: Yes, it is a very protective means of building a narrative.

LE FOU: What would happen if we had a writing which didn't end in an anthropos figure, which is only a transcendent figure idealism builds as a plural image of "We."

THE POET: What Heidegger calls proximity is closer to writing: proximity in relation to being, but to a being that is not constituted by metaphor.

LE FOU: That is a change.

THE POET: The wakefulness of proximity.

LE FOU: This will bring language back to life. But that proposes within itself a discourse. The difference between language and discourse is what must be respected. A discourse is based on the existence of a subject, whose essence is being. It is possible to get rid of the organizing subject, the "guide" of the narrative who, knowing its steps in advance, is disguised as the leader of meaning, in a fore-knowledge which disappoints the text.

THE POET: The problem of representation and the text is that the identity of the thing is not its primordial structure, as has been supposed. It disappears as soon as the text is approached as matter. As Levinas says, the Other is neither initially for or against the Subject. The supplementary truth is always being cornered in a particular enclosure, and at least in modern writing, sometimes, this enclosure is identified. The supplement can never be erased yet it has only exchange value. We are still examining the context of representation in the ideological enclosure. The problem is not that of truth being a supplement, but that the letter is a footnote. The proximity of the text is lost, absented, put in the mailbox.

LE FOU: Yes, the spirit above the letter is a false proposition, a desire which sentences the sentence. Reading has almost been done to death in this game of the stadium, where everything is a broken bundle of mirrors, spells, and trances. We read through the transparent literature to find a castle of purity uncontaminated by the language itself. This is demystification of the text. It is that doubling between letter and spirit, the literal and meaning, manual and mental labour which excludes literature. Are you talking about a new kind of literalness?

THE POET: The literal is just one interface of the text; not a position of the text. That is what we don't have; the text has no position in relation to *Aletheia*, at least it hasn't as yet.

LE FOU: Does it have a position in relation to itself?

THE POET: The text is a maneuverer; a wanderer. It is as meandering as any concept you associate with it, because it is disassociating. The ideal fault that Mallarmé initiates in his long poems cannot be replaced or turned into another writing. This is where the text stands.

LE FOU: It is the fault that remains. This fault which is overlooked, which is the writing. Is that what you mean? Duncan's *Opening of the Field*, I mean the hortulans of the "field" which is fenced from the beginning of that book, closed and containing the virgin of the "field" of writing. And in Olson's writing, where he stands astride the Cabot Fault. Continental drift in which all ground is fragmenting, and the Newtonian fragility is breaking, and he's standing on a fault where he's naming the fault that runs right through his writing. There's a great difference between them.

Mourning Cloaks

THE POET: In poetics every image is a contradiction of subject and object.

LE FOU: What happens is that a love relationship, the embracing, turns into a dialectic where language is used. What happens with the disarming of eros; does the text feel this?

THE POET: What seems to characterize the erotic is that it is without signification. What the virginity of the text means, is that we have never read it.

LE FOU: But why is it not erotic? The erotic seems to be the basis of our aesthetics, a worship of what before we called the virgin.

THE POET: But the signs are like petals in a brook, they whirl together, they are blown together, they eddy together, they cohabit; but they are never together outside of the contexts of the text. We have been asked to hold them together in another erotic enclosure?

LE FOU: Olson's rose is like an attempt to form an archaeological history which comes into bloom. It comes into bloom when all the petals have been centered.

THE POET: The bloom of knowledge? Well that's a very romantic myth, the final image of the first scene. But I would not want to be a mystery because then I would never know who I am. The text is not continuous historically, at least not in any historical sense; for in a poem of Mallarmé's each image is a contradiction; a contradiction of all the images that go before it and after it — it is this ability of image which allows it to be read; a type of contradiction which deconstructs the subject and the presence which is hypostasized within writing itself. To some degree this aspect of the imaginary in Mallarmé depends upon repression — the figures of his poem — the faun, Herodiade, the absence of the king, the writer who has disappeared from his work —

LE FOU: — at this point in the tape we should insert the distinction to be made between deconstruction and destruction.

THE POET: But it was Mallarmé for whom it can be said that destruction was his Beatrice. There is no “soul” left in Mallarmé. After a theory of deconstruction we can begin to apply it to the subject, or to the subject who is barred from his writing, the duplicity of the subject. The other subject is always the object of anthropology or psychoanalysis.

LE FOU: In some sense the whole of western metaphysics is the study of anthropology. We are plagued with that subject. Where are we? The answer is always “over there,” on the far shore of the map. This is the subject which represses the self; it is always larger than life and very authoritarian. Yet metaphysics assumes the study of man in himself; it is always an assumed subject feeding being and yet hidden in all of this there has never been an analysis of what the subject “man” is. I think that when you have something like Darwin’s *Origin of Species* you have the beginnings of what we call an evolution of humanism, the sciences of man.

THE POET: But the *Origin of Species* is the text of a phantasy, an examination not of the origin of man but of the logic of the phantasm.

LE FOU: Previously it had been angelology and not anthropology. The problem is man. Who is he? We assume he is an ideology or ideal being, of course. Lévi-Strauss shows how time retards the subject in his search for origins, that origins in presence are invisible, and in absence never cease in making the imaginary longing of desire which dominates western epistemology. He is engaged in a deconstruction of the subject, which is anthropology, or the anthropos figure, as opposed to or in distinction to naive and violent types of destruction which go on in metaphysics, for example, in destroying original societies in order to live in the loss and absence of relations. Deconstructions are never negations.

THE POET: Lévi-Strauss' kinship systems are written or inscribed in the methodology of the idealism itself. There are systems of a discourse which has disappeared, and studies of a myth in which one is supposed to find the traces of man.

LE FOU: The traces of a man, extinct, non-existent.

THE POET: But the evidence of a poetry that depends upon anthropology for its subject matter is reductive to say the least. For example, one has only to turn to the *Cantos* of Pound, the myths of Olson, or the conceptual ideologies in the work of Jerome Rothenberg, to see that the around the world in eighty days study of anthropology is the same metaphysics that we have already encountered in much more sophisticated writing elsewhere. But the fact is that no writing is already constituted, and as soon as you believe it is, you've timed your exit from the scene of writing.

LE FOU: I take from Lévi-Strauss the exposure: not structuralism; because he is speaking of what can't be disclosed, the subject of his study.

THE POET: Those systems are without economy; they are exploratory.

LE FOU: There are spatial problems. Anthropology is always a projective verse.

THE POET: I think Spicer was looking for an economy of the signifying system when he began to approach the poem in terms of an infinitely small vocabulary. I am more interested now in the economy of Spicer and Duchamp than in more theoretical works where you find the interjection of the representational into the Platonic enclosure again. We don't speak out of it anymore, but we still speak through it; the text is barred from history and history is barred from the text.

LE FOU: What you are speaking about, again, is the centering of man in proximity.

THE POET: Some writers are not interesting for their content, but for its economy; and this is the question of proximity, and because of the academic situation and the capitalist economics that have taken over interpretation, we can now read poetry only in terms of its meaning.

LE FOU: Meaning pays off. Galahad is always armed with that on his mind.

THE POET: Between the divine, the inert and the relation —

LE FOU: Between the divine, the inert and the parking lot —

THE POET: And that is how we slide into meaning, by slipping into the meaning we are swept along by the dialectic of the logos.

Tiger Lilies

LE FOU: What are linguistic origins?

THE POET: There are some writers who do not look for the origins of language but for whom language is the origin. The question is of the signifying economy which is always the shortest path. There is no real theory that can account for the grammar of the event and it is impossible to know what that phrase means. But there is a signifying economy which stands outside the event. It doesn't turn back into the event for an origin.

LE FOU: No rerouting of language through meaning? The event plays no part in generating the language?

THE POET: I think I'd have to answer no.

LE FOU: Do you think words of the text generate a narrative?

THE POET: You are thinking of the anagrammatical studies of Saussure? According to the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, he develops a systematics of the transcendental language and I think when he reaches that point an unforeseen reversal may occur. At this point the argument should be taken up by Derrida when he speaks of the logocentric enclosure and of the difficulty of analyzing materialism from the *cogito*.

LE FOU: Someone might be hunting for meaning where he would find language?

THE POET: The imaginary. For every grammatical element there is an anti-grammatical element. Together they constitute the imaginary and the divergence between linguistic signs. There are alliterations, anagrams, hypograms, that are capturing the space of the narrative in the same sense that signs devour meaning. In the very particularity of language there is an enclosure which is not subjective at all and it is this enclosure which is usually appropriated in a search for origins, archaeological or linguistic. It is the redundancy of language which interests me: the overlapping of message and code. The imaginary must always be constituted as more or less than itself, in the same sense that numbers are in Frege's theory of integers. One is only possible through two, and it is this circuitous route of the sign and the signifying process which makes the study of economy. It is easy to turn this imaginary aspect of language back into psychoanalysis, and this is what has gone on in France, and lingers now in American criticism through the publicity of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Lacan; but the problem of economy at the level of praxis is poetic, because economy necessitates a deconstruction of the rules which apply to the Name of the Father, the object, the part object, and the structure of the signifying system generally. It is not a question of substituting one set of rules for another, but in deconstructing the rules, erupting the sliding of the signifier over the signified, of the marking of the Signifier, etc. Most writers reach the point where they have learned the rules of the game, and because they have reached this point, just when they think they are on the verge of a new breakthrough, their work becomes more and more subject to the rules. Let us say that the writer has advanced to what Derrida describes as the "Scene of Writing." It is at this point that the question of language becomes more and more strictly posed, and the position of the subject becomes the most important thing on his mind. It is at this point that he becomes a typed writer: a romantic, a classicist, a marxist, a structuralist. He realizes in his work there is a certain overlapping of message and code, that his language is articulated upon a gap. Take metaphor, for example, an obvious term for the crossing of boundaries. When a writer is appreciated for his startling metaphors, his problem is economy.

LE FOU: What exactly do you mean by economy?

THE POET: Economy is always taking the shortest path. It is only by knowing the economy of light that gravitation was discovered. A writer looks at language as it plays in a mirror, in a spectrum, in what Shelley called the "many coloured glass": the colours that stain eternity. In short, it depends on how the question is posed. The imaginary, the overlapping of message and code, leads through metaphor and many other means to identity; and this identity cannot easily be deconstructed by the writer who is caught in its rules. Economy involves then, the sense in which language is always transcendent: the sign, the trace, inscription, etc.

LE FOU: What kind of critique can you envisage if one were talking about a poetics without a subject?

THE POET: In many poets you can identify a poetics that is "without a subject," and in that sense it is nothing new. One can always find the texts that are without a subject, and we are now on the track of a new economy; but that is not to say that the present is an *archai*.

LE FOU: There is nothing happening in poetics right now? It is asleep?

THE POET: La muse endormie? Yes, but in the same house, in the same room, and that is the question of dwelling, or what Heidegger calls indwelling. Yet, without the metaphorical structure which Heidegger applies to it.

LE FOU: But that is an issue which Heidegger tries to fight; the indwelling of literature. In Heidegger's thought the soul is always looking for the earth and this is the domicile he is talking about.

THE POET: Which certainly places his dialectic in a strange context: Holderlin, Heine, Novalis, Rilke.

LE FOU: Yes, that's a very particular *archai*, and one that has been deconstructed in itself. Yet there is this Heideggerian problem. When Heidegger tries to write poetry, it is always alpine cowbells.

THE POET: Because the text is very enclosed. It's pastoral. He's a pastoral philosopher too.

LE FOU: And then you get into the question of wildness which would come out of the indwelling. But these are all descriptive terms, and in a sense, we are in a pastorate ourselves, at this point.

THE POET: The indwelling is not transcendental, it's proximate being.

LE FOU: Let's backtrack a bit. Are you saying we should rewrite all the gods in terms of what they are doing in the sentence? Take Okeanos, take Night —

THE POET: Take Iris —

LE FOU: What the sentence is as a world, how it closes, how it opens in the thought of the Father of the world who is Zeus, what binding really means — and Prometheus as fettered forethought.

THE POET: The economy has really eclipsed poetry; it has really clipped its ears.

LE FOU: To write about that eclipse? At least we won't have sentences which on the one hand praise the worker then on the other say go and see your shaman. Or prescribe a visit to Cold Mountain.

THE POET: You mean the deep body therapy, the bone massage?

LE FOU: Yes, language as the threshold of pain. All the therapists are trained in syntactical shifters.

THE POET: Yes, and they paraded the poor Lama Govinda around on a ribbon like Nerval with a lobster. Don't get too close to the Lama they'd say, and then they'd sit him in the corner with some cheese and a box of crackers and let him answer questions from a bunch of stockbrokers.

LE FOU: The cook told me something. He said he decided to stay on after they broke his arm. You couldn't say anything up there unless you were speaking through some chink in the wall.

THE POET: Pyramus and Thisbe, and I'm not so sure about Thisbe.

LE FOU: Come around tomorrow morning before sunrise and if the Lama has time after breakfast he'll convert you to Buddhism.

THE POET: Along with the knives, forks, and spoons.

LE FOU: Nothing too small for the Buddha.

THE POET: I wonder what happened to that stockbroker's clients after the hypnotism wore off?

LE FOU: They give you a certificate at the end of a week.

THE POET: Yes, "I lasted six rounds with the Other."

LE FOU: Let's get back to economy again.

THE POET: We were speaking of a language without interiority.

LE FOU: To eclipse death, profundity and deep structure, because they are all dominated.

THE POET: We are speaking of a time that is not metaphorical.

LE FOU: Not of the visible and the invisible?

THE POET: Phenomenology cannot provide for the kind of economy we are pointing towards. The visible and the invisible are captures; depth captures, perceptual captures and we are back to the reign of the Signifier. There was a law, an Indoeuropean law that was written into language: that language is a person. After that, you are stuck with a mask that is not easy to divest oneself of. At the time we were born, 1950, Malraux declared that the future was the time of the machine. The imaginary, because it is a transcendent thought, becomes a critical speculation: transcendent to the word, it becomes a critical thought.

LE FOU: What the theory of the Other proposes is that language is a consciousness which is transcendent. Which consciousness for other things we don't know. We only think we do.

THE POET: Language alienates the subject, but even in suffering "at the mercy of language" the subject is aware that the alienation comes from within. It is a typical double-bind situation. We compare the self to the rights of property. While property is meant to induce permanence in a floating system of exchange, its situation as an object of exchange, in the fact that almost anything can be exchanged into the anonymity of money, makes the self susceptible of being caught up in the anonymity of money. This anonymity is also a hidden quality of representation: the anonymity of words, which, in order to become more definite, demands hierarchy, boundaries of exchange, mythologies, and so forth. So we are faced with economy throughout the layers we spoke of earlier.

Swallowtails

LE FOU: With Heidegger's theory of proximity, with language as proximate, the relations between language and living are far less known than in the works of most American writers.

THE POET: Yes, there is an opening.

LE FOU: But in going back to find ourselves in the system, all you get is analogy; and you cannot write out of analogy. When anthropologists went to Yakut land, at the beginning of this century, what they described as the journey of the shaman was nothing more than the journey to trade furs with the Russian Fur Trading Company. When they needed to buy a living, they'd climb up to the stars to do a little trading. It sounds very dogmatic, doesn't it?

THE POET: The time of the machine, the time is the machine —

LE FOU: For a machine, we could substitute the flatness of space, the color of space; poetics has been frightened of color; viewed as a stain upon the world, blotting out transparency. There is more to the colors of the rainbow than what's at the end of it.

THE POET: In poetics, in language, the rainbow is signification — the generation of the sign. In order to perceive the world and the passage of time, one must first be able to hold it, and as one does, one discovers that time is a mirror. Then, secondly, what Augustine says — that everyone knows what time is but no one can communicate that knowledge to anyone else. The mirror is a kind of ideal text that our sentences attempt to translate. But this is a denial of metaphor, reducing it to suffering. And metaphor always speaks of the existence of suffering, somewhere unheard, at a distance, in the world, almost unimaginable, thus, easily erased, forgotten. But this reduction of metaphor to the subjective, giving it a semblance of inner correspondences, anterior to the written word — mathematical, yet mysteriously free of the envelope of sense in which it dies or is reborn. This meaning is considered at the end of the rainbow. But it is in the being, suddenly, unsignified, that, at the end of a sentence, or in the process which creates a painting, we know we have reached for something that did not exist. This is the evocation of Jean Paul. Because we have a slight knowledge of the substance of language, or imagine we do, we can indulge, without being bored, or narcissistic, in the glissement, as Sassure called it, of form. It is when we begin searching for the substantiality of thought, that we fall into meaning. It is Iris, the rainbow, the goddess of messages, who was given special powers because of her hesitancy to yield, given certain privileges in the underworld. She defines the boundaries, certain messages. All poets have known that they were damned by the rainbow.

LE FOU: Or the fallen angel on the balustrades of the library, in *Aurelia*; Nerval's angel of Saturn, in despair of a color which has changed into the appearance of ideality. Matter endures melancholia. I mean Durer's melancholia. She has conjured up how to square the circle, but the language has fallen asleep at her feet.

THE POET: And in modern times, the angel of history in the work of Walter Benjamin. Who does not move forward into the Future, but has his face turned towards the past. Where a chain of meanings appears to us, he sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling up, and is hurled at his feet. The angel would like to stay and awaken the dead, and join together what has been smashed to pieces, but a storm is blowing from Paradise, and sends him, reeling, into the Future. And then, he comments, "what we call progress is this storm!"

LE FOU: She has found the luck at the end of the rainbow. This is the language of representation, and it is Dante's Paradise. You remember the puzzle in Canto 33, before he loses language. She has worked on that problem.

THE POET: It is the language itself, always veiling and unveiling — logos and eros. The gravity of the language; but image has the function of a vector.

LE FOU: That is what I am talking about, the flatness of the text. Take, for example, the problem I have encountered in Charles Olson — because of the fault of subjectivity in his text his poetry hides subjects, mythological subjects, like Tartaros in Hesiod's *Theogony*. All one can do in the poem "Maximus to Dogtown IV" is read one's own foreconceptions into it. But we know something is covered up in this.

THE POET: The missing letter turns into a subject.

LE FOU: Olson was trapped in the Pound tradition, an academic school that requires subjects, which it can hierarchically unveil. The consequences are theology, ideology and meaning. But never poetry. This is because Olson has intentionally created an *Aletheia* by hiding the subject. But when the subject is actually unveiled, and stares you in the face, what have you got left? We are reading Hesiod, Hugh Evelyn White's version, or Leland's Algonquin legends.

THE POET: In Olson, aren't we dealing with the Derridean notion of psyche as text, as a text of other texts, and of reinscription?

LE FOU: Yes, but Psyche is not visiting the letter in Olson's text; I mean variance, the trace. The Derridean recital involves reinscription, marking, making one's own trace: not to preserve meaning, but to dislocate an *arche*.

THE POET: He chooses sources which are self signifying: the self-signifying becomes a definition of the primordial; the system comes back to turning in a circle, but the supplement — are you objecting to the supplement in Olson's text?

LE FOU: Olson's desire to surround himself in a cosmology was often accomplished by copying, or photocopying, without alteration, texts of a completed world. I have great difficulty with this notion of documentation, that finally requires a mute voice in order to retain the secrecy of his *Poetry and Truth*.

THE POET: You mean the "practise of stillness" in the final texts of *Maximus*?

LE FOU: A silent night in the face of a fallen writing. To be blunt about it, Olson was trapped in a notion that the subject of a poem is carried by its letters, as dominant meaning organizing language. This was prompted by a fallacy of readership which was looking for meaning.

THE POET: The Unicorn tapestries.

LE FOU: Going hunting in the letters; I mean school. What use is it to teach writing in school — you can only give meaning away. There is no reinscription in a poetics of meaning, which is the politics of literal subjection beneath the logos of meaning. A play on words, at the cost of the text.

THE POET: But isn't this the dialectic of the lover and the beloved, the structure of desire, and, don't we read these as well in the texts of Corbin, Souriau, and others? Is it the problem of the subject of desire, which you locate in Olson's work?

LE FOU: There is an archaic Maximus. In the first lines, an overwhelming statue, very much enlarged in the mirror of the world. The poet's desire is to embrace this subject. He is subjected by his desire to possess a picture of the world.

THE POET: Are you saying that in Olson's texts, desire is always the subject-object relation? What happens to language when Paradise is a Person?

LE FOU: The desire is, meaning will couple. Not language. There is a previous text which we read, even as Olson read it: there is the proposition of an authoritarian man, that there is someone, a subject, behind the whole of creation. And we want to know who that one-word-speaker is, — and so, how do you get out of the subject?

THE POET: He wants to divest himself of the Name, to empty himself out of the Name.

LE FOU: If we go back to Corbin, I am interested in him precisely where he doesn't divide existence, even theological existence, into archaeology and teleology. He is just not interested in the "end of man," or the final outcome of the species. He does not say that the text is right for our time, but he tries to say, this is how the text was written, in that context. No one knows if Corbin believes what Avicenna wrote. To enter another angel you must break the cycle. The naming of the unknown is an endless venture. You must break forethought; meaning follows from that. What matters is the way we enter the circle; Corbin explains that through a text of angelology.

THE POET: Yes, and so did Mallarmé in his text on alliteration. All that matters is where one enters the circle. But the circle is another ideal of the text, produced by hermeneutics.

Clouded Yellows

THE POET: The description of the text operates on various syntactic levels. The text is a rule the Game finds in its play. This is not a book of rules, that is, a theology, but a book of play and transgressions.

LE FOU: Yes, in the absence of a crisis of closure. I don't believe in the rage generated from the desire to escape world as the rule of desire. The breakdowns occur, and these are unbindings, in all poetic thought of recent times.

THE POET: But poetics has not broken open — no more than this endowment of language upon which desire is constituted. Even *Dasein*, the discoverer, is the thief of the Childhood Scene. There is no position of privilege possible, if you consider the structure of desire, not even “deconstruction” as a principle analogous or isomorphic to the principle of desire. Desire is always implicated in the breakdown in the metaphysics of presence. There are two divergences at hand: one seeks the description, the other only to reinscribe. The description is still referential to the Game — one does not find the Game by looking back at the Rules.

LE FOU: I agree that these methodologies are only rites of passage. They are rituals of intention. The King who sees himself in the mirror views a Fool. All the rules of the image are inadequate.

THE POET: The difference between the images, the aspect of their contradiction; this escapes the reader, and this is writing. And this is how the reader is described in the text: as an inscription already there, and situated in the play of difference which is the surprise of the dialectic. Surprise is that sense of being “taken over” — etymologically.

LE FOU: Etymologically: "to bear a cross." This is what it looks like in belief. Actually there is a Round Dance.

THE POET: The cycle of the return of the letter. It is this same letter which travels in their epistemology from the Childhood Scene, to the analyses of Poe, from psychoanalysis to deconstruction, and I am not entirely sure that the real identity of the letter is not lost somewhere *en route* — I mean the letter, which, as Lacan has tried to show, designates the most private parts.

LE FOU: In Lacan's sense, I think there is a worship of the missing letter, or part of a text. And this is the aspect which is throned. It has very little contact with the world, as Weyl says, "that is open to perception."

THE POET: Yes, I mean we are using a language which has been devoured by the needs and demands of the self. Heidegger is right on target, when he asks, what could be more alien to the Group, which is lost in the functionally concerned and diverse "world," than the Self, which is always alone, individualized, uncanny, and thrown contingently into nothingness.

consciousness of another, no different from the one that I automatically assume in every human being I encounter, except that in this case the consciousness is open to me, welcomes me, lets me look deep inside itself, and even allows me, with unheard of license, to think what it thinks and feel what it feels.

THE POET: Yes, it's the circulation of the letter; the reading of the phallus. He is appropriating the text, calling it his own, and assuming an ownership of it which is held in common. I don't think texts are common, are held in common, or that the dialectic of subject and object proposed here can make a clear statement of desire. This is an extreme form of mimetic desire, which is the problem of the logocentric inclusion — of mimesis and castration. The reader feels excluded from the enclosure, is occluded, because the center of the structures of the text and of desire work against each other — and each becomes an epicenter. This is a mystification of the text, a veiling of the phallus. The metaphors of transformation cannot be detected within the level of reading — and so, they are written in, not deconstructed.

LE FOU: I would say, unconsciously, though intentionally. Poulet is trying to withhold the inviolability of the text, by setting the scene beforehand. The scene is set up to crown the author, who is the priest of a communion with the Other. And this is none other than entanglement which enslaves, because there is an inert priority given to the meaning, which is the "subject" of the text. Most readers want this: to be enchanted.

THE POET: With the phallus? It is a belief in an innermost self, which is the other end of the scale of the reading of psyche as text. Actually the text is attempting to demystify enchantment, while the reader is trying to be taken by the magic of the scene.

LE FOU: The demand for mystification is the consciousness, which covers over the unconscious. This is a false *Aletheia*. The truth which is known to be not truth, and which is received in the simulacrum of unknowing. Actually, it is a cover-up for the attacks of subjective surprise, a kind of militant advent, which takes control of the world. It is pathological because of the intentional wound which truth makes on the unconscious.

THE POET: He is attempting to free himself from an imaginary that has become solidified: it leads, finally, to the definition of truth that you find in Hegel:

The true is the Bacchantic ek-stase in which no member of the whole, no link in the chain, is not drunken. And because as soon as it differentiates itself, each difference immediately dissolves itself — becomes redundant, as it were — the ecstasy of the whole is as if it were simple and transparent repose. . . . In the totality of process, which we now see as repose, what comes to differentiate process, what comes to differentiate itself in the whole, and to give itself a particular being-there, as something, is preserved and retained as that which remembers itself, that for which its being there is the knowledge of itself.

LE FOU: That is overwhelming; you see a solid ground move. He wants a continent but he has an archipelago. The fault of the text is immense. "Astride the Cabot fault" it is; a Gondwannaland of unities gone adrift.

THE POET: It is a drunkenness which stands at the end of the ideal — whether in interpretation, or in poetics. It separately displays the contexts that he wishes to have as a whole.

LE FOU: Yes, his unconscious is wild here, and he is covering up that fault of the text with a truth the chain of being cannot break. But it is broken, and he knows it. The text is full of faults he is avoiding.

THE POET: The repose is a traditional sign, and the philosopher is a Pentheus who must listen to Cadmus. It is exactly this fault which signifies the creation of other orders — for example, the imaginary, the symbolic, the real; ontological orders. They are unities which cannot be sustained at the point of the word, where difference dissolves them. Poulet moves towards it, because in his own reading, he, unconsciously, locates in the trace of a text the circulation of the letter or the phallus, the signifier of fiction, and the fictive; he presents a fictive opening to what is actually a closure, or a seizure.

LE FOU: Yes, seizure: a heart attack. It is a heartless death which joins the unities: fictive, in the sense that it erases cosmology and small-being. I would go so far as to say that this is the mid-Atlantic Ridge, which shows the drift, even the extreme between philosophy and literature. For example, philosophy always thinks of cosmology as an incarnate body.

THE POET: Yes, this certainly would be Merleau-Ponty's position. But as soon as you have an exhibition of self and world, as soon as you have a consciousness which is the key signature, you have a meta-physics which cannot be deconstructed without a violent rupture — not a repose. The key is in "the past, the future, or the elsewhere" — in other words, nowhere. Philosophy tries to articulate the fault only by trying to transcend it.

LE FOU: Whereas literature thinks of cosmology not as a crypt, but as a genotext — it is Medieval in respect to writing. I think of Dante, who in Canto 29 of the *Paradiso*, jumps from the largest body (*el maggior corpo*) straight to the eye of desire. Out of the one body into the Other, from cosmology into the heaven full of light and love. The intermediate is a purloined paradise, where all writing takes place.

THE POET: In the cosmology of the Tantric texts, the parts of the body are seen as the seats of the manifestation of letters. What the scene of writing is concerned with is not image, but *Aksara*. In some respects, it is the question of interiority; of a language without interiority, that we are attempting to arrive at here. Man is no trope of himself. The boundaries of the text are not the boundaries of the subject: the text carries different imprints. In Hegel the pure I is effectively real only in its connection with what is Other — it obtains its liberty through the power of negation; negation, in the first place being the negation of one thought, the difference or resistance of one thought to another. The subject is always caught in the surplus of the text's signifying functions, in the overlapping of boundaries in the text.

LE FOU: Not in the unity of the text?

THE POET: We must recognize in poetics, the Eye, which attempts to unite itself to a statue, a model, of classicism, the nostalgia of the child before the mirror, in which lingers a trace of the primal scene. Already too many poets have become statues, even in Vancouver — I mean, one can see a poet from a long way in the distance. It is precisely this mirror, the substantiality of his own thought, which Olson attacks in the development of the Nude — a mirror in which he reads the development of the lyric, and in which we read the development of the erotic, and of metaphysics. It is a matter of who, or what is speaking, in the text, but it is also a matter of the logic of the phantasm, the “phantômes de sentiments” of Blaser’s poem, and in the writings of Jean Cocteau. Both of these artists have been enveloped by the mirror. The point in Cocteau’s *Orpheus* when he licks the envelope — the child Orpheus, you remember, was given a mirror to amuse himself while he was captured by the Titans.

LE FOU: The envelope, the child’s enclosure in the symbolic. I am not so interested in the retard which Orpheus suffers, but the Orphic of a literature which knows that it begins “on the other side of the mirror,” on the other side of this specific “return.”

THE POET: So that the reader who thinks he is demystifying literature is actually being demystified by literature —

LE FOU: — having “crossed over” to a place of no return, which is a darkening of the mind for us. Nerval says, “What will happen when men find there is no more sun?” The guide of the mind is not over there, that is, here on earth. The transcendence has jumped the gap, between the ideal and the material, and here he is, without light, at least the light of mental discourse, on this shore, unable to return because *this* is no longer backwards, or forwards, but the *writing itself*.

THE POET: We are dealing with two terms here: the mirror and the gap. And this is the context of desire. Manonni writes, "we would find everywhere, names which serve to designate a desire which does not have a real name." The circulation of desire, the circulation of the letter is inhibited by the imaginary reserve of signification in which the subject is "caught up." And this being "caught up" is not being caught up in the writing, or in the space that the writing opened or closed, but in the envelope of a certain enclosure — and it is at this point that the writer tries to move the narrative forward through a metaphysics. And it is only a diversion. The imaginary must be spent, used up within the writing — it cannot come as a supplement.

LE FOU: It must be withdrawn from the circulation of thought, then, restored to a signifying economy?

THE POET: In a poem like *Voyelles*, Rimbaud was to discover that all words can be found in every text. So it is with Mallarmé, who tries to reconstruct his entire symbology in each text. There is certainly this insistence but the function of it has been lost in most poets. They are looking for a text without gaps, without interruptions — yet, this is exactly what they arrive with. The anagram, and the anagrammatical theory of Saussure deconstructs the pre-eminence of the imaginary in the scene of writing. In Nabokov, and others, but in relation to anagrams, in Nabokov in particular, the anagrams reflect the condition of the text, the narrative, as well as the structure of desire, until the imaginary, strictly speaking, is used up. The imaginary provokes unlikely correspondences — beauty and incest, for example, in *Ada*.

LE FOU: I would like to relate a tale, Shakespeare's tale, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for it seems to me to be both Orphic and about desire. It has a kingdom and a faeryland, and the crossing from one to another. The lowest is in love with the highest, Bottom, who desires the Queen of the Faeries. But this is reversed, mistaken, at least metaphysics would have it so. The Queen loves an Ass. Love is somehow blind. There's no mirroring of the self in the Other, only a play of mistakes which come to the other side of the play. Bottom is the writing at the very bottom of Shakespeare's text. So he has written a play, to be played, in which Shakespeare has him adorned in a lion's mask, which would be a mask of frightful identity, what we all want to be. But he appears from behind a mask, to uncover the untruth he so stupidly doesn't hide, as a secret writing hides from readership, to create desire. He uncovers the coverup of truth. He says, "I'm not really a lion. I'm not astonishing, fearful, perilous, the *leo viridis* who eats up the sun at the end of the world in alchemy. I'm really Bottom the worker." I'm being Snug the joiner, here, fabricating this.

THE POET: It seems ideological in reverse.

LE FOU: Bottom is just a worker, with the working class of his fellow players, who are also carpenters, and suchlike. It's reassuring, we feel, to come down to earth, in another identification of Being which has more proximate origins in familiarity. The transcendence is overcome. Lest we be taken by his fierce "roars," which *we might believe*, if he were smart enough to make believe. But he isn't. And he doesn't say exactly, "I'm the worker." He says, "I'm Bottom, the *weaver*," which is a worker of another sort, the one who has woven for us the play of the text. He is Shakespeare at the Bottom of the play.

THE POET: He doesn't allow transposition, whether to an ideal activity (as worker) or to an ideal potentiality (as lion). These mirror images of our desire are crossed out.

LE FOU: The writer has disappeared, except where he interrupts the make believe of the play, to be literal about it. The crossing to the literal is the most difficult, because it is a denuding of the make believe of the play. The desire is unmasked. The letter of the play is woven by this Bottom who is neither like a lion or an ass. In fact he, the text itself, is the truth woven in the veil of his writing as the site where all work is done. Any magnification of the part he plays in the play is a reduction to meaning, or a revelation which stops at the make believe of the play. Who desires Bottom?

THE POET: The writer is on the other side of this play. The literal is the last thing we want to be told, yet it is the writing of the play itself.

LE FOU: Shakespeare uncovers this for us, in the Orphism of Bottom's disturbance of the mirrors of truth, beauty, and actuality.

THE POET: Yes, in the first place, the text is demystifying the reader, actually unmasking the lions and the workers.

LE FOU: And where Adorno speaks of metaphysics as being the lid on the garbage can, Bottom is both the lid and the garbage pail. He escapes all the mirrors of description because he unmask the make believe of our various poses which we have identified as truth.

THE POET: I think the counterpart to that would have to be *Lear*, in Kent's speech, "I would teach you difference." Benjamin discussed Proust in a similar context: "Like the weaver, the writer works on the wrong side of his material. He has to do only with language, and it is thus that suddenly he finds himself surrounded by meaning." The exchange is ideological, the spending of the imaginary. This is what capitalism has taught metaphysics — Marx has introduced another dimension of the imaginary. While in America, during the Fifties and Sixties, a new definition of the imaginary, apart from the political, was being carefully nurtured, in France, during the same period, this very theory was being deconstructed.

LE FOU: Is it a "spending" of the imaginary because it exhausts the imaginary as a form of exchange, based on similarity? I mean a levelling?

THE POET: In part, because of the new theory of the sign — which has meaning in relation to other signs, rather than to other signifieds. The intermediate play, the difference, or what in America has been called, the *expression*, was avoided. The theory of capitalism, the well-known difference between use value and exchange value.

LE FOU: This is the idea of Social Credit, as opposed to the capability of the subject to amass fortunes. Whereas Social Credit distinguishes a credit value of exchange which is not determined by the capability of the "egotistical sublime," which is the production of the commonwealth. Where we live, of course, this is all B.C. . . . The forms of exchange in the academic world are so rigidly determined by "economic necessity." But posed against necessity is chance, which is said to be the player of the game; the negative, the double negation, the dialectic or the double dialectic, whatever. It doesn't have a chance. In fact, I would go as far as to say that the speaker loses his language, which goes elsewhere, and becomes other, in a class structure where the teacher, who is the other, is paid by the students on the condition that he mystifies them completely!

THE POET: If he doesn't, they come back for more until they are completely alienated from our society.

LE FOU: They come into the game, which is the game of spell-binding.

THE POET: Yes, in the name of the father, the son, and the *infans solaris*. What they don't know is that they are in the scene of castration. Literature and castration, a problem well recognized by Mallarmé.

LE FOU: It looms as the unmoved being, or the shepherd of being. Who cares if one man can have enough shirpas to go to heaven. These men are apologists for the ideology we "in-dwell," which is why their intelligibility is very accessible to us.

THE POET: Meaning is commonplace, until it has the appearance of so-called "proximate being." Ideological Being, which is the displaced Other in a structure of exchange and desire, depersonalizes existence.

LE FOU: How can there ever be a disenchantment with the concept, when the concept laments our absence from the original scene? By ownership of model and mimesis, the accumulation of capital ruins presence.

Queens of Spain

LE FOU: I had no idea a painting could be like that.

THE POET: It's the eyes. I know someone with eyes like that.

LE FOU: When I went in I knew nothing, absolutely nothing. It left gold on the walls of my mind. I didn't know what it was there for or anything.

THE POET: And the painter who worked with him . . .

LE FOU: He did another Annunciation, I know.

THE POET: One thing that I don't think I ever got into that poem, which I did in another version, was St Juliette, the figure of St Juliette.

LE FOU: Where is she from?

THE POET: That painting.

LE FOU: From Martini?

THE POET: It is actually Juliette as the virgin. I really thought about it like Romeo and Juliet. But I don't know anything about St Juliette. The Martini Annunciation is dedicated to her.

LE FOU: So you were in an enclosed garden, and the words were coming through like that, coming through the lilies almost. It's hard to talk about this poem because it's full of love.

THE POET: Not full of blindness?

LE FOU: Yes, it's full of blindness, and out of darkness, these words appear. They seem to have nothing behind them. I know they have a very deep experience behind them — in terms of where you are — what location.

THE POET: The situation was casual enough — to write a poem in. So, in a way, the situation can be very casual. It is the language that isn't very casual, although I do think language comes to one very casually.

LE FOU: Casualness is an absence of crisis or rage? Or inspiration, or irruption?

THE POET: Yes; I would say some poems walk on all fours.

LE FOU: You mean you don't put your ear to the ground and listen for tremors? Crisis and rage seem to be a conception of knowledge waiting to do violence; a kind of violence that is worshipped as inspiration. I know Dante invokes Apollo and the Glory.

THE POET: A wild logos?

LE FOU: A logos struggling to get free — a logos straining out of captivity. But it is the violence of the captivity that makes it wild. Otherwise the word is not the fore-word. But the words that are in squares?

THE POET: I was trying this as an experiment in typography. These words have yet to break apart — almost like different cards which have yet to show their hand.

LE FOU: They don't appear again in that form, so you are aware that something is being shown.

THE POET: They are like opening cards or visiting cards — they aren't of course cards at all, though they are geographic. But in a way, that is what the geographic is.

LE FOU: I like the way you walk through it, as though you walked into the words. Like "walking down the road into the mirage, on your back was a pack of colors." Or, "the pink rose that closed like a cloud of fire upon our last night in Alexandria." It seems that in a way you're just exposed — or in a place that words come down to.

THE POET: Maybe everything comes down on you but the words. That's why I think language is more a maneuverer than a destination. It has no topology in itself. And I don't think poets can afford to make a topology out of it, like Lacan, or Freud.

LE FOU: You seem to have things, in the poem itself, things like "Artemis guards the silence of the page," as though you were guarding against the incoming of topography. I'm sure you didn't go through this experience in any great depth, going around trying to make a great purity.

THE POET: It may be the contrary.

LE FOU: But you kept something out of it, from intruding, which allows you to step on these words. I get the impression that you are actually moving on the words. "Falling asleep, the rhythm of the rails under us," and the train takes us through love, and through the entwining, and the tunnels. You are actually moving on the words.

THE POET: Instead of stopping inside the words.

LE FOU: Instead of having another ground the words point towards, that this is the actual ground that you are moving across. I know that you came from Egypt, and Mary is going to Egypt, and there is a cross, but the geography has changed. "Out of the windows of the car, passing by the stands of palms, high and ariel, then, a white mosque lit in the moonlight slipped by like a castle of words." So you are actually moving on the words. And then when you come to this part, and suddenly the words are printed upon you. When it came down to this I thought the poem was coming through lilies on to me as a reader.

THE POET: Yes, but I don't think she is visited by the logos. Unlike the poet who is caught in the metaphysics of the word, the language visits her by complete surprise. But the poem is as close to my perception, of the painting, or of the stillness inside that perception, as I could possibly make it.

LE FOU: It's almost as though I was told, when I came to this, I was told what was happening to me, when I was reading. And then when you get over here, and all of these words are taking place in this chamber, and you are actually locked in it. Again, that whole idea that you are closing something out — all that geography that we know, all the places that we know we are going to. And then these words start moving in. Do you know what you mean by this? "Overhead the throw of the clouds, slow dice, does not disturb us."

THE POET: Do I know what I mean? I guess it reminds me of Anubis, now, he often carries the dice. Dice are a very ancient game in Egypt, one of the first Egyptian games.

LE FOU: What does he do with the dice? Does it have something to do with life and death? Is it his last chance?

THE POET: It's a game. Even in the Egyptian tombs you see the pharaoh and his wife playing dice. It's one of their more heavenly memories.

LE FOU: A cribbage game after supper.

THE POET: Sitting around the lotus pond, playing dice. Putting a little gambling in their lives.

LE FOU: And who is this figure?

THE POET: Sekmut, you know the cat? The lionfaced wife of Ptah.

LE FOU: What do cats have to do with the sun? Because of the eyes?

THE POET: The light in the cat's eyes is the light of Re. There's one hidden road where only a cat can walk because it has the lights of Re.

LE FOU: Inside the glass, outside the glass. You're going in a lot of directions.

THE POET: Yes, I read it at a reading once and everyone panned it.

LE FOU: That reading in Vancouver for the Buddhist institute? The Summer Heat? I don't think Vancouver will like it. It's really not for any particular place.

THE POET: What I really think about it is that each person's annunciation is their own. You can't give it away. You can't even send it anywhere. I think that's true of almost all poetry. You can't even give it away. You can't translate it, because the less interiority it has, the more self-pollinating the language is.

LE FOU: The less interiority, the less you can send it out. It pollinates itself. It's a very different feeling from having a poem sent to you, which is what usually happens. I don't even get the feeling of the presence of a writer. The people in this poem are very much in love, they really are. I love that, "The old lady has gone into town for groceries." Do you think she's going to find her way through all of this?