

ruskin watts

document
of hearsay

poem, letter, facsimile & edition

drone fascicle four
a poetry & poetics
periodical
2004

drone fascicle four
document of hearsay
© 2004 ruskin watts
drone codices, dartington

thank you hedwig for mishearing
photo with cabal eero by gwendolen

contact: ruskinwatts@web.de
in der au 6 / D-51570 windeck

ISBN 0-9541407-5-3

CONTENTS

the complete facsimiles	endpapers
a poem	9
a letter	11
three editions	42

A DOCUMENT OF HEARSAY

of the glory
of the lord
scared though it be
clarity

– afraid to see
docetist
deceit's fire
dazzle dark

this doxa that
dressed with sun
moon or stars means
otherwise

the common way's
opinion
on how it appears
when it's called

or rumoured fame
as rare faith
for the now named
unknown noun

as if only
by pony
penetrating
we'd follow

and the glamour
clamoured word
mediating
remind us

the bodily
is laid down
then punned a fact
that bridges –

pastoral hinds
will have passed
last night before
the posed crib

hear=

*life mere twist into synecdoche how you
stand for that*

Keston Sutherland
from *Ode: What You Do*

*yes i'm
thi-nking*

*yes i'm thi i i
i iyi*

*(look i you know it's
i'll i'll
start again i'll
start again*

*uh and it's no it's just
the fact you know of
going through it i mean if you
if we could cut-)*

*yes i'm thi i i
i i i ii i ii i ii i-
nking of this
yes i am*

Syd Barret (approx.)
from *If It's In You*

'But "glory" doesn't mean "a nice knock-down argument",' ...

*'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words
mean so many different things.'*

*'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master
- that's all.' ...*

'...Impenetrability! That's what I say!'

from Lewis Carrol's
... *Looking Glass*

say

A LETTER

11

Little Ollave
Verulam Lyke
17/12/03

This is a piece, dear

just finished,
and I'd like to send it off to you. I intended it at first to fit
onto a seasonal card but it soon swelled up into a page of
nine quatrains. The thing was more or less worked out on a
twilight ramble, when I'd walked up onto an eminence to
find Mercury, trying to make the most of his being quite far
from the Sun. It was a very favourable time, but the little
planet had already gone down before it was properly dark,
like a too devoted minion, attached after all – and anyway,
the horizon always gets more cloudy at sunset. So no luck. I
continued my dionysiac trot, though, and got all the stanzas
shuffled onto paper at home before going to bed.

Well, in case I'll have forgotten it all by the time you might
ask me about it (and what it is on about), I thought I could
put the hermeneutic and formal idea into a sort of epistle,
and pass them both on to you together. Maybe it's a case of
diffident prolepsis, aiming to disarm. I know it IS vain, this
self-reflexion, wanting to explain, but I wonder if you'll think
it's been IN vain? If any art there is, speaks for itself – then
everybody'd effortlessly know. My account won't be a
cryptogram or a prescription, more like an 'analeptic'
poetics, by retracing what was off the top of my head to
start with, to 'recall it', get it off my mind.

not frenetic not
glorious in the field
polytropic
though purposive:

of any verse
the splendour's in
i grant you
the postscript.

The final word'll be yours.

What is the subject of the poem? The main clause that emerges from the lines as a whole when they have been read through will most likely be the final statement, that the "pastoral hinds will have passed before the posed crib". This would be the conclusion of the primary sentence, which may be paraphrased as follows: the shepherds, scared of the glory, will nevertheless by now have passed before the crib. As the gospel recounts it (Luke 2:8-20), they were calmed by the angel's information, after the brightness had frightened and alarmed them, and then willingly decided among themselves: Let's go! (*transeamus*) to Bethlehem.

Structurally this primary sentence, which consists of the first and the last strophes, brackets off and 'contains' the rest of the poem. There is another passage in the poem, however, which sticks out as a possible main clause, in that it stands prominently as an assertion. This is the bald statement in the penultimate stave, that the "bodily is laid down". In this way, a secondary bracketing of the middle of the poem by a spanning sentence can be made out; this time the second strophe passing straight to the second to last one. Afraid to see ... the bodily is laid down. This bridging statement is like a mirror, or like a variation of the most outer sentence, repeating its 'declaration', but this time in a more theoretical, intellectual way. Whereas, in the outer version, "the hinds, scared of the clarity, will by now have passed the crib", in the inner bracketing passage, "in spite or because of (in any case not unconditioned by) a fear to see the fire, the bodily is laid down". As the "glory" matches the "dazzle", so does the "bodily" (or perhaps "that which bridges") functionally match "the crib". So much for the grammatical subject of the poem: we have the 'naive' or native hinds, along with their predicate: going to view (or at least 'attend') the child; and we have the philosophical or theological thesis 'laid down': the fire is become (or punned up into) fact.

What though is the subject of the poem? There's no doubt that it's Christmas. It is day; it is the day following the rising of the new light in the deepest night. The after days will, now, be lengthening. The word has been born as body. It's not as though it hasn't happened "before". The pageant is

acted out, yet again – we know it for the first time. The people were terrified initially, "in fields where they lay", and then consoled. "Glory shone around." And then came a gentle injunction, "*pone metum*", "*solve metum*", "*nolite timere*" (a phrase repeatable by enamoured and caring Sulpicia in Tibullus, by distracted and dutiful Aeneas in Vergil, and by the present angel in Luke's palliative depiction), saying, lay aside fear, surely the god will not harm. The shepherds conclude, "let us view the word – *quod factum est*."

Glory! This odd word we seem to know so well, and not to know at all, so often sour, is what forces itself on the reader's, as on the shepherds' attention. It irritates enough – right at the start, I hope – that you might even want it to be, well, gone into further. This glory, even though it may "be clarity", is an englishing of the Greek *doxa*. Or as we'll see, the Double Dutch.

It is not a question of ambiguity. That bothers no one. The ambivalences must be complemented by a forceful *unequivocality* of meaning. At least if there's to be a dialogue. A competition of certainties. Each a unique-vocality. Polyvalency is one-sided, too simple, still comfortable. It requires a dialectic of definiteness against it. Many meaninged is not enough!

If the first and the last strophes between them make a point, as I suggest, and the second and second to last strophes suspend a corresponding point, or rather an errant ray of light: then the section following, strophes 3-5, pulls together to lay open this word, to construe and pull it apart, analyse and account for it. Can glory, a little too penetrating itself, be penetrated? Its aura envelopes. (Even as upcoming high point, release, 'climax', it's still Greek to me.) This *doxa* is thus, for a considerable stretch, the subject of the poem.

The explication of the term falls into two main distinctions. First, between *doxa*, as glory and clarity, splendour; and *doxa*, in the more familiar sense, of point of view, belief, doctrine. The second of the main distinctions is a different, diametrical one: between *doxa* as opinion on the one hand and dogma etc on the other, between splendour on the one hand and terror etc on the other, and between the respective glories of sun, moon and stars. These distinctions cut across the first one, and respond to the

ample dynamic of difference meant by the word – “otherwise”.

Strophe 3, with its mention of the celestial lights, the variants of Sun, Moon and otherly stars, refers to the biblical Epistle, Corinthians I, 15:4. *Doxa* is namely a key term in that passage. Here is where St Paul suggests a vital distinction between the fallen body and the risen one to come, one born corrupt and the other pure – which is an altogether other glory (*alle doxa*), a different story. (A grander narrative.) The epistle compares this distinction to the diversity of light and character in the sun, moon and stars. (The argument of the apostle is admittedly more concerned with the grading and heirarchy of the heavenly bodies, than with an aesthetic judgement of the richness or polyphony of the several radically divergent light-styles.) To the distinction meant in the word *doxa* we can add, I think, that between flesh and the flash of understanding. (*Récit* and receipt.)

This is jumping ahead, rather, to the second half of the poem, where the subject there could be characterized, I suppose, as the mind and body problem, or the relation of matter to meaning. The contamination of poetry and prose, glory and crib. Strophes 6-7 will be seen, then, to compare in their turn the two new alternatives: “penetrating” and “mediating”, and to give a variation of the differences which will have been raised in Str. 3-5.

I ought to add, though, before taking a break, that along with the words “glory” and “lord” the figures *dome* and *doom* were active in the dichotomy of *doxa* and its mediation. Dome is the *domus*, the seat of a lord, under his roof, and has become by extension the semi-spherical cupola of a church and the dome of the sky, cut by its lord’s ecliptic. The *dominus* is master of this ‘house’ (he is the host), whose work is hospitality but domination too, the taming and ‘breaking in’ of domestication: both a pastoral and civil castration. The chastity and economy of this household. Doom, however, is judgement, as in what is deemed, passing from ‘opinion’ to ‘enactment’ (word made fact). The ‘decision’ of doomsday has become the apocalyptic cut of utter ruin and all-revealing. As *doom* comes from the ‘theme’, the sentence of law ‘laid down’ by Themis, a kind of cosmic economy, a *domain* is a divinely

ordered community, contained in a lordly halo, a dark and sublime tent, a rainbow arch around the throne of the hoary, as ancient, silver-glowing ‘head’ of the household – the capital. (Think of the supposed wis-dom of white locks and argent locked up in circulation. It’s not easy to get out of this patriarchal ark, since the whole naming capacity of language is caught up in thing-dom, king-head and all the arche-tropes.) The thinking through of *doxa* ought to bridge these rather narrow straits between domesday and domus, the census poll and the Bethlehem stable. A comparable ambiguity has struck me in the German *herrlich*, ‘lordly glorious!’, which is the contamination of *hehr*, primally splendid and sublime, with *Herr*, of royal rule and ruling, the august arbitrariness of all these distinctions, a profound chiaroscuro! (*Urteil*, ‘judgement’ in German, *ordeal*, is literally original parting, or an archaic clearing, the primal cut.) So *dom* spans the poles, I think: clarity & its crib.

In a first overview, the structure of the poem has been clarified. The outriding strophes 1 & 9 (the simple story) are varied by their partners 2 & 8 (an idealistic analogue) and then within these parentheses the central part is divided into a quick (and surely not too dry) commentary on *doxa* (str. 3-5) and an application of this to our story (str. 6-7). And here is where another ‘subject’ of the poem and its actions will emerge: the we and us that are exposed, both to the glory and its understanding, interpretation, application. I will return to this later, where the question of priority will want to be raised. I mean the relation of the real baby in the manger to its propagation (maybe previous) in heaven. Could the gloss precede the crib? Do the angel’s semantics, *ave* & *ecce*, prefigure or even pre-empt any actuality of an individual child? “But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19)

In short, the plain and seasonal question is: has the prediction produced the splendid incarnation, has stiff dissemination petrified the composition, strewn semé dissolved constellation; or is there a body of otherwise flesh nested in the hay, placed there irrespective of any suspicious looking and significant stars? Is there a mother’s mystery sufficient without the international supervision of any Magi or major powers, auspicious hepato-physicians, or special name-check of country cousin and their own lambing rustic kine?

Starting at the beginning, the initial effect is one of repetition and inversion. In the syntax, this is the genitive "of" the Lord, and the more ablative "of" his Glory frightened. Then it is the unorthodox placement of the "scared" or earthy state, only put after its celestial cause has been laconically and neutrally introduced. Lord/ scared: a rough and 'nearly' paratactic transition. Too close.

(Unusual word order is not enough a dominating feature of this poem for me to question in detail now the prejudices against 'inversion'. These presuppose a normal and neutral acceptance of conceptual order, both in temporal development and hierarchical importance of a person's thought, which applies right across all speakers of a 'single language' and all their situations. Comparison between related languages alone is enough to feel how flimsy and limited these norms are. The genius of a national tongue is another of those hoary doms and hoods.)

Another instance of repetition and inversion is in the sound and rhythm structure. After the minor variation in the lines "of the glory/ of the lord" comes the middle of the strophe and with it a central chime or half-rhyme. I mean the enjambment lord/scared as a sonic juxtaposition. This is an internal, mirroring effect, a chiasmic form which will be seen to carry on in this position through all the staves of the poem.

...and bud like hang
inwards the leaves, for whom
flowers from below a chasm ground...
Hölderlin, *The cleft Nook at Hardt*

On its first occasion, of course, this feature is obscured amongst other consonances and disruptions in the strophe, such as the quite conventional but irregular and soon discontinued end-rhyme (ie. be with clarity and see). In contrast to such erratic formal elements, the rule that articulates the verses, really, is the inverted echo joining all the pairs of 7 syllable groups: *docetist/ deceits, sun/ moon, opinion/ on how, faith/ for the* and so forth. In the absence of a reasonably strict, regular 'metrical' pattern, or other

predictable measured format, this inversion rhyme is the only fixed point, comparatively, that keeps the 'strophes' from being merely a series of alternating 4 & 3 syllable lines. (Lineation is itself a basic form of punctuation, although no ink is expended on it. Punctuation is a pointing direction to follow, but gaps between words and lines are even more effective in their forceful *transparency*. (They incise, not purely empty size but invol-ition, self-edge of the person.) The making of spaces is a puncturing, the drawing – of blood, whereas the pointing in a text is more painterly – daubing of ink. It might be surprising to note, as well, that this poem with its 9 x 14 syllable units is shorter than a sonnet by more than a decasyllabic line.)

The chiasmic gesture of internal rhyme, an X or cross shape (in this instance AB/BC), is a reflexive structure that occurs in various aspects of the poem, not least in its discursive method. Like the bridging or bracketing of the main sentences around the parenthetical central auxiliary clauses, the whole suggestive thrust of the argument is like a process turned in on itself, where each alternative is conditioned and confused with the other. There is a counter-intuitive tendency, maybe, in the inversion and confusion of 'appearance' breeding 'reality', for example; as if the figural were *providing* the literal, the illusion determining the truth, and the 'light' preceding its presumable source, the star. As in the rumour, said in the central strophe (str.5) to give knowledge: it is as if the Name made the Man.

While reading, you will have heard of the lord almost repeating of the glory; heard scared almost repeat lord; heard afraid almost repeat scared. In strophe 2, before dazzle gets to almost repeat clarity, *docetist* is very nearly 'consonant' with *deceits*. Here, an issue of misrepresentation is raised. (An offspring reared, like Blake's Orc: duplicit reproduction of the species.) Here, as usual, misrepresentaion cuts both ways. To leave the details of the Docetic faith 'on one side' for the moment, it suffices to think of the possibility of the firm physical world as all illusion, construction, a botched and obsolescent job. In that case, a saviour might be awaited who was not of this world, whose body – presence and promise – was a phantasm, not of identical stuff with the others, although seeming to be so. This fantasy would be more faithfully representative of the

truth, although as metaphor, than the mortal physique itself. Which of the alternatives, flesh or fancy, is in fact the 'false' deception is not clear; whether it is the world into which the god intrudes, or the apparition, that is unreal. This fully virtual form (god as man), according to texts claiming to give docetic doctrine, is meant to work as the "stumbling block" to the knowing and the powerful of this place. The sign itself, all we have, as a cheat. Which is which, doesn't matter to me here. Clone or robot. Only the disparity is important.

Of course, for the orthodox, then as now, for whom the physical sphere is the authentic theatre, it is a heresy NOT to believe in the real body, the real flesh of the god and of oneself accountable also. (One is held responsible for the body's badness, for 'carnal' failings. One's mediocrity. For gnostics, the phantom body cannot sin or be sullied.) The Docetist, therefore (one who proclaims that it is a seeming), would then by orthodoxy no longer be acknowledged as the *critic* of misleading mere appearance and its promise of something more substantial, but as a fabricator of a misleading doctrine. The especial glory is then interchangeable with "deceit". But what is the dark background to this fatuous fire? – That which language glosses, soaks with light to the centre, cradles in vocables and *matricious* script, mediates?

This should be sufficient to open up the argument for strophe 2. I ought to add, though, that along with the words "afraid" and "fire/ d" the Greek figures of Phobos and Phoibos were active in the dichotomy: spirits respectively named Fear and Brightshining, attributes of the gods Ares and Apollo or the 'planets' Mars and Sun.

It fascinates me, how for even the late classical astronomers attributions for the visible planetary heptad were not yet fixed. The cosmic *convivio* was spoilt, no, was a table plenteously blest, with overflow and choice. Venus appeared as morning and evening stars, Lucifer and Vesper, and also as Phaeton hanging around the Sun, and Venus as a person even was at home in the moon as Helen, at least as much as was the Diana of chaste poets. Helios was not only the up and coming Apollo, rising out of Aurora's bursting womb, but the super-annuated titan Hyperion, tinged with twilight and nightfall, decline of the western

Fatherland – not to mention the sun's general female character before Phoebe meant exclusively the moon, when the bright and frightening eye of day was of a goddess. What we see tonight as Mars was fiery Pyrooides; Jupiter was Phaenon, but his person was also the horn-clouded heaven and the sky's branching, hairline crack of lightning; and strange yellow Saturn was a Phaeton too, or even Stella Solis. The sun does not return unchanged by his setting. (Questions of this kind hid serious dangers, for Dante, of the most poisonous heresy. What are we allowed to hold? How much of the splendour *does* cohere? How are souls distinguished? How "other" will their glories be? *Paradiso*, Canto IV.)

Now, listening to these audible units (*pyre* or *phobos*, *phoibos* and *phainos*), although it shows my bent of mind, might not seem really relevant to the poem – as immaterial as dome and doom – inasmuch as I chose to leave these morphemes (and their character as combinative sound coinages is not to be discounted) out of the final version of strophe 2. Or at least the poem itself seemed satisfied without them. Nevertheless, these variants of 'awesome shining' do implicitly return in the consequent definitions of doxa in str. 3-5, where the crucial double nature of the concept is *appearance*, how it actually *appears to be*. Think of the empyrean and the empirical, if you like, spheres of heaven and earth; think of 'enlightenment' and the rational Enlightenment (not to mention *nirvana*, said to be extinguishing of the flame), of phenomenon and fancy, or the exquisite German dialectical pair, *Schein & Sein*: the Glisten & the Is. I won't say which goes with which.

Thinking through this sort of thing too resolutely is bound to drive anyone mad, and lead to social unsuitability, at least, if no longer to the official stigma, the bodily brand of heresy. It is better to pass always from one to the other: glory to clarity, vision to observation, ecstasy to steadiness. Flaming cherub to family cheer. But maybe not to keep them separate. *Hinüberzugehen und wiederzukehren*, "to pass, across,/ then return to". (Hölderlin, *Patmos*.) It is better to travel, in transports and with bare feet on the ground, retaining the status of metaphor, from one to the other, like the simple shepherds do. We need a safe and benign medium. So the bodily is laid down. "Fire-dazzled ark."

The certainties of the Church, as vessel, vehicle and nave, as matrix, navel and capital, once closely watched the frontiers of our sanity. (*Ecclesia* is, of course, the Gathering, the Thing: thinking a thing, together, through.) Reality TV today demonstrably does the same.

"The bodily is laid down". A fact that bridges is put up. A pun. Open.

3rd Fit

By the time the middle of the poem has been reached it will seem to you that nothing but a pun, in fact, is the subject of the lines. I'm not aware of the latest, reliable etymology for the ancient word *doxa*, for example; it may very well be two or more quite different and mutually contaminating words – yet that is not the point. If *glory* and *clarity* has (or have) nothing to do with *opinion* and *dogma*, it is more than enough that there is a variety of glories. Perhaps that word is best translatable as natures, qualities, styles. Or if you prefer, there IS most definitely a variety of opinions about them. (About it? Nature, quality, style?) Whether it is terror and truth we are talking about, or 'what works' and what only wants to. What causes effect and what inexplicably escapes 'success'. What follows and what won't, will not. "This (&) that", str.3, a demonstrative (pointing).

Doceticism is a semiological theme, primarily (of signs/ the science); and it duly interests poets and carers for aesthetics. For St Paul's text, as well, there is this *sarc* and that, this *soma* and that, this *doxa* and that: signifying each other but not identical: like the vagrant Bethlehem star and the stable baby.

I wouldn't know enough about doctrine, say, to judge how close the Corinthians letters are to doceticism, but the gnostic circles are indeed said to have taught "the other god" – coming disguised *in order* to be mistaken by the rulers of this world, who can only execute him (his wish) inasmuch as they cannot recognize his splendour. (And that is their undoing. We would be redeemed, sold out of foreign serfdom.) All this might well be made an allegory of the figures of language, fraught with consequences for the 'order of signs'. Starting with things like poetic exigency,

emblazoned emblems in the sky, the slave-labour of satellites, formulaic pictures on the screen, the identification of a fugitive and suddenly found deposed dictator. Less a case of resemblances than fixed exchange values. Friend and fiend. On an exiguity of grounds. The readings of symbols will then be as likely to dissemble as to reveal – and clarity the darkest of glass. Intoxicating. (Not for nothing was Hölderlin struck by the god in the ripening sun of Bordeaux. Utter sobriety effaces both self and any faith.)

The funny thing with deception in language is that it is the normal state of affairs. It is understood. (A handy craft/ and clear enough.) The literal or bland face value of talk (what words are supposed to be) is a sort of illusory concept, an unspoken middle ground we have in mind, like an inelegant crib, to compare the various ironies of utterance against. I would say there are two extremes to which idiomatic deceit tends. One is the intimate mask of exaggerated honesty you use with friends, so as to criticise and spare them at the same time. The other is the blandishments of non-committal polite compliment, or creeping congratulation, so as to either get rid of someone harmlessly or to cultivate their reciprocal interest. This is part of the performance or show, the 'performative' pageant which distinguishes the intentional sphere of strophe 4 from the showings of particulars, self-evident, meant in strophe 3. For "how it appears/ when it's called", you fill out an order form and are served in due course. You 'command' a language, though in perfunctory, parrot fashion. Adversely, for the customs of "sun/ moon..." you address 'natures'. How things 'belong': the costume is naively meant to picture how you feel. This is an inborn 'vernacular', in bondage to the tongue, in contrast to the "lordly" 'properties' of the actual, theatrical, practical world. Both my models of semiotics line the "seems" of docetist dress.

What about raptures through nature huge
and oblique?

What about what we long for and know
isn't there?

When we have gratefully left behind us the periods of St Paul and St Luke and passed, in strophes 4-5, into the realm of more common sense and shared belief, it will be found to

be a world of 'phenomena'. This word can cover all the possibilities of knowledge: both empirical results and self-perpetuating popularity – if not perennial wisdom, at least that high visibility of the 'well-known'; a fantastic phenomenon, each somehow strange and wonderful, yet literally created by the media. Stars. Overnight *sensation*. Kept economical and special, held in common but kept rare enough. Often you can't get that tune you've got on the brain (helplessly made to hum it, noisome rumour noised abroad, normally sniffed at) out of your head by any means.

What happens usually? As doctrine, practice got from ambivalent doxa comes to be dogma: a claim becomes 'acclaim', the rave review *reveals* the popularity of a book, a prize prognosticates its broad readership. The claim of the angel, the journal, becomes acclaim, and turns now to splendour, returns to doxa. (What's becoming, going along, comes true, of course.) Or in more critical, contemporary usage: it works, it grips, it grasps, is grasped, fulfills expectation, makes an effect. It conforms to the law of causality, that is, comfortably. Experience of experiment comes to expect the unexpected transformation. How can you simply *try* something out, without a patterned receptivity for what will come?

It is a simple and common phenomenon really, how what you call it – that it is. They tell it and that's what they get. It was not absolutely necessary for there to have been an organization called al Qaida in existence; it was sufficient to give an idea of its nature, for people to gather themselves under its ethereal auspices, claim membership and responsibility, and find confirmation somewhere loosely in the 'network'. Yielding a well and living fake. (This kind of retrospective reconstruction is documented in the modern resurgence of 'magic' and 'witchcraft' and in the renaissance emergence of a Rosicrucian brotherhood, exactly contemporary with the unearthing of written documents anent it. You will have heard of the explicit 'confessions' called up out of the 'un-conscience' of accused heretics! I imagine that, to a certain extent, the scripture preceded the community before the community followed the scripture, in the Levantine history of the rising early Church.) The discovered or deciphered text, d/sembled, will summon up the followers, waiting to flock

to the ark, who synthetically reconstitute the missing tradition. False Memory Syndrome. (Analogous to the pattern of patients suddenly remembering formulaic traumatic experiences of 'abuse' in the family, which they had had no knowledge of before, and usually violently recriminatory to hitherto 'loved ones', is that imaginative apologetic for Creation in the face of then new theories of evolution: that God made the world barely a week ago, complete with a geological and paleontological record. He filled the world, not with glory, but with full memories for every human of a spontaneous sudden life they'd never lived. We wake and find the light – of data.)

This syndrome is the field of interpretation, 'exegesis', laying out the contents of the crib. The baby Dionysos. Along with the utensils in the basket, genital and engineering, Persephone is yearly lifted up intact, erected, edifying. Build a fane and you'll find a fanatic.

Interpretation. It is an intervention, an action, an instauration – which resuscitates and inaugurates – institutes. A past truth is conjured up in the moment of its current confirmation. As if per/emanant.

This is the transition, the translation of Str. 4-5: How it appears when it's called or rumoured, "fame". It's all 'talk'. From appearing to calling, from empirical to imperative: this permeable passage will be returned to in str. 7, with "glamour/ clamoured".

Meanwhile, the force of poetic fable is not confined to religious wish-fulfillment, or the weening and overweeningness of the under-privileged and powerless. Self-empowerment seems to be the nature of reality: our access to it and the access granted us. I don't need to go into the irony of reality here: the preserve of the king and his *thing-motto*, the keys of royal Israel or Caesar's government 'in kubernet'. Cybernet, the secret chamber. The republic might well be the same as the thing-moot, but the regal path of trial and error leaves everyman's 'real' empiricism comfortably cognate with imperious demands of empire. This is the Tao, effortless and universal rule, impersonal and immaterial the person. No, no need to go into it, the masquerade is everyway we go.

It goes both ways, it proceeds: 'processes'. In what way? Flesh makes fact. Fact makes flesh. What is matter

discovered to have been, but flashing info, atomic digits, nerves and genes, chemical and electric? Pure idealism and efficient spirit! (I could almost intuitively assert, that everyday concerns, practical application, as calculation, are a most spiritual pursuit, whereas dreaming, romantic appetite, fantasy and attraction are down-to-earth and bodily determined.) It is a spectral, ever-reflexive argument that str. 3-5 adumbrate. The present body, apparent, becomes information, media and evidence. The message, contrariwise, becomes embodied form, the media as the convincing matter at hand. The 'manual' shadows forth. I am reminded in all this of my child, conditioned as well no doubt by habits and views of her parents, yet feeling fully authentic herself, and even gratified and glad to find how often I feel the same way as she does when we talk! Doxa and all the rest, whatever glory be, oughtn't to be alienated from such experience. Otherwise, myth turns truth turns myth turns truth turns myth ... MTMTMT.

Never mind the knowing peace of the Upanishads (*shantih shantih shantih*), inspired moral epistemology, shady figures, Dante's interpreted Paradiso. For even the most sober earthbound intelligence, it is the "bodily laid down" that *reminds us*. We are reassured, the mind, of ours, by body set at ease. The secreted will be IN the crib. Or will the baby have been – the crib all along?

To wind up this part of my letter, I have just twisted two conflicting versions of the Pauline text, Ephesians 3:9, the orthodox and the heretical respectively. The news now brought to light was for all ages "hidden IN God". The news was for all ages "hidden (from) God". The other one, the false. ...*absconditi (in) deo...* Poets and their theorists are familiar with the concept 'absence'. The empty/ signified. (From Bakh to no USSR, Heath ditcher and Dear reader, passing west to peirce the Hard o' Man.)

I want to adopt this missing preposition for a further look at the transition in str. 4-5. What was new in the news? The only semiotic a human ever HAS meant is the "hid/god". Signification is no more or less than that. The secret nook, the look, the nod and the wink. It will have been the same with the angel and the evangel. One gives us the other. Coming up with the goods. The spell.

4th Fit

In the second half of the poem 'another' subject of the lines is given voice. It is us. We is the subject. What are we doing in this sentence? Only in a simile and a conditional mood do we appear: "as if ... we'd follow", and as if the mediating word would "remind us ...".

We will have found out by now that the word is not on its own. As if wrapped in swathing bands, it is interpreted and spoken by its crib: "and this shall be the sign." The effected fact seconds the nomination. "...the word was (with) God." (This time it works better in English grammar than in the Greek or Vulgate *Evangelium secundum Johannem*, 1:1.)

The "noun-aimed unknown", as it were, proceeding from the noia to the paranoia, proceeding from the noumena AND the phenomena, no less numinous (...*de patris filioque procedit*), is by now a *substantive* of some kind. Still caught in this conditional, subordinate clause, though, it is in a shimmer, all aflicker, it has 'got into a state'. Between the blazing "angel" and the blaring "tidings", like clarion and bugle, paracletic, purer-military, hosts of blinding lucidity! The poles of this alternating current, I think, are unsheathed in strophes 6 & 7. It is a flicker, a contact, that like the interleaving threads of a textile weaves the picture.

So, corresponding to the original pair Glory and Crib, you will now read the complementary participles: "penetrating" and "mediating". (I do hope that action and passion, the divine and the bodily are somewhat aroused in these words.) Doxa dazzles, penetrates, inspiring and convincing: that is the angel, as if the penna trait of dove. The doctrine is more ponderous, wondering, something learnt or cogitated: that is the crib, as if it's weighted to conceive. (I admit, that the gender polarity here would be sometimes more congenial if it was turned around. To take away the blame and make the word, the merely subli-mated, more sublime. The woman "clothed with the sun", having mounted the masculine moon, her hair to him a shower of asteroids, her own head full of orgone stars, is on her second coming delivered of the blood-red baby girl, Orc not as Blake's son of Los, but the daughter Sun, young and dawning on us, rosy gummed.) Between them, and in short circuit, "penetrating & mediating", the active and passive make up the "glamour/

clamoured" (str.7), the otherwise. The latter, clamour, is a word "that bridges" (str.8), that puns. The former, glamour, is one "that dressed" (with sun etc, str.3), means. Now you will be wondering: what does "pony" mean!

The first half of the poem was governed by the alienating term 'glory', and you will have gathered that it really is a piece of terminology or jargon that we have had to deal with. (Therefore deserving here my set of only single inverted commas. They signal the use of what's called second attention: talking about the word mentioned and not the thing. The double inverted commas are reserved for the *particular* quote, keeping close to exact notation or utterance, and the poetic words used.) The term is couched in its cloudy foreign garment, *doxa*. Correspondingly, the second half of the poem is governed by the item, a 'crib'. This term is also furnished with its foreign counterpart, not yet revealed: the lexical item *pons asinorum*. This locution did not manage to get completely included into the final poem. One reason, is that it is as misleading a term as *doxa*, and like the ambivalent body of the Lord, even harder to nail down. Looking in the Oxford English Dictionary, with magnifying glass or even online won't help much, I don't suppose. In my copy, *pons asinorum*, ass's bridge, is defined as a nickname for one of the bits of Euclid's geometry which it is particularly hard for a dunce to grasp. Or a bestial intelligence. So the figure is applied to a 'stumbling block', a passage as if too narrow or vertiginous for the donkey to cross. Too demanding even for the carrot to lead, or the stick to coax him over. The ass's bridge stops him up short. On the other hand, in other dictionaries, there is a different account of *pons asinorum*, more or less diametrically opposed in meaning, which defines it as a scholastic term for what we might almost call a crib, an intermediate link to assist in a chain of reasoning. It might be a logical, intermediary step or it might be a chance resemblance, of the sort we often use to remember something. (Even here you will notice the appearance of that tenuous but tenacious polarity, 'logical step' and 'chance resemblance': an agonistic link as if of engaged wrestlers, if not of copulating dogs, between mathematical necessity and poetic association – that the poem is at pains to, er, evoke, elucidate, to demonstrate: there we go again ... well, only

you can tell me what it does do.) Logical links are easy to imagine, and you might need them for calculating sharps or flats in a musical key, for example; but rhyming games are usually more effective. Something I've observed in my recent attempt at learning Welsh, is that I think of 'venue', and indirectly of Venus, when remembering the word for 'woman', *y fenyw* or *menyw*, which even conjures more the man. I have stupidly needed to think of the German word *Umwelt*, my neighbouring world or environment, when trying to remember the Welsh for 'to visit', *ymweld*, although it's rather linked with 'to see' (as in *come and see me*). The amusing question remains, though: when the learning has been completely internalised and the words come 'immediately' to mind, is that a plain logical or is it a pure musical or poetic connection? (The 'visitation' of an angel, though, is often remembered as a clear vision and a literal text, as if verbatim on a scroll. Not at all internalised.)

Anyway, rather than an obstacle to understanding, as the Oxford has it (thus being one itself, I'd say), this second definition is a guide, a negotiable passage. And this in fact fits better with what you know of the skill of asses, in precisely being useful in narrow clefts and on heady chasmic terrain, rather than on the restricted fox hunt and the prohibitive steeplechase.

This second definition of *pons asinorum* matches the German slang term *Eselsbrücke* (ass's bridge), an easy mnemotechnic trick. Of course there is still the undertone that a smarter arse could manage without. The distinction stands: a tricky crevasse for the silly, or a successful ancillary carrot. An English equivalent, not very common maybe, for this second sense, a coaxing reminder, is a 'pony'. Have you ever heard it used? Crib definitely has a strong connotation of copying and plagiarizing, cheating. I wonder if pony does. In a moment I will have to address the problem of 'originality' and the trick of coming from nowhere. (Maybe the complex of original and fake is related to *lying* as a dishonest passive position, false and smothering, going for a ride, loose, leasing and belating; while *understanding* is upright and stately, staying under guidance, holding on, and having arrived.)

I wouldn't know enough of the history of 'pony' in this sense of crib, to judge of its derivation. Since 'horse' is used

in the same way, (secundum Oxon.), it's possibly just the conventional 'vehicle', a pony as the carriage for a necessary verity. (Portage=metaphor.*) Who knows whether it's attributable to *pons* or to *asinorum* or both, but a striking isomorphism is plain. Particularly in regard to the problems I have had with *doxa*, glamour and clamour. If there was a spark at all, this isomorphism was the one that started off the poem. There's more clamour than glamour in the donkey's portion of this banquet, but the 'crib', whether a cheat's chit or a mental note, is the 'pony', my *pons asinorum*, and it can be construed, like the "block rejected by the builders", symbol of the all-overturning Nazarene, as either a *help* or a *hindrance*. A let, or a letting go on.

This is the method then by which we "follow". Our 'penetration', as they say, depends on this "pony", which proves to be – a pun. Open to interpretation and analysis. Similarly, in str. 3-4, the golden glow-oriole of the sun proved to be merely how she appears. (Mercy seat or merciless. Or meretrix, *sospita*: her-mercurial & mercenary merit.)

The glory is a halo, enveloping. Think of the golden ground still in early European landscapes, with Madonnas or nativity scenes, an idealised wall of light with its ikonic

* NOTE. A trope: knotted rope.

1) A string to follow, not ortho nor author dux, is a *synecdox* connection. That is 'taking-up together', our con-ceiving. We snag the slack. The cervix swells. (The node-nexus of this bit of argument, by punning *ducere/docere* – *dochein/ dechesthai*, ties up the concepts, 'to lead the way' / 'to draw on, teach', with their corollaries, 'to hold, accept, believe a thing, a tenet, a teaching, to think that... / 'to receive, take on, in, to gather that...')

2) An event of communications (any venture of co-monitoring units) = crossing-over/ under-standing.

3) As a thing appears – a standing wave, the *charge* in a current – must I 'accept' it, recognize it even, let it define me? Like part and parcel, docket duty, totalled at the *turnpike*.

4) As for 'figures of speech': a designation can be determined as metaphor, metonym or literal depending on point of view (*doxa*), meaning order (of faith) in things (or beings). The material, literal sense will always be *figural*.

Further, for rumours carried giving knowledge, see the deeming name that made the man (2nd Fit). Also consider the phrase, *Benedictus qui venit in nomine domini*, which is pure tautology. (Not to mention aural insemination.)

For enunciation giving substance and identity (taken from both uncongenial and congenial sides of this process), see my three epigraphs, page 10.

For eventually more on PONY as pons (continuing) and crib (containing), see *Escotatz!* (dr. fasc. 5), where this business carries on. The term is found in V.Nabokov's foreword to *Eugene Onegin*, translation and commentary, where he hopes as his highest reward to be used as pony stage to Pushkin.

Byzantine atmosphere, before the ornate and abstract heaven, stylized and gemmed, slowly gave way to a depiction in the equally precious mineral blue of the sky, then cloudscapes increasingly overcast and seeming to withhold a maybe more dangerous, dubious glory of the sun.

A glory is a nimbus, a chaplet of light, a ring, focussed and expanding. But like an ouroborus, everything tucked in, no loose ends, a round and closed corona, everything follows, without restraint only constraint, no fraying edges, no littoral tongue or clitoral extensions, a gleaming fillet, wreathed and woven, knotted and figured; and also like an ancient withy trough was, the root of creche, cradle and crib, a fodder basket, in the rushes. Garland of Phanes, new fangled *stephanos*, wearing a crown of *thungol*.

What does it mean to follow? Is it a martyrdom? Are you under the ordinance of a gubernator, step by step, or a skipper? Are you just docile, ductile, trainable; or a quick learner, sharp; or are you slow, or dazed, always keeping behind, jogging along; or are you Damascus-dashed, brought up short and unsaddled? Do you properly understand? We say 'get it', as if we'd get a thing, get somewhere, to stand in a place, a handhold or a foot in the door. (Can you ground any substance, give grounds to the un-founded?)

The present discussion of *penetrate/ mediate* (str.6-7), as 'avant' material, advanced media art (the ponies, if not this poem!), introduces the troublous dialectic of originality.* Is 'success' the trick of keeping ahead as the highest form of 'fitting' in? To follow is to keep up, right along with, and not 'behind' at all. Not to fall–low. (Who wants to be designated

* The origin or source seems to have no place in this poem, since it is all sewn up in non-unravellable reflexions, unless it is the hole in the middle, "as rare faith/ for the now named". At this point, I think that some glorious and acute examples from Hölderlin's set of Pindar fragments, a translation with prose PS (which I have just been looking at), can help clarify what is rendered in 'what follows'. (Literally what 'succeeds'; thus not 'original'!) They are an immeasurably finer text to spin on than any words of mine.

In *Concerning Calm*, it is said the citizen follows the prince. In other words, the principal, the first, *arche*, which means old and young, the 'original'. This is the force or the faith that quite violently names. Herakles steals cattle with neither payment nor agreement. (My "noun", of strophe 5, equals *nomos*, law.) Whereas the peaceful people, the citizens of Pindar/Hölderlin, like careful poets, imitate. That means, in an act of mimesis and simile, to preserve and praise.

an 'original', with auto-didact crank's aphasic eloquence?)

If you have 'followed' this far, the thicket in the middle, the hard central theoretical forest has been safely passed and you get to a more promising bridge. In strophe 8 the "bodily is laid down". Now this laying down is what is called a *thesis*. It is an argument promulgated, a position 'put forward'. In Latin, *ponere*. The word 'theme' corresponds to this. A thesis is a statement, positive, a proposition with a predicate. A theme, however, stands as an open subject. A

In *Concerning the Highest*, Pindar sings, "the law: of all, the lord". (Hölderlin says "king", we think no doubt of how the canny can; how Order means always both 'artificially' arranged, and the several natural 'kinds' – ie, art as cunning craft, *künstlich*, nature as law of each species, *Art*; we think no doubt how royalty grants the real.) H.'s comment follows: "the immediate is strictly speaking impossible for mortals and immortals." God's role, as nature, must be good, "unmixed", the pure particular. (I think of my str. 3 and glory.) Man's role, as knowledge, must make distinctions, "opposition". (I think of my str. 4 and clarity.) "Strict mediation is, though, the Law." That is the Laid Down. The force we willy nilly follow.

In *Concerning Retreat*, this high violent rape (ie. law, logic, property, calculation, order) is felt as more peaceful rapture, when the goddess of Positioning, Themis, is declared not bride in her 'prime', but 'archaic' daughter of God, led back by returning Seasons carried by golden mares, from the sea's dissolution to heavenly state; and the Order she gives birth to then (as 'breeding', *Zucht*, means both discipline and issue), following times and tides, are places of rest, refuge for Man.

Von einem gehet zum andern. "From one thing go to another." Be flexible but principled, back and forth, from forest to the city. Like lines migrate. The following it, IS the rule. No synthesis to the dialectic. What Tao is effortlessly followed? What rationale of communication? Go from the pasture to the town, *transeamus*, go from wild fields, caves and windy fells to Davy's *dinas* and Jesses's *tref*, wander in and out of Egypt.

In the *Infidelity of Wisdom*, the innocent and thoughtful youth has to lay aside fear of a duplicit world, the place of 'practice', where his birthright is usurped, where humane reason doesn't apply (where for example virgin won't mean an untouched maiden). Only horse sense helps. Be rock-fixed and river-fluid like the centaur (wise, violent?). Be prepared for circumstantial detours. "Praise the present, positive, in other times think otherwise." To be too purely scared of error drives you mad. (And in German languages, even to 'err' means to 'go' crazy, like Sweeney, 'astray'.) The margin for creative revolution seems depressingly small, a perilously straitened passage: as 'movements' have to make a 'stand', then come to 'understandings' and are always stayed at the prior status quo.

In *Concerning the Dolphin*, its wayward frolics in the calm are an "echo" of the flutes of Tritons. Our own song is re-sounding fidelity to the human muse's movement. To follow her sway.

name and a title. "Of the glory of the lord, scared though it be" is a theme. It is a lemma, with no copula. It is a problem, undeveloped.

You will probably find this distinction a typical illusory "deceit" (docetist deception)! How easy language is, sinuous, to insinuate. You swop an AS for an IS, pop in a THAT, strike out a wooden word or two and *ecce!*, poetry and parataxis. You can pretend to restraint by cutting back, vainly, what compromises you. You can affect an open structure, leave lots of space, you can effect at leisure a tight or a loose illusion. This is a serious objection to style.

Theme and thesis is like glory and clarity, poles of poetry and prose, of modal and assertive utterance. What would predication be all by itself? Transparent. The *opaque* is needed by transparency to enable vision. Hölderlin wondered not only whether humans need mediating tales of poets in order to be able to bear the sight of gods, but whether gods need humans in order to feel. More gnostically spoken: not before the breaking of God are opposites given. The fall as creation where the original is broken. The original IS the broken. The IS, broken. Tao is not "the way", but *away*. (Specifically non-present, empty, in the Chinese: impersonal power behind the wordly throne. This tempers our old western hopes for way, truth and life.) *Away*: between this & that. You could say the phrase "the death of God" is meaningless. It is tautology.

Both sides are Law, conditional, meaning Season and Measure, 'what is fitting'. Doxa and doxa: theme and thesis are the province of divine Themis and, as in the *Anathemata*, mean to consecrate, that is to pro-stitute, to raise or deposit for sacred use. The goddess lifts high her *arsis* and lays low the law. The canon and the can can.

To lay down (*thesis*) is to make a deposition, it is a suggested, tentative solution. It is *prone* (an attitude of reverence!) to disagreement. Yet in the stable situation, the naive nativity myth, it is an established fact. The mother has undergone confinement and been delivered, and the child deposited on display. "Poorly arrayed, both meek and mild." With Gib and Coll, Daw and Gill in the Mystery Play, with Hob, John Clare and Colin Clout, with restless Mak who's caught cribbing and stealing a lamb in the night while the others are on the way to the stall: are we ones who will

have seen, or will still see it there? That would be the province, the job demanded of the subject of the poem.

hear=

5th Fit

In strophe 9 the sentence is completed. The pontifex, the grand bridger of all this gulf between word and word, the fear and fire, the glass and the face, pond and ocean, say: the sign and the song, pony and pons, the meagre crib and the makar's immaculate carol; this pontiff is meant to be a pastor, humble and bucolic but able to vouch for verity. To execute the sentence, the *Novum Organum*.

The poverty attributed to the first witnesses in this Legend, by the way, is still very welcome to the largely Ghibelline tendencies of modern society, you could say, where the emperor and certain nobility, natural science and hard metal, determine the course; whereas the liberal arts, the wordy trivium especially, *Geisteswissenschaft* ('spirit-science' says there's more here than mind in the word), disinterested play and cultural attachments: each interchangeable and as equally dispensible in this, are relegated to erratic Sunday driving.

Quem queritis, reges? The rich Magi will manifest in glory, well-endowed departments of research, while the *pastores*, the various poetries, return to the field. The ox and the ass, the trump and the oaten straw, the eagle bugle and the broken reed, the gates of ivory and horn. The doctors and the readers, the sepulchre and the barn.

A little light, like a rushlight
to lead back to splendour.

So Pound closes his *Cantos*. But are these shepherds simply "hinds", kept domestics and no masters of arts? As the Latin bluntly has it: *pone*. (They are 'behind', that is, rather than marching, prancing, putting forward, *ponere*, their rare faith in rumoured fane.) Is poetry the property of the current state? Are poets chattels of punishing Bethel, home vernacular in the sly and agonic 'Lord's House'? Not coyote Mercury but catamite: after struggle with El's angel, a Jacob's Ladder servile to the sublime? Serious they are, that

say

is, a scene for self-respecting labourers, artisans work. Is poetry art of work; are poets put out of it? – the squalid enough luxury of an age-old subsidised institution, while thousands have already died in this year's winter cold in Britain, fuel too dear and people too transparent for the state. That's the down side of theories, not only market forces but aesthetic and atomic: those who suffer because the world is a 'world of language', of 'elegant and economic' solutions, of 'poietic systems' dispensing with persons, of 'quanta' dependant on their observer – and his instruments.

Lower poets have to bear TH'IS. Are they honoured with a pitiless itch –

... it has been given them to heap together and arrange and harmonize the results of many men's labours ... they have not wished for property ... (says Ezra Pound)

... A poem is the perfectly formed fragment of a non-existent building ... Myth is the name for all that which does not exist but is there due to the word ... (says Paul Valery)

are poets familiar with the mean manger, shelter of bread, Bethlehem, "wherever you are"? In the Utility Muffin Research Kitchen, "nothing so exalted on the face of God's gray earth". *Gaea' llwyd?* Though I may gaud it lurid, gay and lewd here in the bleak midwinter's grey twilight. Anointing "the summit of a dense but radiant muffin of his own design." (Lethe's fluid god-swallowed swaddled stone.)

So much for the 'passing' of the subject. The predicate in the final lines does house a strange enough tense, though. There is confidence, hope in that future perfect. As well as a touch of resignation. An intention. This construction, "will have been", is common in certain recent theoretical and aesthetic texts. It addresses the situation I have been talking about, of the priveleged reading determining the reality which purportedly preceded it. As if neutral and natural. (As if to say, well, it will have turned out like that after all. 'Will have' means, most likely.) There is also the up-to-date, which depends on and determines the past, the detriment –

and is itself continually displaced and put out and data redispersed in endless postscript. Our contemporary present "will have passed" into unrecognizability by the time others address it.

In the intelligible postal system, as you might call the workings of communication, mechanics of meaning, semiotic and somatic interchange – where *phrene* is both brain and breathing diaphragm. In the staves and moving strips and 'reverses', in the alternations of an ecstasy that comes and goes and its lasting memorial, immemorial record. In all of life's dilemmas, 'grey' area, between some splendours and some squalors. (Frank Zappa's *Muffin Man*, "he hung around until you found he didn't know nothing.")

He turns to us and speaks
Some people like cupcakes better
I for one care less for them...
Later he says
Some people, some people, hah!
like cupcakes exclusively
while myself I say there is not
nor ought there be
nothing so exalted on the face of God's grey earth
as that prince of foods
the muffin.

But between erected alternatives there is this confidence: looking forward, that there be something at back of the crib, something 'behind it' after all, enlivening the figured screen, something from before, and still before me. A salve action to be felt, a niche as a secret hole, a homely spot, a refuge, the calm retreat that Hölderlin wanted in following the prescriptions of the Parcae.

An optative mood, say, is the prospect of this "will have": an aorist, an unlimited trust, a view to the future. A subjective, fluid subjunctive. A say.

Should pastoral swain have got it right, shouldn't I rather quietly relax with the Shepherd's Calendar?

The wooden horse wi arching head
Drawn upon wheels around the room

The gilded coach of ginger bread
And many colored sugar plumb
Tho manhood bids such raptures dye
And throws such toys away as vain
Yet memory loves to turn her eye
And talk such pleasures oer again
Around the glowing hearth at night
The harmless laugh and winter tale
Goes round–while parting friends delight
To toast each other oer their ale
The cotter oft wi quiet zeal
Will musing oer his bible lean
while in the dark the lovers steal
To kiss and toy behind the screen

(John Clare, *December:Christmass*)

My 'poem' is neither here nor there, I know. The key, the content of translation, transcription cuts both ways. The prose is lost in pictures the verse may have profitted from. In this piece, between opposed readings of the words, between the rhetorical tropes and the rhythmical strophes, between intellect and guts, concern for sense and concern for style, I hope the alternation has been clear enough. Between the 4 & 3 syllable lines, between couplets joined with a chime and staves disconnected into discursive units, syntax 'fragmented' or fluid, between phrases, stocchia, postulations pullulating and raised possibilities. What do you think? The altercation, though, is never clear enough. The whole poem takes place in one period. If the *stocchiaion* is the divided part (the 'single word', in Greek), then the whole lot is the *logos*. A pustule system.

credo in unum, yes, tuberculum
and insurrection of the signified

(Bysshe Berkeley, *i overt urn*)

This letter began with asking after the main clause, the subject at work and its predicate. Getting near the end, I want to return to this, to the predication and even the prediction. At the outset I suggested two elementary readings of the grammar. Both require, in fact, an imaginary interpolation of the word 'that'. Your reading mind supplies

this effortlessly. It is a kind of supererogatory *pons asinorum*, a place of easy transition. It works as in these examples.

*Here's a poem (that) I've written
I say (that) I wrote this poem*

In German these are exemplified in the distinction of *dass* and *das*, homonyms. (It's the missing coping stone, we mock, and make up.)

If the primary sentence is contained in the outer two strophes, saying: scared of the glory, farm hands will have passed, and so forth; in that case the statement in str.8, considered subsidiary, will have to be construed as a subordinate clause, thus: as if by pony we'd follow, and the mediating word would remind us (THAT) the bodily is laid down ...pastoral hinds will have passed and so on. If the inner sentence, on the other hand, the fact that the bodily is laid down is what the primary sentence is to contain, then the ultimate statement in str.9, in its turn considered secondary, will have to be construed as follows: scared and afraid, 'held to be' and named etc, the bodily is laid down, a fact – which bridges – (THAT) the hinds will've passed and so on.

Is the corpo/real a fact that the pastoral people, near to animals as they are (with shears and castrating clippers), will have got past years ago – or will have passed by?

That/ thatt = hid/god.

6th Fit

If I flame on thee in love's fervency
Beyond all that is seen in earthly mood,
So that I quell the courage of thine eye,
Marvel not
(Dante, *Paradiso* V.1, Beatrice speaking)

What do you think of this now as mytheme and motif? What do you think of this now as my theme and motive? – There IS only one doxa. There IS only one *pons asinorum*:

they are simply
differently dressed

– ah, there's the rub. The vital spectre, the virtual. A great sign appeared in heaven, *mulier amicta sole*,

a woman – amygdala sole
garment – mandorla gloriole

The virgin or the magdalen, in azure lazuli or scarlet: solely the dress is what makes all the difference. In endless continuation, monist flow of universe, functional architecture, elegant and economic poiesis: the ornate, the habit, is all there is. The one spirit clothed in iridescent flesh: the one flesh decked in evanescent spirit.

or clear-voiced cantors

tunicled as though
in cloth of rainbow

(from the wide pomoerium'd Urbs
as ultramundane to the Pleiades as to the ordered polis
whose archetype the Pleiad is)
that sing and say

Lux fulgebit hodie
(David Jones, *Anathemata* VII)

Many bodies with a similar significance: many meanings within a single sign. Poetry is what's most important. The personal get-up.

Shall two know the same in their knowing?
(...) they would be individuals.
Swedenborg said "of societies"
by attraction.
Blind eyes and shadows (...)
up out of hell, from the labyrinth
the path wide as a hair
(Ezra Pound, *Canto* 93)

As for the nativity, the incarnation, the soul the same from the beginning, resurrection even: in retrospect, with hindsight, it will have risen otherwise.

O petalled flower! pure contradiction, joy
to be nobody's sleep under so many
lays of eyelids
(Rainer Maria Rilke, *Oh Rose...*)

This is something Rilke wrote to be put up as his epitaph, as the bodily was to be laid down. The more wordly caviller in me says, insisting on an individuality against the poet's intuition – on a conscious plurality, yes, yes! There is no rose itself, no. No unsightly stigma in the centre, if you will. The rows and rows of names, the Manifold Troper empty, no one there to sleep. Death's to be this multi-nothing. Yet the pure is always "pure contradiction". Uncircumcised. Then the lids, *Lider*, are telling lays, contra-ditty to the lute, *lauter niemand*,* the layers of lids are eyes, all as sees and seen, and that is *some-bodies* after all!

Florete flores et date odorem (a chant for the Feast of the Virgin's Rosary): "put forth flowers...spread abroad a sweet smell... with the songs of your lips..."

It doesn't matter how it is – or whether it is – true. IT is.

I asked the muse once and she
answered me
at the end you'll find it.
No mortal can contain it ...
and fire, vapour of smoke flowers,
on an arid floor,
a quiet asylum ...
the last thing is
the sign in the sky, that tears
and humans
rapt away. Certainly Hercules
feared that. But since we're born
in inertia, we need the falcon
to follow...

(Friedrich Hölderlin, *Einst hab ich die Muse*)

* *lauter niemand* → pg 40

On Christmas Eve the sun will be turning in its decline on that circle in the sky which is traditionally called the Tropic of Capricorn, in order to begin its blessing return for us, higher in the northern heaven. (The terrestrial analogue to the Tropic of Capricorn is a latitude from where the sun in its most southerly progress is seen to reach the very zenith and has to turn back; within the so-called tropics every place is for a day on the virtual earth's equator.) Now, when the sun is low on this tropic, we can see its opposite sign at the highest point round midnight. This is the sign of Cancer (69), and because it was at its height then, at the time of the Nativity and the Roman Empire, from which the eras and the calendar are fixed, it is traditionally still the house of the sun at blasting Midsummer – in the same way it stood at its diametrical nocturnal height on that epochal Midwinter.

It will not have ever been the same, however, as for us. Because like the crab, and not only in the sign of Cancer, but backwards around its whole course, a sidling step as seen against the stars, the sun moves counter-wise, gradually every year, in an inverted progress (caused by a wobble in the earth's tilt and technically called the "precession"), like a *crab canon*, a musical rule, reversible and irreversible the tune, yet where on every repeat it can never quite manage to reach as far as it did the time before. The same time will not return.

But to return to our sign in the sky. Cancer is the palest of the classical constellations. At the Winter Solstice it is right high up. You'll find it, at the moment, about half way between Saturn and Jupiter. At its centre are two neighbouring stars which could be construed as the crab's little eyes, but are known as little asses, the Aselli, one a few degrees more to the north, one a few degrees more to the south. Between them on a very clear night, like the one I'm having now, you can see a cloudy fleck, a bit like a milky nebula but really a disordered cluster of stars. This is known as Praesepe, the Crib. It is right next to the ecliptic and will have been passed by – by all the planets: no magnificent Christmas comet, an inconspicuous apparition, a manger of haze, eaten only of the asses,

Yours,

Bart Bach

* The phrase *lauter niemand* comes, I take it, from Franz Kafka and on reading through the above I thought it cried out for translation. (And this Hob can't resist his hobby nag either – more cribbing, carping and gratuitous clarification.) “A lot of nobody, pure no-one” is what it means. In German, the purified is literally the ‘loud’, laved clean, having undergone a process of *läutern*, purgation. *Erläuterungen* are ‘elucidating’ commentary, gloss. Think of *lustrum* in the Latin, a ritual regular wash; think of the illustrious (glory=clarity), and of illustration, shedding exemplary light and shedding the dirty skin of the letter. Leaving the fiery tongue.

This concept is sound-ness, what even Nietzsche meant by his “philosophizing with a hammer”: to gently tap and hear a glass clear ring. Bell-pure. But the sound is a lightning stroke. The wild and pullulating forest, purulent, gets cleared and logged. To render good tone, to atone, the simple harmonic. “ah you can make believe in your tin whistle/ ah you can be my broom boy/ ah scrub me till i shine in the dark/ n’ i’ll be light till doomsday” (Richard Thompson, Under the Calvary Cross).

Lux & Vox / Phos & Logos. But maybe German is an especially logophiliac, philological language. As *Stimme*, the ‘voice’ gives ‘conditions’ and ‘proofs of truths’ (*Bestimmung, es stimmt*), and then *hören*, ‘hearing’ it, gives ‘propriety’, ‘property’ and following ‘obedience’ (*gehörig, gehören, gehorsam*). To belong=to go along, to go along with.

Voiced command covers the firing squad and we cower.

TIMÉ

demands

clear carved

awe dread

honour

tombstone’s

gilt face

given

Heresy, however, comes from *hairesis*, was ‘choice’, free judgement. Personal doom, say: how we hear it alone. As in the term *dihairesis*, it is the choice of positioning a verse caesura or line-break. De/cision. You’ll want to ask, though, since I obviously long to simplify and to grant access, to dis-

perse mystique, or deconstrew and disseminate it: why quarrel with ‘communication’? If eyelids can be eyes, then deceits are clear concepts too, and vice versa...

Pure language never ‘produces itself’, auto-poietic, as if no one were speaking. We are no vessels of its sacrementation. Every even flavourless social formula is a manipulation by a person’s own pusillanimity. Not neutral norms are needed for colloquy, but nuances of attraction between people. Think of how the official and the officer *choose* whom they will chicane and persecute. Language is all either placebo or threat. Any egalitarian discourse space will favour *certain* styles of thought and talk. No learning is amassed to be applied. Like the illusion of the aesthetic ‘avant garde’, its lustral advance (as if in ‘five year plans’, or from *ziggy stardust*, “my brain hurt like a warehouse/ it had no room to spare”): any progress in reception implies a pornographic capacity – for increasing ‘hardness’. Not difficulties resolved but blithe technologistics, amerimedio-redemption.

Who ever can agree what expressions mean? Listen to the clarifying ‘apologetics’ about present economic need to wish-wash away the social welfare system. (Germans keen to follow the English in this.) Language is a nudge and wink, where the literal faithful is victim, has fear fed into them, trapped and laughable while you, the language User, fiddle your PC correctly. To ‘get that clear!’ is an effective ‘evocation’ of fist in face and knee to groin. Pending.

If poetry had a point, it would be not to obey.

To take me back to *lauter niemand* (“pure no-one”, “loud no man”), language in itself is Kafka’s “admirable apparatus”, *In the Penal Colony*. No need for trial. The sentence is scripted in precious arabesques, calligraphic belles-lettres, onto the flesh by the machine’s impeccable stylus, the cry choked in “treated cotton wool”; the execution is nothing but the word, incisive laser moment of metanoia, rinsing “blood and water” of the sublime wound, and at the sixth hour the body will have realised the meaning of the figures, with a look of “transfiguration” (*Verklärung*, metaphoney clarity). Harrowed. Needles sew the selvedge, etch the self’s final boundaries, heath turf ditched, so be it, killed&cancelled, cleared&reconciled. *Transeamus*.

Any body, as always, yours, etc

THREE EDITIONS*hear =*

DOXA

of the glory
of the lord
scared though it be
clarity

pastoral hinds
will have passed
last night before
the posed crib

PONS ASINORUM

of the glory
of the lord
scared though it be
clarity

afraid to see
docetist
deceit's fire
dazzle dark

the bodily
is laid down
then punned a fact
that bridges

pastoral hinds
will have passed
last night before
the posed crib

say

A SERMON ON LUKE, chapter 2, verse 9

Of the glory
of the lord
scared, though it be
clarity;

afraid to see,
docetist,
deceit's fire
dazzle dark

(this 'doxa' that,
dressed with sun,
moon or stars means,
otherwise,

the common way's
opinion,
on how it 'appears'
when it's 'called',

or rumoured, 'fame',
as rare faith
for the now named
unknown noun:

as if only
by 'pony'
'penetrating'
we'd 'follow',

and the glamour-
clamoured word,
mediating,
remind us); –

the bodily
is 'laid down'
then punned, a fact,
that bridges –,

pastoral hinds
will have passed,
last night, before –
the posed crib.

the series so far (2001 – 2004)

drone fascicle, no.one

senses/love: an imaginary symposium

(featuring theo reiz de man, axel s. parrot,
bysshe berkeley and r. eustace dart)

drone fascicle two

reply/replica: how i can read and you may write a poem

(featuring dan tallis, cecil voss and n. guy ban)

drone fascicle three

venus cuniculous: excerpt of analogue

(featuring alexis troy)

drone fascicle four

document of hearsay: poem, letter, facsimile & edition

(featuring bart bach)

ΠΦ

a word on the >drone codices< logo:

as a pair of gates, pi and phi are shown, signs for a voiceless stop
opening to an aspirant, the sounds of P! to Ff; like a pair of wells,
of memory, say, and amnesty, books as springs of mneme & lethe;
the codex a telling tail, a semely spoor, god bromios a damp squib;
like two open passages of numbers, pi & phi, inexactly notated and
tending to nothing, irrational, a ratio, a form of infinitesimal thea(t)ry,
a more secular alpha & omega, no voice yet – a vibrancy.

*in my mouth words, like mind
and body, inexplicably
distasteful, melt like fungus –
urge disabled now to think
or speak, coherently
at all, on anything*

after H.v.Hoffmanstahl,
'Lord Chandos Brief' to Bacon