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Theo J. Hermans

Aspects of the Structure of Modernist Poetry 1908-1918

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A structural and comparative study of the poetic writing of Guillaume Apollinaire, Hans Arp, Hugo Ball, Georg Heym, T.E. Hulme, Max Jacob, Ezra Pound, Pierre Reverdy, and Georg Trakl.

Dissertation

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(Graduate School of Comparative Literature)  
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Supervisor: Dr. C. Nash.

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London, September 1977.

### Summary

This dissertation offers a structural and comparative investigation into some of the 'principles of construction' operative in Modernist poetry in the English, French and German language areas in the first decades of the twentieth century. While the general scope of the study is fairly broad, its thematic focus is restricted to questions of poetic structuration and related theoretical issues. The method of analysis and description leans towards Formalist and Structuralist approaches to literature, and incorporates a diachronic as well as a synchronic dimension.

Taking as a starting-point, in chapter 1, the synthetic and idealist conception which informs Mallarmé's Symbolist poetic system, the main body of the work then explores, in the eight chapters which follow, the poetic theories and practices of a representative selection of Modernist poets (Apollinaire, Arp, Ball, Heym, Hulme, Jacob, Pound, Reverdy, Trakl). The central argument pursued throughout these chapters rests on the contention that the diverse and often highly paradoxical modes of Modernist poetic writing are to be understood in relation (in opposition) to the basic categories of the Mallarméan aesthetic. The Modernist repudiation, whether implicit or explicit, of the Symbolist norm represents much more than a stylistic reaction. It implies, within the larger series of 'the Modern', a major theoretical reorientation, the construction of a new, non-idealist poetic, and the replacement of a metaphorical by a metonymic conception of poetic writing. The result is a radically altered approach to the function and finality of poetic language, to the status and nature of the poem, to the relation between poem and poet, between the poem and reality, and between the poet and reality. It is this momentum of reconsideration and reassessment which defines the space within which the various modes of Modernism come into being. In practice, the Modernist poem develops a powerful internal dialectic between on the one hand an impulse towards fragmentation and deconstruction, and, on the other, a tendency to objectivation, control, and reconstruction. In the Expressionist branch, where the role of socio-cultural elements is a contributory factor, the first impulse is particularly in evidence, and reveals strong existential overtones. The more

'constructivist' movements (Cubism, Imagism, Vorticism) appear preoccupied with the notion of the poem as a self-sufficient, self-reflexive entity, appealing at the same time to complementary moments of classicism and exploration. The paradoxes inherent in both branches of Modernism are finally radicalized in the Dadaist venture, which presents the point where the Modernist reconsideration of the categories of poetic writing reaches its ultimate extreme, while simultaneously creating the conditions for its transcendence.



### Introduction

The first part of this introduction outlines the subject of the dissertation. The second part offers methodological considerations.

#### 1.

The main purpose of the present work is to offer a descriptive and comparative study of some fundamental structural aspects of Modernist poetic writing. The term 'Modernism', it should be pointed out immediately, is used here and throughout the following pages in a restricted sense, and refers only to the poetic theories and practices of a limited number of poets, movements and circles at the beginning of the twentieth century (cf. below). The work concerns itself primarily with basic structural elements and techniques, and with the assumptions which underlie and determine the Modernist mode of poetic writing. Particular attention will be paid, therefore, to the theories developed by individual authors and to the essential 'principles of construction' (Mukařovsky) which shape the structure of their poetic production. It follows from the nature of this orientation that the main preoccupation in what follows is not with all aspects of the work of particular poets, but with the presentation of a (structural and comparative) description in terms of general and, wherever possible, supra-individual categories.

What is attempted, then, is a type of study which focuses on what D. Ďurišín calls "strukturtypologische Zusammenhänge" (cf. 'Ein Abriss grundlegender Thesen der vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft', in Fügen 1973:214), that is to say on "literarische Analogien (Parallelen) bzw. Unterschiedlichkeiten" (Ďurišín 1972:91), and not on 'genetic' relations (Ďurišín) or on questions of influence. Within an over-all framework which is both diachronic and synchronic, and comparative as well as contrastive (for "Analogien stellen () lediglich die eine und Unterschiedlichkeiten die andere Seite ein und derselben Medaille dar", ibid.:92), the present work concentrates on a series of 'typological' questions, on those structural elements through which the Modernist mode of writing manifests itself most clearly; it does not intend to offer a 'diffusionist' investigation

into the historical circumstances of the emergence and spread of Modernist poetry.

The book is organized in accordance with the general framework just mentioned. The first chapter deals with the basic assumptions and procedures of Mallarmé's poetic, as the paradigm of the idealist and synthetic Symbolist conception. This opening chapter should provide the groundwork for the diachronic dimension to be developed in the rest of the work. The subsequent eight chapters then discuss central structural categories in the poetic theory and practice of a number of Modernist poets: Apollinaire, Arp, Ball, Heym, Hulme, Jacob, Pound, Reverdy, and Trakl. The contention is, in other words, that an adequate (synchronic) description of the nature of Modernist poetry must include a diachronic aspect. The various, widely divergent forms and manifestations of Modernist poetic writing can only be properly understood as part of one general 'trend' when they are considered in opposition to the aesthetic of the previous generation - as responses, that is, in different socio-cultural contexts, to the decline and repudiation of the Symbolist norm. The term 'Symbolism', it should be noted, is here also used in a more specific sense than is usually the case; it refers primarily to the idealist (metaphysical, transcendental) conception associated in particular with Mallarmé. It will be shown that the Modernist reaction against 'Symbolism' in the broader sense of the term is not merely a question of the adoption of an alternative stylistic code, but entails, implicitly or explicitly, a rejection of the idealist and synthetic component which dominates the Mallarméan approach. More strongly: it will be argued that precisely the abandonment of the Mallarméan Symbolist perspective induces that crisis concerning the nature and finality of poetic writing which characterizes the Modernist venture. This view can, paradoxically, account for the bewildering formal diversity of Modernist poetry while simultaneously providing the common ground for the interpretation of this diversity within a unified conceptual picture. The analyses should show that this argument also holds for those poets for whom purely stylistic considerations predominate in the elaboration of a new type of writing, and who may be largely unaware of the specificity of the Mallarméan poetic system.

The work thus explores a series of ruptures and discontinuities on two levels, diachronic and synchronic (between Modernism and

Symbolism, and between some of the diverse manifestations of Modernism), with a gradual accumulation of comparative and contrastive material, as individual poetic systems are separately examined. The limitations which are imposed on the scope of the study are of various kinds, and of a pragmatic as well as of a methodological nature. With the obvious exception of Mallarmé's poetry, the bulk of the literary work discussed was written and published between, roughly, 1903 and 1918. These dates however represent no more than a conventional and convenient framework, which will not be rigidly observed. In 1908 Apollinaire publishes the important poem 'Les fiançailles'; Cubist painting emerges in the years 1907-08; in the period 1907-09 Trakl writes his early Expressionist poems; in 1908-09 Heym develops his mature style, and Hulme forms his pre-Imagist circle in London around the same time. In 1918 the War ends, Apollinaire dies, Reverdy publishes the collection Les ardoises du toit, and the Dadaists disperse from Zurich to Berlin, Cologne, and Paris; Hulme was killed in 1917, and Ball had left the Dadaist circle in the summer of the same year; Pound produces his 'Homage to Sextus Propertius' in the years 1916-18 (published 1919), moving from there to 'Mauberley' and then to the Cantos (the first three Cantos had appeared as early as 1917). The term 'Modernism', then, is used to denote primarily the poets whose work is under discussion, and, by extension, the groups or movements with which their literary production in those years associates itself, namely Cubism (Reverdy, Jacob; in Apollinaire's case one should add 'Orphism' or 'simultanism'), Expressionism (Heym, Trakl), Imagism and Vorticism (Hulme, Pound), and Dada (Arp, Ball). A substantial number of equally important poets commonly labelled 'Modernist', in other words, are not discussed (to name but a few: Cendrars and the Littérature group, Aldington and HD, Eliot, Benn, van Hoddis, Hülsenbeck, Tzara, Huidobro, van Ostaïjen, the Italian Futurists, the Russian Acmeists and Futurists), partly for purely practical reasons (the number of languages has been limited to three: English, French, German), partly because the focus of the work is mainly on poets in association with groups and movements, and partly to avoid overlapping between two or more poets writing in the same language. To an extent, the selection, like all selections, has inevitably something of the arbitrary. The movements and groups which are discussed, however, may reasonably be regarded as representative of the poetic avant-garde of the time, and for each

movement or group at least two representative figures are considered. Although it may thus be assumed that the conclusions arrived at in the present context will, in broad outline, be valid also for most of the other Modernist poets mentioned, to furnish proof of this assumption would require an additional series of detailed studies and hence a number of modifications. In that sense the views upheld here are necessarily provisional.

As it is, the poets discussed in the present work clearly belong to one generation. With the exception of Jacob, all were born in the 1880's. Some did not outlive the period of the emergence of Modernism, others did. Heym drowned in January 1912, Trakl committed suicide in November 1914, Hulme was killed at the front in September 1917, Apollinaire succumbed to fever in November 1918; Ball died in 1927, and Jacob perished in a concentration camp in 1944; Reverdy died in 1960, Arp in 1966, and Pound in 1972. Finally, while the parallels with painting are followed up in several cases, on account of the close contacts between painters and poets and the close parallels between literary and pictorial procedures which develop as a result, no attempt is made in the course of the analysis to explore the sociological perspective of the emergence of Modernist poetry. In spite of the obvious importance of this aspect, its virtual exclusion may again be justified on partly practical and partly methodological grounds. The approach intends to be primarily formal and structural, concentrating on questions of poetic technique and on theories of poetic construction, not on the social and ideological conditions which circumscribe the categories of Modernist writing. Given the relatively large number of writers whose work is discussed, severe thematic limitations must be imposed to keep the material within manageable proportions.

## 2.

The main tenor of the present work, then, is descriptive and structural, comparative and contrastive, synchronic and diachronic. As an analytical investigation, concerned with the characterization of a limited number of poetic procedures, it recognizes that these procedures do not exist in isolation but inscribe themselves in the totality of the poetic theory and practice of the individual authors under discussion. If oversimplification and distortion are

to be avoided, and if the aesthetic function of particular techniques and devices is to be understood, then the context of an author's entire poetic 'system' should be taken into account. In the essay 'De l'évolution littéraire' of 1927, J. Tynjanov indeed observes that "L'étude isolée d'une oeuvre ne nous donne pas la certitude de parler correctement de sa construction, voire de parler de la construction elle-même de l'oeuvre"(in Todorov 1965:125). In the case of a comparative study, where elements from different poetic systems are correlated, this danger is even greater. Tynjanov:

Il est incorrect d'extraire du système des éléments particuliers et de les rapprocher directement des séries similaires appartenant à d'autres systèmes, c'est-à-dire sans tenir compte de la fonction constructive. (*ibid.*:124)

These observations explain, basically, the approach adopted in the following pages. In the case of each individual poet the analysis of particular techniques is placed within the context of this poet's entire 'system' at the time (which accounts for the length of the work), and the synchronic description is continually complemented by a diachronic one, so that seemingly identical techniques may be adequately differentiated by taking into consideration their proper 'constructive function'. In this sense, moreover, poetic procedures and devices can be evaluated not as static but as dynamic and relational entities which function within a literary-historical context. This is a point strongly emphasized in J. Lotman's Vorlesungen zu einer strukturalen Poetik:

Der künstlerische Effekt des 'Verfahrens' ist immer die Relation, z.B. die Relation von Text und Lesererwartung, ästhetischen Normen der Epoche, üblichen Sujet- und anderen Schablonen, Gattungsgesetzmässigkeiten. ( ) Das literarische Verfahren ist nicht ein materielles Element des Textes, sondern eine Relation. (Lotman 1972a:56)

And in Die Struktur literarischer Texte Lotman makes the same observation, in a more general and more decisive way:

Eine synchrone, intern statische Beschreibung der Textstruktur, und vor allem der paradigmatischen Textstruktur, stellt zwar eine unerlässliche Voraussetzung für eine auch nur etwas exakte Vorstellung von der künstlerischen Wirkung dar, reicht aber für sich allein noch nicht aus.

Indem wir die Beschreibung eines Systems durch das Bild der ihm entgegenwirkenden (extratextuellen wie textimmanenten) Strukturen ergänzen, führen wir das energetische Moment in das Feld unserer Betrachtung ein. (Lotman 1972b:282)

Just as an understanding of particular techniques requires an awareness of their functional context and of the pattern of

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Just as an understanding of particular techniques requires an awareness of their functional context and of the pattern of

expectation which, within the literary series, derives from the prevailing norm, so a whole body of work, a whole poetic conception and its manifestation are to be viewed against the background of the ruling convention. This existing convention, and the ensuing expectations, have the same 'reality' as the individual literary work itself. In 'The History of the Echo of Literary Works', F. Vodička states in this respect that "We should not imagine the literature of a given period merely as the set of existing literary works, but also, and equally, as the set of existing literary values"(in Garvin 1964: 73). Lotman's Vorlesungen apply this principle then also to the notion of the literary 'text' as such:

Man muss sich entschieden von der Vorstellung lösen, dass der Text und das literarische Werk ein und dasselbe sind. Der Text ist eine der Komponente des literarischen Werkes, natürlich eine äusserst wesentliche Komponente, ohne die die Existenz des literarischen Werkes nicht möglich ist. Aber der künstlerische Effekt im ganzen entsteht aus der vergleichenden Zusammenstellung des Textes mit dem vielschichtigen Komplex der Vorstellungen vom Leben und dem Ideell-ästhetischen.

(Lotman 1972a:57)

An approach along these lines implies, among other things, the complementarity of literature as system and literature as evolution, that is, of the synchronic and diachronic perspectives. Indeed as early as 1928 Tynjanov and Jakobson note that

L'opposition de la synchronie à la diachronie opposait la notion de système à la notion d'évolution; elle perd son importance de principe puisque nous reconnaissons que chaque système nous est obligatoirement présenté comme une évolution et que, d'autre part, l'évolution a inévitablement un caractère systématique. ('Les problèmes des études littéraires et linguistiques', in Todorov 1965:139)

The Formalist notion of literary evolution which lies behind this conception, then, revolves essentially around the idea of the replacement of one poetic norm, as a hierarchical system of assumptions, values, principles and conventions, by another. "The development of poetry may be characterized as a struggle against the prevailing norms of the moment", O. Brik remarks in 1927 ('Contributions to the Study of Verse Language', in Matejka & Pomorska 1971:119). Tynjanov speaks in similar terms of "la notion fondamentale de l'évolution littéraire, celle de la substitution des systèmes", adding later in the same essay ('De l'évolution littéraire', 1927):

Si nous admettons que l'évolution est un changement du rapport entre les termes du système, c'est-à-dire un changement de fonctions et d'éléments formels, l'évolution se trouve être une 'substitution' de systèmes. (in Todorov 1965:122,136)

In the essay 'La dominante' of 1935 R. Jakobson further refines this view of the mechanism of literary change, describing the literary work as a "système structuré, ensemble régulièrement ordonné et hiérarchisé de procédés artistiques", and subsequently observing that "L'évolution poétique est dès lors un changement dans cette hiérarchie" (Jakobson 1973:148). This more 'functional' approach, applicable on a personal as well as on an interpersonal level, will be particularly useful in the context of the present work. It is also put forward by B. Tomashevsky, who states likewise that evolution in literature implies

...une variation continue de la fonction esthétique des procédés littéraires. Chaque oeuvre se trouve orientée par rapport au milieu littéraire, et chaque élément par rapport à l'oeuvre entière. Tel élément qui a sa valeur déterminée à une certaine époque changera complètement de fonction à une autre époque. ( ) C'est dans le changement continu de fonction que se manifeste la vraie vie des éléments de l'oeuvre littéraire. ('La nouvelle école d'histoire littéraire en Russie', 1928; quoted in Genette 1966:167)

The Formalist and post-Formalist notions of expectation, convention and literary norm, of technique and constructive function, of literary evolution as the introduction of functional modifications in the complex hierarchical structure which is the (individual or collective) literary system and its eventual replacement by an alternative system, all these concepts may be applied to the relation between the various manifestations of Modernist poetry and the Symbolist aesthetic (in the wider sense). At the turn of the century the Symbolist convention can still, in spite of symptoms of decline, largely be regarded as the dominant norm (cf. Cornell 1958:1-13,24). The elaboration of a non-Symbolist aesthetic, it will be seen, implies a process of internal transformation of particular techniques and motifs (like the radical change in the function of the 'depersonalization' procedure) as well as the introduction of new technical (formal, thematic) elements.

It remains essential, however, to see the relation between the Symbolist and the Modernist poetic as only one reorientation within the larger series of 'the Modern'. V. Zirmunsky observes in this respect that it makes sense to consider 'das Neue' as a supra-national 'macro-system' of which the successive national movements are the 'micro-systems':

Das Neue ist ein umfassenderer, supranationaler Begriff, unter den andere, engere 'nationale' Begriffe fallen. Sie sind die 'Mikrosysteme' eines durch spezifisch nationale oder individuelle



Merkmale mehr oder weniger differenzierten 'Makrosystems'.  
 ('Die literarischen Strömungen als internationale Phänomene',  
 1967; in Fügen 1973:183)

For Zirmunsky, 'die Moderne' is preeminently a series of anti-realist writing, extending from about 1880 to the present; the term 'Symbolism' (and, by implication, one may add, 'Modernism') then denotes "einen engeren Komplex von Erscheinungen innerhalb der Moderne" (*ibid.*:188, 189). For Mukařovsky too, 'modern art' begins "an der Grenzschiebe des realistisch-naturalistischen Zeitabschnittes und des Symbolismus in der Literatur sowie des Impressionismus und der nachimpressionistischen Kunst in der Malerei" ('Dialektische Widersprüche in der modernen Kunst', 1935, in Mukařovsky 1974:207). Although H. Friedrich's Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik (1956) and R. Poggioli's Theory of the Avant-Garde (1968) trace the origins of this type of writing further back in the nineteenth century, they posit the same fundamental continuity. A continuity, however, marked by constant ruptures: "Durante el último siglo y media," O. Paz remarks in Los hijos del limo, "se han sucedido los cambios y las revoluciones estéticas, pero ¿cómo no advertir que esa sucesión de rupturas es asimismo una continuidad?" (1974:16).

The subject of what follows, then, is a discussion of some structural aspects of one of these ruptures, and an analysis of some of the heterogeneous, paradoxical and dissonant forms resulting from it. The diachronic element in the discussion then stems from the recognition that

...l'oeuvre d'art est perçue sur le fond et au moyen de ses relations avec les autres oeuvres d'art. La forme de l'oeuvre d'art se définit par rapport avec les autres formes ayant existé avant elle. ('Rapports entre procédés d'affabulation et procédés généraux de style', 1919; Shklovsky 1973:37)

In this respect the typological relations (contrasts) between the principles and techniques of Mallarméan Symbolism and of the various Modernist modes will prove to be of particular significance - even in the case of poets who do not consciously reject the Mallarméan paradigm. As early as 1920 A. Malraux says of Reverdy that "Ce qu'il voulait, c'était un poème absolument différent du poème symboliste" ('Des origines de la poésie cubiste', Malraux 1920:38). In a quite different context S. Coffman notes that "The Imagist theories of both Hulme and Pound are most clearly reflected in the French poetry which differs from or ignores the metaphysical basis of Symbolism" (1951:86-87). The synchronic element, on the other hand, explores

both the oppositions and the similarities between individual Modernist poets in regard to some basic structural procedures. In this field Paz has pointed out that the relations between the collage devices in Pound and Eliot and the simultanist structure of some of Apollinaire's poems should be studied in more detail, adding that the venture of the Anglo-American poets at this time only becomes fully intelligible within a properly European context (Paz 1974:164-165). The essentially transnational character of the present work represents an attempt to develop this kind of perspective, even if, for obvious reasons, its thematic apparatus and scope remain limited. It is to be hoped, however, that in this way some further critical material becomes available for the classification and clarification of the various branches of Modernist poetry in Europe in the first decades of the century.

CHAPTER 1

Mallarmé's Language: Transposition, Structure

This chapter is purely expository; the focus will be on those aspects of Mallarmé's poetic which are most directly associated with the 'transcendental' or 'metaphysical' orientation of his aesthetic. The first section deals briefly with Mallarmé's early views on the modalities of artistic creation. Section two discusses the later theoretical positions in some more detail, concentrating on the nature and function of the notions of 'Transposition' and 'Structure'. In the final section a reading of one poem (the sonnet 'Ses purs angles...') is attempted, as an illustration of the close inter-relationship between Mallarmé's poetic theory and practice.

1.

It is customary to consider Mallarmé's spiritual crisis of 1866-67 as providing the groundwork for his philosophical and aesthetic views; the development of the properly Mallarméan poetic is then also related directly to this crisis experience. Such crucial notions as those of 'le Néant' and 'le Hasard', of impersonality and the transcendental dialectic indeed appear in his writings only after 1866-67. In many other ways, however, the later views are a continuation, though often in modified form, of earlier positions and concepts, which subsist after the crisis years and without which the later aesthetic would be largely incomprehensible. It will be useful then, so as to put things into perspective, to turn first, briefly, to some aspects of these early views.

Mallarmé's position in this early period is most clearly set out, apart from various remarks in his correspondence, in the essays 'L'art pour tous' (1862) and 'Symphonie littéraire' (1864) (OC:257-265)<sup>(1)</sup>. Both essays are openly polemical: whereas the later Mallarmé confidently speaks as the "solitaire ébloui de sa foi" (OC:67), here he is still postulating principles and defining basic social and artistic positions.

The general starting-point appears to consist of two complementary views: the strict separation between the world of art and the

ordinary world, and an exalted and absolute conception of art as turned only towards the sphere of 'l'Idéal'<sup>(2)</sup>. The artist, torn between disgust and worship, lives in two mutually exclusive worlds - a circumstance which also spells out the tragedy of Mallarmé's own life. Since the world around him has nothing of value in store for him, the artist dwells only in the 'sanhedrin of art'. Mallarmé speaks of "nous autres malheureux que la terre dégoûte et qui n'avons que le Rêve pour refuge"(Corr.I:90), since "la seule occupation d'un homme qui se respecte est à mes yeux de regarder l'azur en mourant de faim"(ibid: 118). The result of this radical duality is, inevitably, the elitist gesture, the withdrawal into the small and closed community of spiritual aristocrats:

Qu'un philosophe ambitionne la popularité, je l'en estime. ( )  
Mais qu'un poète, un adorateur du beau inaccessible au vulgaire,  
- ne se contente pas des suffrages du sanhedrin de l'art, cela  
m'irrite, et je ne le comprends pas.  
L'homme peut être démocrate, l'artiste se dédouble et doit  
rester aristocrate. (OC:259)

Thus, surrounded by a hostile or at best indifferent society, the artist finds refuge in "la sérénité du dédain"(OC:258).

The idea of artistic isolation, rejection and withdrawal is frequently repeated in later writings (notably in the 'Autobiographie' of 1885;OC:661-665). Mallarmé's insistence on the need for solitude and silence (Mondor 1941:179;OC:664; Corr.I:150,180) is, in this context, of more than merely biographical interest: seclusion becomes a precondition for artistic creation (hence the various references to "cloître":Corr.I:222,313; Mondor 1941:728). This seclusion naturally invites introspection, which allows the poet to regard himself as "un instrument qui résonne sous les doigts de diverses sensations"(Corr.I:151), even though he is at the same time engaged in an active pursuit to register, by means of introspection, "les impressions extra-terrestres et nécessairement harmonieuses que je veux donner, que je m'étudie jusqu'à une prudence qui ressemble à de la manie"(ibid:195).

As the Baudelairean overtones here suggest, Mallarmé's introspection is not so much pure self-contemplation as a dogged attempt to perceive the "harmonie surnaturelle" behind appearances, the "trésor profond des correspondances"(OC:262) which, planted in a contingent material world and revealed by poetic perception and expression, point to the existence of a superior, ideal world of

absolute values. In that sense Mallarmé can claim that "il n'y a de vrai, d'immuable, de grand et de sacré que l'Art. Toutes les vaines disputes politiques passent, n'ayant rien d'absolu en elles."(Corr.I:94).

The artist's isolation from society has a correlate in the isolation of the artistic product. Thus the work of art is placed outside the commercial circuit: since "l'art n'est fait que pour les artistes"(ibid:168), artistic products remain purely gratuitous commodities: "gratuité du produit ou dédain commercial; les deux, par un noeud simple"(OC:405). However, the isolation of the work affects not only its distribution, but also its nature and composition. First, art, as something sacred, is enveloped in mystery ("Toute chose sacrée et qui veut demeurer sacrée s'enveloppe de mystère"-OC:257) and requires description in semi-religious terminology. In this view, which presents itself unmistakably as "la haute esthétique"(OC:337), art cuts itself loose from the material and social world, to turn only to those spheres which Mallarmé at this stage still denotes with terms like 'Rêve', 'Idéal', 'Azur' or 'Beauté'. Failure to acknowledge clearly the supremacy of the Ideal draws Mallarmé's reproach, as in his criticism of des Essarts (followed by a scathing reference to Baudelaire): "Il confond trop l'Idéal avec le réel. La sottise d'un poète moderne a été jusqu'à se désoler que l'Action ne fût pas la soeur de Rêve", a criticism which is accompanied by the exhortation (to Cazalis): "O mon Henri, abreuve-toi d'Idéal. Le bonheur d'ici-bas est ignoble"(Corr.I:90). Given this exclusive orientation, the only possible value judgment on a poem depends on the way it appears as a reflection, as one manifestation, of Beauty; the decisive question is then: "Y a-t-il reflet de la Beauté?"(ibid:104).

The logical consequence of this aesthetic puritanism is that ultimately, in the process of the composition of the poem, the 'ontological' link between poem and poet has to be severed, or at least attenuated and disguised. In spite of the poet being an instrument vibrating under the touch of sensation and inspiration, Mallarmé repeatedly insists that the lyrical impulse is to be banned: the poem is neither impression nor expression, but formal construct. "L'art suprême, ici, consiste à laisser voir, par une possession impeccable de toutes les facultés, qu'on est en extase, sans avoir montré comment on s'élevait vers ces cimes", he writes in a letter of April 1864, and he concludes: "Il faut toujours couper le commencement et la fin de ce qu'on écrit. Pas d'introduction, pas de finale."(Corr.I:117).

In an earlier letter to Cazalis, Mallarmé had already established the incompatibility between pure form and lyrical effusion:

Je ne veux pas faire cela d'inspiration: la turbulence du lyrisme serait indigne de cette chaste apparition que tu aimes. Il faut méditer longtemps: l'art seul, limpide et impeccable, est assez chaste pour la sculpter religieusement. (Corr.I:36)

This attitude, which obviously foreshadows the later views on the impersonality of perfect structure, has two complementary aspects: the poem's status, its orientation towards the sphere of ideal beauty, resists the intrusion of all extraneous (impure) matter, including the author's lyrical sensibility, and at the same time its formal perfection demands that inspiration be sacrificed to technique. Mallarmé's emphasis is consequently on the construction of the poem as such, on painstaking study and application: not "impression" but "réflexion"; and "Devant le papier, l'artiste se fait." (Corr.I:154); and even more clearly: "Quelle étude du son et de la couleur des mots, musique et peinture par lesquelles devra passer ta pensée, tant belle soit-elle, pour être poétique." (ibid:168).

Already in the early writings, poetic language is described as striving towards suggestion, mystery, insubstantiality. The precept "Peindre non la chose, mais l'effet qu'elle produit." (ibid:137) dates from as early as 1864 (in a letter announcing the 'Hérodiade', which was to be a lifelong preoccupation), and is in later years repeated again and again, in various formulations. In the letter just referred to, Mallarmé goes on to posit the need for a connotative and basically synecdochic mode of writing, where allusion replaces denotation: "Le vers ne doit donc pas, là, se composer de mots, mais d'intentions, et toutes les paroles s'effacer devant la sensation." (ibid.). But whereas the approach to this kind of immateriality is still fairly 'rectilinear' at this stage, the later texts will, in the concept of Transposition, opt for a properly dialectical process of destruction and reconstruction of the 'signified', moving from "réminiscence" or "abolition" via "oubli" towards the "notion pure". In later writings also, Mallarmé will dispute the supremacy of music as a non-referential sign system precisely on the grounds that poetry can approach 'immateriality' via a dialectical process; the early texts, however, still regard music as the superior art form, not only because of its abstract and harmonious nature, but also because its very notation ("...ces processions macabres de signes sévères, chastes, inconnus"-OC:257).

inaccessible to the uninitiated, effectively prevents profanation<sup>(3)</sup>.

The exalted conception of art and the severe formal demands placed on artistic creation also lead, ironically, to exasperation and despair in the face of the unattainability of the Ideal. The poet's predicament is that he requires of poetry a purity which only the unwritten work - be it the imagined poem or the blank page - can possess. Writing, for Mallarmé, becomes "l'heure sainte de Jacob, la lutte avec l'Idéal"(Corr.I:151). The essay 'Symphonie littéraire' begins with an address to the "Muse moderne de l'Impuissance", who holds the poet prisoner in her "irremédiable filet, l'ennui," and inspires only "la haine de la création et le stérile amour du néant." (OC:261).

Paradoxically enough, though, this state of mind itself provides the subject-matter for several of the early poems. The poet oscillates between the required "lucidité parfaite" of mind and form, and an actual "navrante impuissance"(Corr.I:103). Creative sterility thus becomes the pretext for writing, whereby many poems have their own ideal forms for their theme. In 'L'Azur'(1864;OC:37-38), the overwhelming power of the Ideal ("l'Azur") is experienced as painful, and resented for its cynicism:

De l'éternel azur la sereine ironie  
Accable, belle indolemment comme les fleurs,  
Le poète impuissant qui maudit son génie  
A travers un désert stérile de Douleurs.

and the poem subsequently traces the impossibility of escape, from the initial "Où fuir?" of stanza 2, via the whistful "donne, ô matière,/ L'oubli de l'Idéal cruel"(stanza 6) and the despondent "En vain! l'Azur triomphe"(stanza 8), to the inexorable conclusion:

Où fuir dans la révolte inutile et perverse?  
Je suis hanté. L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur!

The same theme appears in 'Les Fenêtres'(1863;OC:32-33), where the projection of flight, rebirth and ascension also meets with crushing frustration:

Je me mire et me vois ange! et je meurs, et j'aime  
- Que la vitre soit l'art, soit la mysticité -  
A renaître, portant mon rêve en diadème,  
Au ciel antérieur où fleurit la Beauté!  
Mais, hélas! Ici-bas est maître: sa hantise  
Vient m'écoeurer parfois jusqu'en cet abri sur,  
Et le vomissement impur de la Bétise  
Me force à me boucher le nez devant l'azur. (stanzas 8-9)

Thus the power of attraction of the Ideal is ironically related to its inaccessibility, in the same way as the poet's resentment against his residence on earth only makes him more aware of its oppressive inescapability. The sonnet 'Renouveau'(1862;OC:34), finally, develops along almost identical lines, be it in more metaphorical terms and even more Baudelairean rhythms, from the opening quatrain:

Le printemps maladif a chassé tristement  
L'hiver, saison de l'art serein, l'hiver lucide,  
Et, dans mon être à qui le sang morne préside  
L'impuissance s'étire en un long bâillement.

to the indeterminate conclusion:

J'attends, en m'abîmant que mon ennui s'élève...  
- Cependant l'Azur rit sur la haie et l'éveil  
De tant d'oiseaux en fleur gazouillant au soleil.

- indeterminate yet paradoxical, since apparently the poem itself is the result of reflection on creative impotence.

The particulars of the spiritual crisis which Mallarmé underwent in the years 1866-67 need not be discussed here in any detail; the crisis itself is only important in the present context in so far as it affects Mallarmé's views on language, poetic diction, the status of the work of art (the poem), and the relation between poet and poem. In general it would appear, as D.J. Mossop (1971:130ff) points out, that the 'metaphysical experience' of 1866-67 is mainly philosophical and religious in nature, and is not explained by Mallarmé's aesthetic development before 1866. Yet, as the crisis draws the ultimate consequences from a profoundly idealist philosophical outlook, it is bound to have serious repercussions on an aesthetic which also has its roots in idealism.

The crisis, as already the first letter in this experience (April 1866) indicates, revolves principally around the 'abyss' of "le Néant" and the relation between "la matière" and "le Rêve":

Où, je le sais, nous ne sommes que de vaines formes de la matière - mais bien sublimes pour avoir inventé Dieu et notre âme. Si sublimes, mon ami! que je veux me donner ce spectacle de la matière, ayant conscience d'être, et, cependant, s'élançant forcenément dans ce Rêve qu'elle sait n'être pas, chantant l'Âme et toutes les divines impressions pareilles qui se sont amassées en nous depuis les premiers âges, et proclamant devant le Rien qui est la vérité, ces glorieux mensonges!(Corr.I:207-208).

The religious aspect of the crisis finds a partial resolution when Mallarmé is able to look back on "ma lutte terrible avec ce vieux



et méchant plumage, terrassé, heureusement, Dieu!"(Corr.I:241). In philosophical terms, as Mossop (1971:133) also observes, the passage quoted above illustrates the radical idealist reversal whereby the real is denied its reality and only ideality is regarded as constituting the true reality; hence the denial of apparent reality, knowing itself to be "mensonge", is an affirmation of that genuine (ideal) reality.

In subsequent stages of the crisis, Mallarmé also turns to the aesthetic implications of this whole experience: the creation of an impersonal universal consciousness, and the correlation between poetry and the universe. Already in the first few months the crisis had thrown up the question of the relation between "le Néant", "le Beau" and "la Poésie" ("...après avoir trouvé le Néant, j'ai trouvé le Beau", he writes in July 1866, and in May 1867: "Il n'y a que la Beauté; - et elle n'a qu'une expression parfaite - la Poésie."-Corr.I:220,243). In the letter of May 1867 he also describes how pure contemplation of the absolute 'Néant' affects his own consciousness:

Je viens de passer une année effrayante: ma Pensée s'est pensée, et est arrivée à une Conception pure. Tout ce que, par contre-coup, mon être a souffert, pendant cette longue agonie, est inenarrable, mais, heureusement, je suis parfaitement mort, et la région la plus impure où mon Esprit puisse s'aventurer est l'Eternité; mon Esprit, ce solitaire habituel de sa propre Pureté, que n'obscurcit plus même le reflet du Temps. ( ) J'avoue, du reste, ( ) que j'ai encore besoin ( ) de me regarder dans cette glace pour penser, et que si elle n'était pas devant la table où j'écris cette lettre, je redeviendrais le Neant. C'est t'apprendre que je suis maintenant impersonnel, et non plus Stéphane que tu as connu, - mais une aptitude qu'a l'Univers Spirituel à se voir et à se développer, à travers ce qui fut moi. (Corr.I:240,242).

A few months later, in September 1867, he writes in roughly the same terms to Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, who had advised him to read Hegel:

Ma pensée a été jusqu'à se penser elle-même et n'a plus la force d'évoquer en un Néant unique le vide disseminé en sa porosité. J'avais, à la faveur d'une grande sensibilité, compris la corrélation intime de la Poésie avec l'Univers, et, pour qu'elle fût pure, conçu le dessein de la sortir du Rêve et du Hasard et de la juxtaposer à la conception de l'Univers. Malheureusement, ame organisée simplement pour la jouissance poétique, je n'ai pu, dans la tâche préalable de cette conception, comme vous disposer d'un Esprit - et vous serez terrifié d'apprendre que je suis arrivé à l'Idée de l'Univers par la seule sensation (et que, par exemple, pour garder une notion ineffaçable du Néant pur, j'ai dû imposer à mon cerveau la sensation du vide absolu). (ibid:259)

The significance, then, of this perplexing - and, for Mallarmé, crucial and shattering - experience appears to lie mainly in the greatly increased complexity of the philosophical and conceptual hinterland which from now on is implied, and indeed embodied, in his poetic theory and practice. The early views, still largely aestheticist in nature, established a relatively uncomplicated, straightforward ('rectilinear') relation between poetry and ideality, with the poet acting as the recipient of the "impressions extra-terrestres et nécessairement harmonieuses." But in the later theory, a term like 'poésie pure' becomes, as H. Friedrich (1956:136) puts it, "das dichtungstheoretische Äquivalent für das Nichts, um das sie kreist", symptomatic of a poetic which is developed almost entirely in negative categories. The notion of 'le Néant' has become the ultimate point of reference for Mallarmé's aesthetic and philosophical speculations alike. The whole metaphysical system is then aptly characterized by Friedrich (1956:124) as an 'empty transcendentalism': the earlier terms 'Azur' and 'Rêve', used to designate the Ideal, are replaced by 'le Néant'; the Ideal, as 'Néant', has no metaphysical existence - and yet it alone exists; the concepts of 'l'Absolu' and 'le Néant' become complementary in a system where, in appropriately Hegelian terms, Pure Being coincides with Non-Being (Davies 1953:34; Burns 1974:103).

From 1866 onwards, Mallarmé's aesthetic begins to emerge as a complex and extraordinarily coherent system, in which all the elements are organically interrelated and no single concept can be seen in isolation (- which reflects, in a way, Mallarmé's very mode of thinking, as he later remarked in an interview: "Jamais pensée ne se présente à moi, détachée;() les miennes forment le trait, musicalement placées, d'un ensemble et à s'isoler je les sens perdre jusqu'à leur vérité et sonner faux." - quoted in Mondor 1941:798).

The development of his poetic as a 'hierarchical system' can easily be traced. Already in July 1866 Mallarmé confidently declared to have outlined "les fondements d'une oeuvre magnifique", adding that

tout est si bien ordonné en moi qu'à mesure, maintenant, qu'une sensation m'arrive, elle se transfigure et va d'elle-même se caser dans tel livre ou tel poème. Quand un poème sera mûr, il se détachera. (Corr.I:222)

The repercussions of the crisis, however, were soon to make themselves felt. Thus, in April 1868, he writes:

Pour moi, voici deux ans que j'ai commis le péché de voir le Rêve dans sa nudité idéale, tandis que je devais accumuler entre lui et moi un mystère de musique et d'oubli. Et maintenant, arrivé à la vision horrible d'une oeuvre pure, j'ai presque perdu la raison et le sens des paroles les plus familières. (Corr.I:270)

A few weeks later, he still refers to "l'angoisse anormale qui m'opresse"(Corr.I:274). But from then on the tone grows more and more self-assured. Early in 1869 he announces that "...j'ai imploré la Grande Nuit qui m'a exaucé et a étendu ses ténèbres. La première phase de ma vie a été finie."(ibid:301). At the end of that year he speaks of "mon grand labeur déjà réétudié"(ibid:313), and shortly afterwards (April 1870) of "la Croyance, où se complait, maintenant, mon esprit revenu, mais auquel se refuse la vie, précisément."(ibid:320). This attitude persists in subsequent years, until later in life Mallarmé can, with ironic self-confidence, tell one of his Tuesday guests that "Nous sommes des ratés prédestinés", justifying the inevitability of failure in terms of the grandeur of the aesthetic endeavour itself:

Mais ratés, nous le sommes tous (!!) La récompense est d'être précisément sur le plan supérieur, un raté, c'est-à-dire un homme qui, dédaignant l'avantage immédiat et facile, s'est mesuré d'emblée avec ce qui nous domine et nous dépasse de toute part. Tel est, du moins, mon crédo peut-être désespéré mais qui me fait vivre. (Mondor 1941:665).

## 2.

Mallarmé's later reflections on poetic writing are extensive, profound, radical and consistent; as was already suggested above, it is essential to bear in mind that these reflections derive their coherence and force from the metaphysical/transcendental orientation of his entire philosophical and aesthetic outlook.

Generally speaking, it is possible to group his views on poetic language around the two central notions of 'Transposition' and 'Structure'. As should become clear in the following pages, the tendency to immateriality, the use of polysemy and euphony, the treatment of syntax, and the ideas of impersonality and anonymity can all be seen as strategies directly related to these two concepts. The concepts themselves are put forward by Mallarmé in a passage of 'Crise de vers':

Parler n'a trait à la réalité des choses que commercialement: en littérature, cela se contente d'y faire une allusion ou de distraire leur qualité qu'incorporera quelque idée.

A cette condition s'élançait le chant, d'une joie allégée.

Cette visée, je la dis Transposition - Structure, une autre.

L'œuvre pure implique la disparition élocutoire du poète, qui cède l'initiative aux mots, par le heurt de leur inégalité mobilisés; ils s'allument de reflets réciproques comme une virtuelle traînée de feux sur des pierreries, remplaçant la respiration perceptible en l'ancien souffle lyrique ou la direction personnelle enthousiaste de la phrase. (OC:366)

Transposition and Structure are interdependent, and properly inseparable: the latter, roughly, allows the former to manifest itself. 'Structure' refers, naturally, to the internal organization of the literary text; 'Transposition' affects the relation of the text, as signifier, to its signified (in the Saussurean sense of these terms).

Before discussing the nature of Transposition and the various levels of structuration <sup>(4)</sup>, it may be advisable to summarize Mallarmé's remarks on the relation between poetic language and ordinary language. His views in this respect follow directly from the earlier positions, and are indicative of the continuity in his thinking.

In the same way as he had described the poet's identity as split between a public and an artistic figure ("...l'artiste se dédouble..." -OC:259), the later Mallarmé distinguishes between ordinary language and poetic language, whereby the latter is seen as constantly striving to attain a purity of a higher order ("Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu"-OC:70); this duality forms the "double état de la parole, brut ou immédiat ici, là essentiel."(OC:368). Thus the poetic use of language, as a 'secondary model-constructing system'(Lotman 1972b: 22ff), presupposes the ordinary use, and is in fact a negation and transcendence of it; this process constitutes "la seule dialectique du Vers"(OC:332).

In 'Crise de vers' Mallarmé argues that language as such is defective because contingent and subject to chance ('Hasard'): the multiplicity of human languages, and the arbitrary nature of the relation between the sound of a word and its meaning (between signifier and signified) are regarded as proof of this. In this respect poetry is completely superior and "rémunère le défaut des langues"(OC:364) in that its form is motivated and necessary. The ordinary use of language

appears to embrace all uses which are not literary, i.e. wherever language is primarily a self-effacing instrument of communication; this 'counter language' (as T.E. Hulme would call it later) is 'commercial' and utilitarian, and therefore referential, transparent, and superficial. The average reader, predictably, receives little and only scathing attention: attuned to "l'universel reportage"(OC: 368), he is blinded by convention ("...l'oeil du public - encore aveuglé par les conventions"-Change 1976:186) and unable to comprehend the poetic use of language ("...des contemporains ne savent pas lire - sinon dans le journal."-OC:386).

Poetic language, then, is the exact opposite of this conventional denotative language:

Au contraire d'une fonction de numéraire facile et représentatif, comme le traite d'abord la foule, le dire, avant tout, rêve et chant, retrouve chez le Poète, par nécessité constitutive d'un art consacré aux fictions, sa virtualité. (OC:368)

As "un art consacré aux fictions", literary (poetic) language does not distinguish between poetry and prose: prose is seen as merely a more diffuse form of poetry, or as dissimulated poetry (OC:367,375). As "rêve et chant", poetry is aligned with music: both effectuate "une préalable disjonction - celle de la parole"(OC:385). And although mostly inferior to music (since the word, "en raison du besoin, strict, de signification" generally remains "plus massivement lié à la nature"-OC:522), poetry, if read properly and lucidly (with a "regard adéquat"-OC:387), succeeds in presenting its own silent symphony (its "solitaire tacite concert" or "envol tacite d'abstractions"-OC:380,385). In that sense poetry emulates or even surpasses music, and it is also this context which allows Mallarmé to speak of "cet acte de juste restitution (), de tout reprendre à la musique"(Corr.II: 286) or to claim that "...on veut à la Musique, limiter le Mystère; quand l'écrit y prétend", and "L'écrit () reprend ses droits en face de la chute des sons nus"(OC:385). If, however, poetry is able to lift itself from a state of natural inferiority to being at least equivalent to music, this is due primarily to the effects of Transposition and Structure, i.e. to the creation of non-referentiality and textual polyphony. What this amounts to, should now be clarified.

The transcendental perspective underlying Mallarmé's aesthetic system inscribes itself in the radical idealist reversal (referred to above) in which literature acts as the "Glorieux Mensonge"(Corr.I:208).

This idea is also set out in an ironic passage of 'La musique et les lettres': the literary 'game' is based on a "supercherie" which disclaims the material world as a mere "leurre":

Nous savons, captifs d'une formule absolue que, certes, n'est que ce qui est. Incontinent écarter cependant, sous un prétexte, le leurre, accuserait notre inconséquence, niant le plaisir que nous voulons prendre: car cet au-delà en est l'agent et le moteur dirais-je (). Mais, je vénère comment, par une supercherie, on projette, à quelque élévation et de foudre! le conscient manque chez nous de ce qui là-haut éclate.

A quoi sert cela -

A un jeu. (OC:647)

The nature of this literary game is thus the projection of an ideal (pure, metaphysical) level of existence, negating the material world which, being no more than an inevitable starting-point, loses its relevance in the process and is dropped as 'residue':

Au vers impersonnel ou pur s'adaptera l'instinct qui dégage, du monde, un chant, pour en illuminer le rythme fondamental et rejette, vain, le résidu. (OC:655)

It is in this sense then that poetry becomes man's supreme and unique preoccupation, that it is ultimately "la seule création humaine possible"(OC:870) and that it can be considered "l'expression, par le langage humain ramené à son rythme essentiel, du sens mystérieux de l'existence" (quoted in Mondor 1941:438).

The "sens mystérieux de l'existence", however, lies in the metaphysical sphere, and hence the basic function of poetry is the transcendence of reality, the intimation of a superior and ideal level of Being (pure Being, but also 'Néant': Non-Being); this process of transcendence from the real to the ideal is in essence what Mallarmé calls 'Transposition':

La divine transposition, pour l'accomplissement de quoi existe l'homme, va du fait à l'idéal. (OC:522)

Naturally, and essentially, Transposition implies a "raréfaction au-delà de l'ordinaire atteinte"(OC:850), and requires, as such, a dialectic of negation and recreation, of destruction and reconstruction, in which reality sheds its materiality. In practice, the 'negative' aspects of Transposition will be most in evidence: the metaphysical being by definition inexpressible, its existence can only be postulated - or suggested, prefigured in a language which negates materiality and avoids denotative particularity, which, in other words, operates "une négativité toute dialectique"(Kristeva 1974:228)<sup>(5)</sup>.

It is in this context also that Mallarmé's view of poetry as evocation and incantation acquires its proper significance. He strongly emphasizes the evocative quality of poetry in the interview with Huret in 1891 (OC:866-872), stressing the need for 'mystery' and 'enigma', which are created by 'suggestion', 'allusion' and, in general, indirectness of reference. What this amounts to is a call for a mode of writing which aspires to connotative and symbolic discourse, always implying, indeed presupposing, further meanings apart from the apparent denotation, meanings which are only hinted at, deliberately obscured or indicated merely by means of symbols, analogies and synecdoches; a type of poetry, that is, which activates "l'air ou chant sous le texte, conduisant la divination d'ici-là" (OC:387), where each poem allows a glimpse of a vast hinterland of implied or suspected, but unexpressed meanings. The incantatory quality of poetry, on the other hand, can be understood in two complementary ways: as sacred ritual, with the poet figuring as alchemist or kabbalist (and the term 'Transposition' has unmistakable overtones of transmutation and transfiguration), and as referring to the orphic nature of poetry as enchantment, as a total rhythmical and musical experience; in this sense Mallarmé condemns the epic as "la grande déviation homérique" from the true Orphic path (cf. Mondor 1941:683), just as the definition of the 'Book' as "l'explication orphique de la Terre" (OC:663) becomes meaningful only in the context of incantation and, hence, of Transposition.

It should be fairly obvious, although the point is no less crucial for it, that in practice Transposition means primarily a linguistic operation: it affects the relation between words and things (properly speaking: between signifier and signified), and the desired 'rarefaction' can only be accomplished via language. Ordinary language, as an instrument for communication and transfer of information, is incapable of transcending (negating) referentiality; music, whose constituent elements are non-referential, is itself abstract and immaterial. Hence poetry becomes the adequate vehicle for the transition from the real to the ideal: concerned as it is with a fictional world, the function of poetry becomes "quelque devoir de tout poète, avec des réminiscences" (OC:481). Within its fictional space, poetic language will focus on the destruction of denotation, i.e. on obscuring the (referential) relation between signifier and

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signified. In practice this will lead to a concentration on the signifier: the increased opacity of the signifier prevents the referential link from establishing itself automatically and unequivocally. Mallarmé's advocacy of evocation and incantation can then be translated as a deliberate foregrounding<sup>(6)</sup> of polysemy and musicality (- both, incidentally, undesirable or dispensable in ordinary communication). Both these notions will be further described below; polysemy refers essentially to the exploitation of semantic multivalence by means of lexical and syntactic ambiguity, and the use of connotative and symbolic discourse; musicality, clearly, implies an emphasis on the phonic component, on rhythm and euphony, by means of which a line is transformed into "un mot total, neuf, étranger à la langue et comme incantatoire"(OC:368).

The ultimate aim of Transposition as a linguistic operation appears to be total 'abstraction' in the sense of non-referential, conceptual insubstantiality and indeterminacy:

A quoi bon la merveille de transposer un fait de nature en sa presque disparition vibratoire selon le jeu de la parole, cependant; si ce n'est pour qu'en émane, sans la gêne d'un proche ou concret rappel, la notion pure.

Je dis: une fleur! et, hors de l'oubli où ma voix relègue aucun contour, en tant que quelque chose d'autre que les calices sus, musicalement se lève, idée même et suave, l'absente de tous bouquets. (OC:368)

The meaning of the term "notion pure" (or "Notion") is given elsewhere: "Le moment de la Notion d'un objet est () le moment de la réflexion de son présent pur en lui-même ou sa pureté présente."(OC:853). The concept thus enters the metaphysical and Hegelian complex of pure Being and Non-Being ('Absolu' and 'Néant'), and may be characterized as a "négativité conceptuelle"(R. Bellour, in Brion-Guerry 1971:531). But as such it also remains a purely theoretical concept: it is, by definition, unattainable ("Rien de si pur ne peut coexister avec les conditions de la vie."-Valéry 1957:1275). The impossibility to create a genuine (i.e. fully non-referential) 'notion pure' forms a wholly characteristic 'ontological dissonance'(Friedrich 1956:130ff) in Mallarmé's poetic, in subjective as well as objective terms: the writer's own endeavour is inevitably doomed to failure, just as language as such can never wholly coincide with the Absolute: every attempt suffers from "cette réciproque contamination de l'oeuvre et de ses moyens", and "tout, véhicule ou placement maintenant offert à l'idéal, y est contraire."(OC:371). In spite of the fact, however,

that the 'notion pure' is by its very nature beyond reach, poetry can and does exist as intimation, i.e. as approximation and prefiguration - in the same way that the 'Book', although it cannot be written in its definitive totality, can be foreshadowed by accomplishing "un fragment d'exécuté, à en faire scintiller () l'authenticité glorieuse"(OC:663).

If the 'notion pure', then, amounts to a 'conceptual negativity', the approach to it can only be spelled out in equally negative terms. The ultimate step to reach its purity would be silence, the unlimited potential of the blank page, and in this sense Mallarmé's poetry can be seen as constantly tending to silence - to suicide <sup>(7)</sup>. But in practice the principle of Transposition is developed along the negative lines of "abolition" and "oubli" in creating referential emptiness or indeterminacy; this procedure lies at the basis of Mallarmé's own observation that 'elimination' and 'destruction' are key elements in his poetic technique ("...je n'ai créé mon oeuvre que par élimination (). La destruction fut ma Béatrice."-Corr.I:246): it is the neutralization of denotation which reduces the signified to its "presque disparition vibratoire selon le jeu de la parole."

Among the techniques associated with Transposition, then, the foregrounding of polysemy and musicality is very much in evidence in Mallarmé's poetry. Of these two, the exploitation of polysemy is the more complex device, operating on the paradigmatic and syntagmatic as well as, more generally, the 'rhetorical' level (in the widest sense of this term).

In the simplest sense, Mallarmé's poems, as has often been noted, strive towards objective insubstantiality and vagueness, i.e. to the creation of a "milieu nul ou à peu près"(OC:391). The rule appears to be that

Le sens trop précis nature  
Ta vague littérature. (OC:73)

In this approach absence and allusion are naturally predominant:

Evoquer, dans une ombre expresse, l'objet tu, par des mots allusifs, jamais directs, se réduisant à du silence égal, comporte tentative proche de créer: vraisemblable dans la limite de l'idée uniquement mise en jeu par l'enchanteur de lettres jusqu'à ce que, certes, scintille, quelque illusion égale au regard.(OC:400)

Thus in 'L'après-midi d'un faune'(OC:50-53) the faun is seen wondering whether the scene he beheld is real or illusory, conjured

up by music and inspiration, or by these means really brought to life; in the sonnet 'Ses purs ongles...' (OC:68-69) both the amphora and the 'ptyx' are no more than verbal presences in the poem, the objects themselves having been removed from the room; in 'Sainte' (OC:53-54) the viola and the prayer-book only existed in the past, while also the harp, formed by the angel's wing, is a "plumage instrumental" which releases no sound, so that the saint becomes a "musicienne du silence". The notions of absence, reminiscence, oblivion and imagination play here a major part: in an essay on Manet, Mallarmé urges painters to do no more than "fixer mentalement sur la toile le souvenir exquis d'une femme" (Change 1976:188), just as he had, in an earlier letter, claimed that in his work "toute vérité acquise ne naissait que de la perte d'une impression qui, ayant étincelé, s'était consumée." (Corr.I:245-246). In other poems, objects or scenes are not directly mentioned but merely implied or alluded to in analogies of which only the second term is given in the text (cf Davies 1955:328); thus the sunset in 'Victorieusement fui...' (OC:68) is only metaphorically indicated by a series of diverse terms implying richness of colour ("Tison de gloire, sang par écume, or, tempête!", later summarized in the phrase "tout cet éclat", which in the first version of the poem still read "tout ce coucher": the change highlights the deliberate obscurity). This procedure is in line with Mallarmé's general advice to include in a poem nothing but "l'horreur de la forêt, ou le tonnerre muet épars au feuillage; non le bois intrinsèque et dense des arbres." (OC:365-366).

A somewhat wider context to these devices is provided by the reference to the power of suggestion which Mallarmé attributes to correspondences and interrelations between phenomena: it is the "relation entre les images exacte" which calls forth "un tiers aspect fusible et clair présenté à la divination" (OC:365). The emphasis is thus placed on analogies between things rather than on the things themselves:

L'existence littéraire, hors une, vraie, qui se passe à réveiller la présence, au-dedans, des accords et significations, a-t-elle lieu, avec le monde; que comme inconvénient- (OC:405)

...l'acte poétique consiste à voir soudain qu'une idée se fractionne en un nombre de motifs égaux par valeur et à les grouper; ils riment: pour sceau intérieur, leur commune mesure qu'apparente le coup final. (OC:365)

Here also lies, obviously, the basic justification for the use of

metaphor, which, for Mallarmé, has "la valeur d'une relation symétrique fondamentale"(Valéry 1957:658). In the same sense Mallarmé describes himself as "une araignée sacrée," waiting to create "aux points de rencontre de merveilleuses dentelles, que je devine."(Corr.I:225). This position, also, rejoins the earlier criticism of all those schools of realistic writing which fail to go beyond the immediately visible, and it is, predictably, in an attack on Naturalism that Mallarmé states categorically that "les choses existent, nous n'avons qu'à saisir les rapports; et ce sont les fils de ces rapports qui forment les vers et les orchestres."(OC:871).

Another aspect of the attempt to create an impression of insubstantiality and indeterminacy appears in the tendency to deparicularization; this is usually most conspicuous when the final versions of some poems are compared with earlier drafts. In the various reworkings of parts of 'Igitur'(OC:433-451), the central character develops - or disintegrates - from a recognizable human figure into something approaching an abstract consciousness, in a setting which grows increasingly vague, sparse and symbolic (Davies 1953:53). In the second section of 'L'après-midi d'un faune', the phrase "une blancheur éparsée de troupeau" (referring to sheep, presumably) was later altered into the more obscure "une blancheur animale au repos"(OC:1451,51). In most cases, however, deparicularization is accompanied by compression and ellipsis. Thus the poem 'Sainte Cécile jouant sur l'aile d'un chérubin' was later soberly renamed 'Sainte', less particular and less descriptive. The opening lines of 'Le pitre châtié'(OC:31,1416; originally called: 'A une putain') read at first:

Pour ses yeux, - pour nager dans ces lacs, dont les quais  
Sont plantés de beaux cils qu'un matin bleu pénètre, ( )

and were subsequently changed into:

Yeux, lacs avec ma simple ivresse de renaître  
Autre que l'histrion qui du geste évoquais ( )

thus dropping the descriptive metaphor and isolating the word "Yeux" which, with the changed title, loses its particular referent and thus considerably widens its semantic and symbolic range. Similarly, the phrase "Un vent mêlé de cendres" in the first draft of 'Le guignon'(OC:28,1410) became "Un noir vent", a metaphor with an immense connotative potential.

The frequent use of 'idiosyncratic' symbols can also be understood as functional in this context. Mallarmé's symbolism, as H. Friedrich (1956:119) points out, is largely autarchic: either purely personal, or derived from a relatively young tradition (Poe, Baudelaire). Naturally, this private symbolism is extremely difficult to penetrate or gauge (studies of particular symbol clusters include Weber 1960:224ff, and Davies 1959): each text is, as it were, continually traversed by symbolic or otherwise allusive strata, and the borderline between the referential use of a term, its traditionally and its privately symbolic meaning is often - deliberately - vague, so that the reader is always kept suspended, in a state of perpetual hesitation and uncertainty as to the semantic and symbolic depth of particular terms (this point will be further illustrated in the third section of this chapter). It is important, however, that this recourse to an idiosyncratic symbolism is located in the context of Transposition, i.e. of referential insubstantiality and indirectness.

Grammatical ambiguity in Mallarmé's poems can be subsumed under two categories: lexical and syntactic. In 'Les mots anglais' Mallarmé observes that "Si la vie s'alimente de son propre passé, ou d'une mort continuelle, la Science retrouvera ce fait dans le langage"(OC:901); in 'Diptique' he also ironically notes that "les mots ont plusieurs sens, sinon on s'entendrait toujours," and he distinguishes between the current meaning of a word and the effect derived from "la fréquentation des livres du passé (), si cet effet s'éloigne de celui qu'il nous fait de nos jours"(OC:852). Lexical ambiguity, then, will often be the result of oblique puns involving the etymology of particular words. Thus in 'L'Azur', the words "aterrant" (in line 6: "un remords atterrante") and "hagard" (in "quelle nuit hagarde", line 7) appear to bring out their accepted current meaning as well as their etymological sense (namely 'attached to the earth' and 'looking like a wild animal', respectively); this speculation is corroborated by the presence of compatible senses in various other words in the text and by the semantic field generated by the poem as a whole (Guedj 1976:48). Similarly, in 'Le tombeau d'Edgar Poe' (OC:70), the word "désastre" (line 12) plays on its etymological link with 'astre' (Friedrich 1956:105), and hence on the whole symbolic range of that term in Mallarmé's work (especially the associations of 'astre' with the sun, brightness, life).

In other, at times more arguable cases, the text seems to suggest a number of properly unexpressed terms on the basis of phonological similarity and semantic relevance. This applies to the anagrams which J. Kristeva reads into the sentence "Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard" (Kristeva, 'Sémanalyse et production de sens', in Greimas 1972:207-234, esp. 230ff; but the results remain disputable, as J. Culler 1975:246ff shows). In the poem beginning with the lines:

Surgi de la croupe et du bond  
D'une verrerie éphémère () (OC:74)

it seems justified however (since the object in question is a vase) to read the words 'coupe' and 'fond' alongside "croupe" and "bond" (Friedrich 1956:105).

Lexical ambiguity cannot be isolated, for obvious reasons, from the general semantic construct which is the poem. The development of several isotopies <sup>(8)</sup> in the same text, then, creates a semantic polyvalence which plays on the paradigmatic as well as the syntagmatic structure of the text. Thus the sonnet 'Salut' (OC:27), as F. Rastier ('Système des isotopies', in Greimas 1972:80-105) reads it, contains two clearly discernible isotopies, one associated with the semantic field of 'banquet', the other with 'navigation'; given these two levels of reading, a number of words in the poem reveal themselves as highly ambiguous, i.e. as belonging to both semantic fields (starting with the title 'Salut' itself). Considering, however, the coherence and the self-reflexive nature of Mallarmé's poetry as a whole, the presence of a third, latent, and almost entirely metaphoric isotopy becomes evident, namely that associated with 'writing'; and it is only when all three isotopies are recognized that the maximum number of sememes has been accounted for <sup>(9)</sup>.

Mallarmé's treatment of syntax, as has often been observed, is subtle and complex. This is already obvious in the predilection for long and involved sentence constructions; in a letter discussing the first drafts of 'Hérodiade', Mallarmé makes mention of "une phrase de vingt-deux vers, tournant sur un seul verbe, et encore très effacé la seule fois qu'il se présente." (quoted in Mondor 1941:196). Similarly, the sixteen lines that make up the poem 'Sainte' hinge on a single, unobtrusive copula ("Est", line 5). Grammatical analyses of the poems also show a marked preference for substantives or substantive categories over verbs (Scherer 1947:147; Kristeva 1974:274). In general, of course, syntax should not be dissociated

from the poetic structure as such, and Mallarmé emphasizes that "la Science" always consists of Grammar plus Rhetoric (OC:852): the syntactic complexity is intentional and purposeful in the over-all poetic composition. In a reported conversation Mallarmé describes himself as being "profondément et scrupuleusement syntaxier" (Mondor 1941:507), explaining the intricacy of his syntactic constructions as the result of a practice of purification, reduction and condensation (and already in a letter of 1865 he wondered if he had not "exagéré plutôt l'amour de la condensation?" - Corr.I:155).

The immediate effect of the interplay between syntactic complexity and calculated verse arrangement is one of defamiliarization and estrangement: the reader perceives words which appear

...indépendamment de la suite ordinaire, projetés, en parois de grotte, tant que dure leur mobilité ou principe, étant ce qui ne se dit pas du discours: prompts, tous, avant extinction, à une réciprocité de feux distante ou présentée de biais comme contingence. (OC:386)

Syntax thus becomes a balanced, contrapuntal artifact ("...quelque équilibre supérieur, à balancement prévu d'inversions" - ibid.); objections to the full exploitation of syntactic possibilities are rejected on the grounds that the convoluted constructions only show "la Langue, dont voici l'ébat." (ibid.). The ultimate consequence of this approach is, needless to say, the single sentence of 'Un coup de dés', where the text, typographically fragmented and dispersed, is built around a central "fil conducteur latent" (OC:455); as a result, its 'constitutive syntagms' become themselves "sémantiquement et syntaxiquement polyvalents" (Kristeva 1974:271).

The syntactic structure (in correlation with the poetic structure), then, allows the creation of a network of paradigmatic symmetries and contrasts (- bearing out Jakobson's definition of the poetic function as the projection of the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection onto the axis of combination; Jakobson 1963:220). These internal mirrorings and reflections, clearly, enhance the break-up of the ordinary referential aspect of individual words, and as such this self-contained structural complexity means a negation of ordinary language as well as of 'le Hasard' (Abastado 1970:44: "Nier l'usage, c'est encore, dans la pensée critique de Mallarmé, 'abolir le hasard'"). Mallarmé's syntax is thus turned inward and outward at the same time: on the basis of paradigmatic associations and oppositions it creates the space where not only words converge and recall one another, but

where also the semantic polyvalence of individual words acquires its widest and most functional range. The reading process, consequently, is no longer linear and automatic, but becomes a tortuous progression, a series of projections, conjectures, expectations and reversals:

L'hésitation, pourtant, de tout découvrir brusquement ce qui n'est pas encore, tisse, par pudeur, avec la surprise générale, un voile. (OC:382)

This 'veil' (which is not to be confused with obscurity: Mallarmé, whether serious or ironic, repeatedly rejected the charge of obscurity; cf. Mondor 1941:645) makes of reading a gradual discovery, a tentative activity of relating and discarding possibilities: a practice ("Lire - Cette pratique -"; OC:386-387).

Yet, in all this, syntax remains the "pivot () à l'intelligibilité" (OC:385) of the poem, although Mallarmé is quick to point out that this 'conceptual' or 'discursive' intelligibility is by no means the only one which the poet observes: syntax offers barely the "vaine couche suffisante d'intelligibilité que lui s'oblige, aussi, à observer, mais pas seule." (OC:383), and is necessarily supplemented by the general poetic structure, from the phonemic arrangement of the single line to the organization of the 'Book'.

Mallarmé's whole concept and use of syntax, then, appears to be fundamentally paradoxical and ambiguous in itself. Whereas 'ordinary' syntax is self-effacing (thus also being without informative value; cf. Lotman 1972b:111) and tends to reduce the distractions of polysemy, Mallarmé's syntax presents itself as "un travail de mosaïque point rectiligne" (OC:1026), as a "chiffrement mélodique tue, de ces motifs qui composent une logique" (OC:648). Its compliance with grammatical rules, in other words, is merely a token gesture, ironic and deceptive: instead, it establishes its own logic of the discontinuous, in accordance with the "primitives foudres de la logique" (OC:386). Mallarmé, as H. Weinrich (1968:33) observes, sacrifices syntax to semantics, whereby individual words retain the "Bedeutungsfülle" they have in isolation. Together with this paradoxical enhancement of polysemy, the very intricacy of the syntactic structure disrupts the referential nature of ordinary discourse:

Ce à quoi nous devons viser surtout est que, dans le poème, les mots - qui sont déjà assez eux pour ne plus recevoir d'impression du dehors - se reflètent les uns sur les autres jusqu'à paraître ne plus avoir leur couleur propre, mais n'être que les transitions d'une gamme. (Corr.I:234)



As a result, the syntactic framework becomes the space where Transposition can manifest itself (Abastado 1970:44), i.e. where transformation of referentiality into musical and connotative discourse (as "l'air ou chant sous le texte"-OC:387) can come into force. Thus, in the structural opacity and semantic polyvalence of the text, the basically linguistic nature of the principle of Transposition becomes again apparent, while it is also clear that the ultimate justification for Mallarmé's peculiar treatment of syntax lies firmly in the transcendental nature of his aesthetic.

It was pointed out above that Mallarmé's syntax cannot be dissociated from the formal poetic structure of the text; on this formal level too the concept of Transposition determines the main principles of structuration. Mallarmé's observations on poetic composition range from the isolated letter to the book of verse (and eventually to the 'Book': "Le Livre"), and pass logically into considerations on the notions of impersonality and anonymity.

Mallarmé, as is well known, subscribes to the view (generally rejected by post-Saussurean linguistics) that 'letters' (phonemes) have an inherent meaning, and his speculations on language, such as those in 'Les mots anglais' and the notes in 'Diptique', look forward to the day when

...la Science, possédant le vaste répertoire des idiomes jamais parlés sur la terre, écrira l'histoire des lettres de l'alphabet à travers tous les âges et quelle était presque leur absolue signification, tantôt devinée, tantôt reconnue par les hommes, createurs des mots (). (OC:921)

Thus he sees for example the letter 's' as "la lettre analytique; dissolvante et disséminante par excellence"(OC:855), and elsewhere: "S, seule, n'a presque pas d'autre sens que celui très net de placer, d'asseoir, ou, tout au contraire, de chercher."(OC:947); combinations of letters, clearly, lead to some reciprocal absorption and hence to more complex meanings. Apart from this, letters and the sounds they represent are, in a poem, also the basic units in the musical organization of the line, and some of Mallarmé's comments in this respect are particularly subtle (10).

The individual word is, by and large, granted relatively little attention: it appears to be regarded essentially as a knot of relations, liable, on the one hand, to be broken up into its phonemic components, and, on the other, always integrated in a larger

syntagmatic structure and in the line. The line itself, then, stands halfway between the letter and the volume: the twenty-four letters of the alphabet are subjected to a "transfiguration en le terme surnaturel qu'est le vers"(OC:646), while at the same time the line is considered to be the "dispensateur, ordonnateur du jeu des pages, maître du livre"(OC:375). Roughly speaking, the construction of the individual line, as well as the skilful combination of lines, serves essentially the same purpose as the syntactic structure in the context of Transposition and the neutralization of referentiality. This is clearly expressed in the final paragraph of 'Crise de vers':

Le vers qui de plusieurs vocables refait un mot total, neuf, étranger à la langue et comme incantatoire, achève cet isolement de la parole: niant, d'un trait souverain, le hasard demeuré aux termes malgré l'artifice de leur retrempe alternée en le sens et la sonorité, et vous cause cette surprise de n'avoir oui jamais tel fragment ordinaire d'élocution, en même temps que la reminiscence de l'objet nommé baigne dans une neuve atmosphère. (OC:368)

It is also the construction of the line as a 'rhythmico-syntactic' or 'rhythmico-semantic' complex (cf.O.Brik, 'Contributions to the Study of Verse Language', in Matejka and Pomorska 1971:117-125) which constitutes "la seule dialectique du Vers"(OC:332) and shapes the whole line into a "trait incantatoire"(OC:400). Rhyme is equally functional in this respect, in a double sense: as a formal marker it indicates the ritualistic nature of the poem as magic circle ("...on ne dénierait au cercle que perpétuellement ferme, ouvre la rime une similitude avec les ronds, parmi l'herbe, de la fée ou du magicien."-OC:400); and, in its semantic aspects ("...en créant les analogies des choses par les analogies des sons"-OC:854)<sup>(11)</sup>, it contributes to the pattern of internal reflections between words and thus to the polysemic character of the text. In other words, as H. Tiedemann-Bartels (1971:126) puts it: "Aus den einander zugewandten Wortentsprechungen und ihren sinnlichen Anklängen löst sich die Nichtidentität der Worte mit jedwedem Genannten." The interplay between the formal word-arrangement and the syntactic structure thus leads to defamiliarization and the destruction of the 'extra-textual' referentiality of even the most ordinary words; precisely on the use of everyday words, Mallarmé comments:

Je n'emploie que ceux-là! Ce sont les mots mêmes que le Bourgeois lit tous les matins, les mêmes! Mais voilà () s'il lui arrive de les retrouver en tel vieux poème il ne les comprend plus! C'est qu'ils ont été écrits par un poète. (quoted in Mondor 1941:488)

On the whole, then, the musical ('incantatory') structure of the line stands clearly in the service of the opacity of the signifier, the tendency to polysemy, allusion and 'insubstantiality' as characteristic modalities of Transposition; the point is in fact made by Mallarmé himself in a letter of 1885:

...plus nous étendons la somme de nos impressions et les rarefions, que d'autre part, avec une vigoureuse synthèse d'esprit, nous groupions tout cela dans des vers marqués, forts, tangibles et inoubliables. (Corr.II:286).

Beyond the line lies the prospect of the 'Book'; the individual poem, like the word, appears to be regarded in this context rather as a transitional entity. The book (whether spelled with a capital or not) is described as the "expansion totale de la lettre"(OC:380), and its composition begins with any combination of words ("...la fabrication du livre () commence, dès une phrase"-ibid.). In the autobiographical letter to Verlaine ('Autobiographie';OC:661-665) Mallarmé rejects the designation of "album" or "recueil" ("...ce mot *a* condemnatoire d'Album"): The Book is necessarily a structured and premeditated whole, and hence, again, a negation of accidental inspiration or chance: it is "...un livre qui soit un livre, architectural et prémédité, et non un recueil des inspirations de hasard fussent-elles merveilleuses."(OC:663). The reference, however, is here clearly to the 'Livre' (with capital: 'l'OEuvre'), and the relative unimportance of the individual poem is then also apparent in the view, expressed with increasing conviction in the later essays, that the 'volume of verse', in fact any piece of writing, in some way prefigures and foreshadows the final Book, conceived as the 'Grand OEuvre'.

In this conception, the Book constitutes the absolute, definitive text, and acts as the supreme instrument of Transposition: it should "instituer un jeu, on ne sait, qui confirme la fiction"(OC:380), and is the "mental instrument par excellence"(OC:335). Yet on the whole it is clear that, like the idea of a 'notion pure', the concept of the Book remains ultimately a purely theoretical projection, fictitious and utopian. Although Mallarmé is convinced that there can be but one Book (be it in many volumes) and that thinking and working towards the Book is "le seul devoir du poète et le jeu littéraire par excellence"(OC:663), the transcendental/metaphysical scope of the project precludes its realization, both in subjective

and objective terms (12). The Book, Mallarmé claims, has been attempted and, in a sense, initiated "à son insu par quiconque a écrit"(ibid.), and he himself writes only "en vue de plus tard ou de jamais"(OC:664) and "avec une patience d'alchimiste"(OC:662), persuaded that he can at best produce no more than a fragment of the Book, a 'scintillation' sufficient to prove its authenticity as project and as projection - and it is ironically appropriate that Mallarmé left behind a number of fragmentary and enigmatic notes for the Book, which, moreover, he wanted to be destroyed after his death. But the Book itself, as 'Grand OEuvre' (with all the kabbalistic and spiritualistic overtones of that term, cf. Mossop 1971:151; and it is worth bearing in mind that for Mallarmé alchemy is "le glorieux, hâtif et trouble précurseur" of aesthetics;OC:399-400), would provide the "explication orphique de la Terre"(OC:663), and hence, inversely, Mallarmé can declare without even sounding hyperbolic that "tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir à un livre"(OC:378). This implies however that the Book, as the definitive text, is also a properly infinite text (Kristeva 1974:358), and furthermore, that its construction requires the absolute transcendence of literature, i.e. its negation. The objective impossibility of writing the absolute Book, then, is perhaps best borne out by Mallarmé's last poem, 'Un coup de dés': though not itself a fragment of 'l'OEuvre', it deals with the same philosophical and aesthetic questions that govern his speculations on the conditions of existence of the Book (Davies 1953:169,179); but the poem, as O. Paz (1971:325-326) points out, proclaims the absurdity and nullity of the intent to make of it the ideal double of the universe: the poem contains its own negation - and thus exists, paradoxically, by virtue of negating itself.

The view of the Book as an 'architectural and premeditated' structure is directly related, finally, to the concepts of anonymity and impersonality. It may be possible to distinguish initially between impersonality as a philosophical notion and anonymity as an aesthetic principle, but the two concepts in fact converge and merge in practice.

The idea of anonymity and/or impersonality itself springs from different contexts. As an aesthetic principle, a form of 'objective' impersonality is already implied in Mallarmé's early (pre-1866) views, in the emphasis on technical perfection in writing and the distrust of lyrical impulses. As a philosophical concept, impersonality is, in a sense, a product of the crisis of 1866-67. In the experience

of 'le Néant' and the 'Conception pure', the individual consciousness is annihilated, and absorbed in the universal consciousness:

Je suis véritablement décomposé, et dire qu'il faut cela pour avoir une vue très - une de l'Univers! Autrement on ne sent d'autre unité que celle de sa vie. (Corr.I:249)

Given the "correlation intime de la Poésie avec l'Univers"(Corr.I:259), the notion of the poet's spiritual death, of his 'suicide', logically imposes itself <sup>(13)</sup>.

After the crisis of 1866-67, as was pointed out above, the philosophical conception which resulted from this experience becomes the basis of Mallarmé's aesthetic. Here, the 'pure' and transcendental dimension of poetry requires the elimination of all extraneous matter, including the author's subjective personality, in the context of Transposition as well as that of Structure. If the poetic product constitutes "un lieu abstrait, supérieur, nulle part situé" and wants itself "vierge de tout, lieu, temps, et personne sus"(OC:307,656), the author is relegated to the status of a "producteur" or "inspirateur" (OC:415,370), for "l'oeuvre pure implique la disparition élocutoire du poète"(OC:366). In other words, the text, starting from "le vers impersonnel ou pur"(OC:655) leads a fully objective, self-contained existence, and even the poem's underlying philosophical and other assumptions should be fully dissimulated:

Je révere l'opinion de Poe, nul vestige d'une philosophie, l'éthique ou la métaphysique ne transparaîtra; j'ajoute qu'il la faut, incluse et latente. () L'armature intellectuelle du poème se dissimule et tient - a lieu - dans l'espace qui isole les strophes et parmi le blanc du papier: significatif silence qu'il n'est pas moins beau de composer, que les vers. (OC:872)

The idea of the 'oeuvre pure' in fact implies an ideal process of purgation (for the author: "le sacrifice () relativement à sa personnalité"-OC:370), from a double point of view: not only is any trace of the author's 'lyrical presence' in the poem to be seen as a material impediment and inconvenience for ideal purity (in the same way as the 'notion pure' strives to total abstraction and non-referentiality), but, even more fundamentally and at a prior stage, the abolition of the writer's individual consciousness is a prerequisite for any artistic creation which is orientated exclusively towards the "impersonnelle magnificence"(OC:365) of the Absolute. In addition to this, the artistic structure of the text guarantees the absorption of the poet's personality in its network of internal reflections: the "ordonnance du livre de vers"(OC:366) eliminates Chance and does away with the author.

These views of impersonality and anonymity also apply, supremely, to the aesthetic of the Book. Since the scope of the Book is universal, it cannot be the venture of a single writer, although each writer contributes to it; in this respect the Book is a properly collective undertaking. At the same time the structure of the Book dispenses with the writer: the text speaks for itself and of itself ("le Texte y parlant de lui-même et sans voix d'auteur"-OC:663). And finally the (structural as well as transcendental) 'integrity' of the Book(OC:373) as such resists the intrusion, even the approach, of extraneous elements: the Book, as "cloître"(cf. Mondor 1941:728), is completely detached - a detachment, ultimately, which requires neither writer nor even reader:

Impersonnifié, le volume, autant qu'on s'en sépare comme auteur, ne réclame approche de lecteur. Tel, saché, entre les accessoires humains, il a lieu tout seul: fait, étant. (OC:372)

### 3.

The sonnet 'Ses purs ongles...' (OC:68-69) is one of Mallarmé's most celebrated poems. A reading of this text seems appropriate here, as the poem occupies a central place in his work, thematically and in relation to other major pieces.

In a letter of 18 July 1868 to Cazalis, Mallarmé comments at some length on the poem:

J'extrais ce sonnet, auquel j'avais une fois songé cet été, d'une étude projetée sur la Parole: il est inverse, je veux dire que le sens, s'il en a un (mais je me consolerais du contraire grâce à la dose de poésie qu'il renferme, ce me semble) est évocqué par un mirage interne des mots mêmes. En se laissant aller à le murmurer plusieurs fois, on éprouve une sensation assez cabbalistique.

C'est confesser qu'il est peu 'plastique' comme tu me le demandes, mais ou moins est-il aussi 'blanc et noir' que possible, et il me semble se prêter à une eau-forte pleine de Réve et de Vide.

Par exemple, une fenêtre nocturne ouverte, les deux volets attachés; une chambre avec personne dedans, malgré l'air stable que présentent les volets attachés, et dans une nuit faite d'absence et d'interrogation, sans meubles, sinon l'ébauche possible de vagues consoles, un cadre, belliqueux et agonisant, de miroir appendu au fond, avec sa réflexion, stellaire et incompréhensible, de la Grande Ourse, qui relie au ciel seul ce logis abandonné du monde.

J'ai pris ce sujet d'un sonnet nul et se réfléchissant de toutes les façons, parce que mon oeuvre est si bien préparée et hierachisée, représentant comme il le peut, l'Univers, que

je n'aurais su, sans endommager quelqu'une de mes impressions  
étagées, rien en enlever, - et aucun sonnet ne s'y rencontre.  
(Corr. I:278-279) (14).

This letter in fact refers to the first version of the sonnet (July  
1868), which should be quoted as well; in this version, it bears the  
title 'Sonnet allégorique de lui-même':

La nuit approbatrice allume les onyx  
De ses ongles au pur Crime lampadophore,  
Du Soir aboli par le vespéral Phoenix  
De qui la cendre n'a de cinéraire amphore

Sur des consoles, en le noir Salon: nul ptyx,  
Insolite vaisseau d'inanité sonore,  
Car le Maître est allé puiser l'eau du Styx  
Avec tous ses objets dont le rêve s'honore.

Et selon la croisée au nord vacante, un or  
Néfaste incite pour son beau cadre une rixe  
Fait d'un dieu qui croit emporter une nixe  
En l'obscurcissement de la glace, Décor  
De l'absence, sinon que sur la glace encor  
De scintillations le septuor se fixe. (OC:1488)

In the final version of 1887, the scene remains basically the same,  
but the title has been dropped; the description of the sunset is also  
less explicit than in the first version, while the (direct or indirect)  
references to the notions of death, absence and emptiness are more  
pronounced; the final version also contains fewer capitalized nouns,  
and they are all concentrated in the octet:

Ses purs ongles très haut dédiant leur onyx, (1)  
L'Angoisse, ce minuit, soutient, lampadophore, (2)  
Maint rêve vespéral brûlé par le Phenix (3)  
Que ne recueille pas de cinéraire amphore (4)

Sur les crédences, au salon vide: nul ptyx (5)  
Aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore, (6)  
(Car le Maître est allé puiser des pleurs au Styx (7)  
Avec ce seul objet dont le Néant s'honore). (8)

Mais proche la croisée au nord vacante, un or (9)  
Agonise selon peut-être le décor (10)  
Des licornes ruant du feu contre une nixe, (11)

Elle, défunte nue en le miroir, encor (12)  
Que, dans l'oubli fermé par le cadre, se fixe (13)  
De scintillations sitôt le septuor. (14)

Mallarmé's reference to the "mirage interne" of the words, and  
his characterization of the poem as "se réfléchissant de toutes les  
façons" lead one to expect a considerable degree of formal organization,  
on various levels. The pattern of phonological, syntactic and other  
parallels, repetitions and oppositions is indeed strongly in evidence.

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 De qui la cendre n'a de cinéraire amphore

Sur des consoles, en le noir Salon: nul ptyx,  
 Insolite vaisseau d'inanité sonore,  
 Car le Maître est allé puiser l'eau du Styx  
 Avec tous ses objets dont le rêve s'honore.

Et selon la croisée au nord vacante, un or  
 Néfaste incite pour son beau cadre une rixe  
 Faite d'un dieu qui croit emporter une nixe  
 En l'obscurcissement de la glace, Décor  
 De l'absence, sinon que sur la glace encor  
 De scintillations le septuor se fixe. (OC:1483)

In the final version of 1887, the scene remains basically the same,  
 but the title has been dropped; the description of the sunset is also  
 less explicit than in the first version, while the (direct or indirect)  
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 L'Angoisse, ce minuit, soutient, lampadophore, (2)  
 Maint rêve vespéral brûlé par le Phénix (3)  
 Que ne recueille pas de cinéraire amphore (4)

Sur les crédences, au salon vide: nul ptyx (5)  
 Aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore, (6)  
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 Agonise selon peut-être le décor (10)  
 Des licornes ruant du feu contre une nixe, (11)

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 on various levels. The pattern of phonological, syntactic and other  
 parallels, repetitions and oppositions is indeed strongly in evidence.



Thus the alliteration of lines 1-2 ("onyx/L'Angoisse, ce minuit, soutient") is echoed in the last lines ("se fixe/De scintillations sitôt le septuor"). Most conspicuous perhaps is the repetition and mutation of particular sounds in words and word groups, such as: "Aboli/bibelot/oubli", "inanité sonore/Néant s'honore" (with an obvious pun), "le décor/Des licornes", "au nord/un or/Agonise/Angoisse", "du feu/défunte", etc. As C. Abastado (1972:80) shows in pointing out such sound-combinations as "leur onyx/pleurs au Styx" or "Phénix/feu...nix", the list could, if necessary, be extended a good deal further, bearing in mind Mallarmé's tendency to "dissimuler les jeux allitératifs, que trop de saisissable extériorité trahirait jusqu'au procédé" (Corr.III:111). On a somewhat larger scale, parallels can be observed between e.g. lines 3 ("Maint rêve vespéral brûlé par le Phénix") and 11 ("Des licornes ruant du feu contre une nixe"), both referring to fire and eventual death, but with a grammatical opposition (active/passive), or between such phrases as "Elle, défunte nue en le miroir" (line 12) and "au salon vide: nul ptyx" (line 5), both of which contain references to total absence, darkness and death (more explicit in the first version: "l'obscurcissement de la glace" and "en le noir Salon: nul ptyx").

The poem as a whole clearly consists of two parts; the octet and the sestet are made up of one sentence each, linked (or opposed) by "Mais" (line 9) - a not unusual construction in Mallarmé (other poems, like 'Petit Air I' or 'Une dentelle...' are similar in this respect). The transition from stanza 1 to 2 leads from a general night scene to the interior of a room, whereas the opposite movement, from the room out into the night, occurs between stanzas 3 and 4; as O. Paz (1973:75) puts it, the quartets fold inward like a spiral into 'le Néant', while the tercets fold outward into infinity. Stanzas 1 and 3 both present scenes of lingering light; stanzas 2 and 4 are dominated by emptiness and darkness (explained by an absence at the end of stanza 2, and counteracted by an emerging presence at the end of stanza 4). Both the first and the last line of the poem offer images of distant, shimmering light. Lines 7 and 8, finally, placed exactly in the middle of the poem and separated from the rest of the text by bracketing, contain the words "Maître", "Styx", and "Néant", pivotal terms, since they suggest a reading of the poem which goes beyond the merely descriptive aspect of the midnight scene.

The rhyme-pattern of the poem also draws the reader's attention: limited to just two rhyming sounds, with an alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes which is inverted in the sestet. Both rhyming sounds dominate lines 6 ("Aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore") and 14 ("De scintillations sitôt le septuor") - lines which, incidentally, will prove to be of key significance in the poem: the final line presents the outcome of the 'solar drama' (Davies 1959), and line 6, an apposition to the curious "ptyx" (itself directly related to "le Néant" of line 8), seems to lead an existence between being and nothingness, i.e. between absence ("Aboli") or insignificance ("bibelot/inanité") and musical presence ("sonore").

The question of the "ptyx" is, clearly, the main 'lexical' problem in the poem. In a letter of 3 May 1863 to Lefébure, Mallarmé writes:

...je n'ai que trois rimes en -ix, concertez-vous pour m'envoyer le sens réel du mot ptyx, on m'assure qu'il n'existe dans aucune langue, ce que je préférerais de beaucoup afin de me donner le charme de le créer par la magie du rime... (Corr.I:274)

The most important point is here certainly that for Mallarmé the word 'ptyx' itself has no proper lexical meaning (G. Davies 1959:116 confirms that "ce mot, en français du moins, n'a aucun sens lexique"), but is conjured up by the 'magic' of rhyme; it is, consequently, supremely allusive and elusive as a term. Speculations about its meaning in the poem may take different directions. On the one hand, the 'ptyx' is associated (perhaps identified, but the colon in line 4 is in that respect ambiguous) with the amphora in the preceding line, and described in the following line as a "bibelot" ("vaisseau" in the first version). The 'ptyx' can then be understood as being the amphora itself (Davies 1959:118), or some other vase or urn (Cohn 1965:141 who also refers to a conversation between Mallarmé and R. Ghil, where Mallarmé supposedly explained the 'ptyx' as such). On the other hand, the Greek etymology of the term (of which Mallarmé, and certainly Lefébure, can hardly have been ignorant) suggests a meaning of 'fold' or 'shell' (Noulet 1940:454; Paz 1973:72), an interpretation which is supported by the fact that all the surrounding rhyme-words are derived from Greek <sup>(15)</sup>. Yet the most significant element in all this must remain the quality of the word as a pure and semantically polyvalent neologism, and the fact that the object it denotes is further described by what is easily the most 'incantatory' line of the poem; in addition, the Master's journey to the Styx also

has the allure of a ritual act, and thus the reading of the 'ptyx' as a ritual object strongly suggests itself (Paz 1973:77).

If the 'ptyx' is by far the most problematic term in the poem, its obscurity is only symptomatic of a number of other ambiguities and ambivalences in the text. Thus the word "Angoisse" (line 2) may be read as a personification of anguish as such, as a metaphor for midnight (Paz 1973:75), as referring to the 'bronze lampadophore' (Davies 1959:110) or in general to "la hantise qui pousse le poète à recréer symboliquement son Rêve"(ibid.). The "rêve" of line 3 (the equivalent of "Soir" in the first version) apparently denotes the lingering light in the room after sunset, but has also (according to Davies 1959:114) the general sense of "inspiration brute offerte au poète par la Nature". The "Phénix" (line 3; previously: "le vespéral Phoenix") clearly means the sun, but the implicit reference to the Phoenix myth substantially widens the scope of the image in that it connotes a cycle of death and rebirth; in 'Les dieux antiques' Mallarmé also speaks of the Phoenix as the "emblème égyptien de l'immortalité, sous la forme d'un oiseau qui renaît de ses cendres" (OC:1274); and as the whole sunset scene is less explicit in the second version than in the first, these connotations acquire comparatively more significance in the later text. The unicorns and the nymph (line 11) also lead a double existence, as painted or sculpted figures on the mirror-frame, and as mythical or legendary figures (16).

This level of lexical and metaphorical ambiguity, however, is supplemented by various syntactic ambivalences. Thus "ce minuit" in line 2 (not in the first version) can be regarded either as an adverbial complement, or, strictly speaking, as an apposition to "Angoisse". The relative pronoun "Que" in line 4 refers, in grammatical terms, to "Phénix", but logically also to "rêve" (since it is this 'dream' which is being burnt, so that its ashes should be gathered); the first version has here, again, an unequivocal construction. This is also true of the conjunction "Car" in line 7, which, due to the bracketing, becomes less specific in its relation to the rest of the sentence, and may explain the absence of the 'ptyx' in the room, or account for the presence of "Angoisse" (anguish in the room because the Master went to the river of death). In "défunte nue" (line 12) it is unclear which is the noun and which the adjective. In the first version, the conjunction "sinon que" (line 13) counteracts the

immediately preceding phrases only, whereas in the final version it may also be orientated to the main clause of the sentence ("un or/ Agonise"). All these syntactic ambiguities, it appears, are introduced in the final version only, and there can be little doubt that this practice is intentional. As furthermore the insertion of such vague terms like "peut-être" and "selon" (one of the vaguest prepositions in Mallarmé's poems; cf. Scherer 1947:123) indicates, the lexical and syntactic polyvalence in the poem creates, on the part of the reader, continual doubt concerning the precise semantic structure and range of the text. The poem, that is, aims in a way at "ces parages/ du vague/ en quoi toute réalité se dissout" ('Un coup de dés', -OC:475): it consciously introduces and exploits a number of 'Leerstellen', a definite 'Unbestimmtheitsbetrag' and leaves the reader in a constant 'Schwebelage' (cf. W. Iser, 'Die Appellstruktur der Texte', in Warning 1975:228-252): the result is a prolonged hesitation between various potential readings - which must at first remain ironically unresolved in the enigmatic final image of the constellation.

The thematic structure of the poem appears to revolve around the conflict between light and darkness, i.e. around "le conflit des cieux et du soleil avec les puissances de la nuit et des ténèbres" (OC:1217): the daily death and expected resurrection of the sun, corresponding to the annual cycle, constitutes "La tragédie de la nature" (OC:1169). The conflict itself also possesses a theatrical, scenic dimension (in the sense that Mallarmé saw the 'Faune' as "scénique, non possible au théâtre, mais exigeant le théâtre" - Corr.I: 166). The drama may be summarized as, first, the gradual victory of darkness, and then, at the moment of total darkness (death of light), the rebirth of a different kind of light (the constellation): shimmering, dispersed, and at an infinite distance.

This 'solar drama' is also the basic theme in the sonnets 'Victorieusement fui...' (OC:68) and 'Quand l'ombre...' (OC:67), both published in the same series as 'Ses purs ongles...', and both with similar structures. In 'Victorieusement...' the sunset is described as follows:

Victorieusement fui le suicide beau  
Tison de gloire, sang par écume, or, tempête!  
O rire si là-bas une pourpre s'apprete  
A ne tendre royal que mon absent tombeau.

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Victorieusement fui le suicide beau  
Tison de gloire, sang par écume, or, tempête!  
O rire si là-bas une pourpre s'apprete  
A ne tendre royal que mon absent tombeau.

Quoi! de tout cet éclat pas même le lambeau  
 S'attarde, il est minuit, à l'ombre qui nous fête  
 Excepté qu'un trésor presomptueux de tête  
 Verse son caresse nonchaloir sans flambeau, ()

The paradox of the sunset as death and yet not death ("suicide", but "absent tombeau"), and the contrast between final darkness at midnight and simultaneously survival of light ("Excepté...") both recall the 'ongles'-sonnet. The colour richness of the sunset, associated with criminality in the first version of 'Victorieusement...' (where the second line read: "Soupirs de sang, or meurtrier,...", which has its parallel in the "Crime lampadophore" of the first version of the 'ongles'-poem), is, however, muted and merely implied in 'Ses purs ongles...'. The other sonnet, 'Quand l'ombre...', opens with the stanzas:

Quand l'ombre menaça de la fatale loi  
 Tel vieux Rêve, désir et mal de mes vertèbres,  
 Affligé de périr sous les plafonds funèbres  
 Il a ployé son aile indubitable en moi.

Luxe, ô salle d'ébène où, pour séduire un roi  
 Se tordent dans leur mort des guirlandes célèbres,  
 Vous n'êtes qu'un orgueil menti par les ténèbres  
 Aux yeux du solitaire ébloui de sa foi.

Here also the duality of apparent but unreal death is in evidence, and pronounced with great confidence in the survival of the sun; this is confirmed in the final stanza:

L'espace à soi pareil qu'il s'accroisse ou se nie  
 Roule dans cet ennui des feux vils pour témoins  
 Que s'est d'un astre en fête allumé le génie.

Whichever reading of the ambiguous last line is preferred ('le génie s'est allumé d'un astre en fête' or 'le génie d'un astre en fête s'est allumé'), it is clear that the stars ("feux vils") function as proof (as witnesses) of the sun's survival. In an alternative - perhaps complementary - reading of this stanza (Davies 1959:65-67), the stars are symbolic witnesses of the poet's inspiration being awakened ('enflamed') by the setting sun. Both interpretations have their relevance for 'Ses purs ongles...'.

The fact, however, that in spite of the structural similarities between these sonnets, the splendour of the sunset is markedly toned down in 'Ses purs ongles...', is indicative of the different orientation of this poem: the 'ongles'-sonnet emphasizes the aspects of darkness and emptiness, and adds the peculiar dimension of 'le Néant' and of

the Master's journey to the Styx. These, in fact, are precisely the elements which approach the sonnet to 'Igitur' (OC:433-451). Relating the poem to this (unfinished) prose text will also open the way to a more adequate reading of the sonnet.

'Igitur' was begun at the end of 1869 (Mondor 1941:285-286), i.e. shortly after the first version of 'Ses purs ongles...'. In a letter of 14 November 1869 Mallarmé describes 'Igitur' as "un conte, par lequel je veux terrasser le vieux monstre de l'Impuissance, son sujet, du reste." (Corr.I:313), which recalls the above-mentioned letter of May 1868 (on the word 'ptyx') where he speaks of "l'angoisse anormale qui m'opresse" (Corr.I:274). Although 'Igitur' certainly goes beyond the 'ongles'-sonnet in its introduction of the dice-throw as the supreme act which will absorb Chance ("les dés - hasard absorbe" -OC:443) and the relation between Igitur and his ancestors (both elements which will recur in 'Un coup de dés'), the general scene presented in the two texts is strikingly similar:

Certainement subsiste une présence de Minuit. L'heure n'a pas disparu par un miroir, ne s'est pas enfouie en tentures, évoquant un ameublement par sa vacante sonorité. Je me rappelle que son or allait feindre en l'absence un joyau nul de rêverie, riche et inutile survivance, sinon que sur la complexité marine et stellaire d'une orfèvrerie se lisait le hasard infini des conjonctions. ( )

Et du Minuit demeure la présence en la vision d'une chambre du temps où le mystérieux ameublement arrête un vague frémissement de pensée, ( ). (OC:435)

Igitur himself subsequently becomes "l'heure qui doit me rendre pur" (*ibid.*), a purity which implies self-destruction (negation) and transcendence, at the precise moment (midnight: "l'unique heure", irreducible between day and night) which is outside time, which is also, in this "chambre du temps", the negation of time and place, and coincides with the double dice-throw ("Il jette les dés, le coup s'accomplit, douze, le temps (Minuit)" -OC:451). Midnight is thus the supreme, critical moment of impersonal and immaterial subsistence, the moment which negates itself and thereby allows the affirmation of the Absolute. Igitur's night, "la Nuit éternelle" (OC:436), is then also his tomb (his death), but after his departure the night will, with the help of the lingering shadows, transform itself into Eternity:

"Adieu, nuit, que je fus, ton propre sépulcre, mais qui, l'ombre survivante, se métamorphosera en Eternité." (OC:436)

Igitur himself prepares to leave the room, "ferme le livre - souffle la bougie, - de son souffle qui contenait le hasard"(OC:442 but the candle is also "la bougie de l'être, par quoi tout a été"-OC:434); he then goes:

L'heure a sonné pour moi de partir, la pureté de la glace s'établira, sans ce personnage, vision de moi - mais il emportera la lumière! - la nuit! Sur les meubles vacants, le Rêve a agonisé en cette fiole de verre, pureté, qui renferme la substance du Néant. (OC:439)

His image remains in the mirror for a while, then disappears too ("une vague figure qui disparaissait complètement dans la glace confondue"-OC:440); finally, Igitur "se couche au tombeau", and "Le Néant parti, reste le château de la pureté"(OC:443).

The "fiole de verre" (also referred to as "fiole vide, folie"-OC:443- which is echoed in the "aboli bibelot"-phrase) is obviously reminiscent of the 'ptyx' in the sonnet; so is the drama of the vacant room at midnight, Igitur's departure (self-imposed death), the conflict of darkness and light, and the sole presence in the end of the 'castle of purity' ("l'Infini s'est enfin fixé"-OC:442).

The fragmentary nature of 'Igitur' however precludes a conclusive comparison, although it is clear that the prose text is rather more complex than the sonnet. The subsequent elaboration of the 'Igitur'-theme lies probably in 'Un coup de dés' (Davies 1959:53,179). In spite of the altogether different scenery in this poem (ocean and shipwreck), the figure of the 'Maître' reappears here, and so does the image of the constellation ("le Septentrion aussi Nord/UNE CONSTELLATION/ froide d'oubli et de désuétude"-OC:477). On the whole, though, 'Un coup de dés' is already far removed from 'Ses purs ongles', in spite of the fact that one of its key sentences: "Rien n'aura eu lieu...que le lieu...excepté...peut-être...une constellation" runs exactly parallel to the thematic development of the sonnet.

Considering Mallarmé's conscious attempts to adjust his aesthetic after the years 1866-67, it is fairly evident that 'Igitur' describes in fact the drama of spiritual suicide and transcendence into an impersonal and universal consciousness, i.e. "l'acte d'abolition et de fondation de soi" (Poulet 1952:325). In the summary preceding the text, Mallarmé specifies that

Igitur descend les escaliers, de l'esprit humain, va au fond des choses: en 'absolu' qu'il est. Tombeau - cendres (pas sentiment, ni esprit) neutralité. (OC:434)



The whole story is thus essentially a drama of consciousness; Igitur himself may be identified with the human mind, or with the 'poet' (as 'Maître'; cf. OC:78,406); the room is, eminently, a mental space (Poulet 1952:327), left empty after Igitur's departure. But if this 'internalized' reading applies to 'Igitur', it also holds, by implication, for 'Ses purs ongles...': the sonnet, in a way, prefigures the drama of 'Igitur'. In that respect, as was already suggested above, the bracketed lines in the sonnet indicate the poem's philosophical and speculative dimension. The original title ("Sonnet allégorique de lui-même") implies, moreover, that the poem is basically self-centred, which, in the context of the drama of spiritual death and transcendence, must mean that it is ultimately concerned with the problem of artistic creation: as in 'Igitur', the room here is primarily a mental space; the Master's (poet's) journey to the Styx and 'le Néant' implies the abolition of individual consciousness; the darkening room becomes, in the absence of the Master, the impersonal consciousness where the objective drama of light and darkness continues (in the figures in the mirror) until, in the final expiring of all conflict (total darkness and "oubli") the room (the impersonal, universal mind) associates itself with the extra-terrestrial constellation only.

Some of the elements in the poem may then be reconsidered in this light. The 'midnight' is, clearly, not a fleeting moment but a suspended presence, a negation of ordinary time, and detached from it (Davies 1959:55): the supreme moment (with the added implicit symbolism of midnight as the double dice-throw and the 24 letters of the alphabet). Given the daily and annual cycle of the sun, midnight also has its parallel in 'midwinter', whereby winter stands for the Mallarméan season of the mind (Gengoux 1950:32,109), of "L'hiver, saison de l'art serein, l'hiver lucide" ('Renouveau', OC:34). Finally, as pointed out above, midnight in the "chambre du temps" is also the moment of total darkness (death), of the dis-individualized and universal consciousness.

The "Angoisse" in the room, between 'impuissance' and 'croyance', is then associated with poetic creativity and has positive overtones in so far as it is the constant element in the gradual darkening of the room. This anguish, however, is not - or not only - psychological, but also part of the solar rite itself, an impersonal and abstract anguish, existing independently of the poet's (the Master's) mind (Paz 1973:76).

The 'ptyx', then, is described as a sheer absence in the room, and as the only object worthy of 'le Néant'. Read as 'conch-shell', the ptyx becomes a central metaphor of transfiguration in the poem (Paz 1973:77): hollow and insignificant in itself, it remains immensely suggestive - and the poetic irony here lies obviously in the lexical meaninglessness of the word itself, which cannot but increase its connotative range, in the same way as the "aboli bibelot"-line denotes utter triviality, although its euphonic quality suggests that it is the main instrument in the poem's central ritual (emptiness and self-destruction). An additional symbolic perspective appears when the ptyx, as a musical hollow shape, is approached to the "creux néant musicien" in 'Une dentelle...' (OC:74), which refers to a mandola which is also regarded as a potential womb, i.e. as a potential creative principle ("Selon nul ventre que le sien,/ Filial on aurait pu naître"); in the same way the ptyx, the receptacle used to gather the waters of the Styx, is an essential, and essentially hollow, object for the creation of the conditions necessary for artistic creation.

The image of the constellation, finally, also grows in complexity. For Mallarmé, stars are usually symbols of disorder, 'hasard' and lack of meaning ("l'incohérent manque hautain de signification qui scintille en l'alphabet de la Nuit", OC:303; F. Coppée also noted in his diary that Mallarmé "explique le symbolisme des étoiles dont le désordre dans le firmament lui paraît l'image du hasard"-cf. Mondor 1941:329). But the constellations, as "points de clarté", are also a negation of the uniform darkness of the night (OC:359), and they further imply a particular ordering of stars, i.e. the establishment of relations between particular stars, and their separation from the undifferentiated mass of other stars. The word "septuor" itself has similar marginal connotations: that of a musical term, and the kabbalistic associations of the number seven (as 'the height of magical powers'; Mossop 1971:150). In the poem, the Great Bear constellation, though it may not have the same symbolic import as in 'Un coup de dés' (Davies 1959:130) is singled out from among the other stars as the only one to be reflected in the mirror; it is linked to the conflict between the unicorns and the nymph via the myth of Callisto (changed into a bear, and hence the name of the constellation, as Mallarmé explains in 'Les dieux antiques', OC1243);

and it marks, finally, the resolution of the conflict between light and darkness (in the pattern: thesis: sunlight; antithesis: darkness; synthesis, and transcendence: the constellation, an extra-terrestrial light). The constellation appears at midnight, i.e. at the moment of total darkness and absolute 'Néant'; this 'Néant' is associated with death (the black waters of the Styx), but also with the "obscurcissement", "absence" (first version) and "oubli" of the mirror. Mallarmé however repeatedly relates mirrors to water also: thus he speaks of a "glace de Venise, profonde comme une froide fontaine" (in 'Frisson d'hiver', OC:271), and of the "liquéfaction des miroirs"(OC:370), and the nymph's death is indeed commonly assumed to be death by drowning. This makes the strife between the mythical figures in the mirror ("ruant du feu...") also a conflict between fire and water (light and darkness, life and death), a duality which occurs in similar terms in the octet (the Phoenix and the Styx) and which is equally recalled in 'Hérodiade', where "l'eau reflète l'abandon/ De l'automne éteignant en elle son brandon" (OC:41; significantly enough, these lines read originally: "l'eau reflète l'abandon/ De la vie éteignant en elle son brandon"- quoted in Tiedemann-Bartels 1971: 80; the relation between winter and night was indicated above). In that sense, the final emergence of the constellation as a set of distant white shimmerings on a black background also symbolizes the transfiguration of the sunlight, its survival in a pure, immaterial and dispersed form. The constellation is reflected in a mirror which is both black and empty (in that it can only reflect), qualities which are both associated, in lines 7 and 8, with death (Styx and 'Néant'): the seven stars, in other words, emerge directly from the negation of light and life, and negate (transcend) in their turn that negation.

If then at this stage the poem is seen as an allegory of itself (as the original title suggests), it follows from the logic of the text that the constellation stands for the possibility of artistic creation: the total annihilation of individual consciousness means the creation of a totally abstract and impersonal consciousness, which is the precondition of pure art. The line of development leading to the final image (from "Angoisse" via "Néant" and "oubli" to the "septuor") implies a double movement: the Master's departure, and the abandoned room (as mental space) losing consciousness of itself; only after this double negation, the room as a vacant space outside space and

time - at midnight - begins to reflect the Universe (Infinity, Eternity) in the image of the constellation; the moment of total "oubli" finds its obverse in a constellation which "relie au ciel seul ce logis abandonné du monde", i.e. in the establishment of the "correlation intime de la Poesie avec l'Univers".

Yet, in spite of this, the constellation remains somehow enigmatic: it is clearly the climax of the poem, the positive term after a complex process of negation, but is itself left unexplained; and in his letter of 18 July 1868 Mallarmé indeed speaks of the "réflexion, stellaire et incompréhensible, de la Grande Ourse". The progressive abstraction in the poem thus results in a positive term which remains itself largely impenetrable, and hence supremely polyvalent and suggestive in its incomprehensibility, as "... le rien de mystère, indispensable, qui demeure, exprimé, quelque peu"(OC:370). As such, and as a distant glimmer, the constellation occupies the same place as the 'notion pure' which poetry can only postulate and approach via a process of consistent negation - including negation of itself.

In that respect the sonnet also bears a resemblance to Mallarmé's early work, where creative impotence became both subject-matter and pretext for writing, so that sterility, in a way, justified the practice of poetry. The sonnet, here, cannot itself be 'pure', but it can describe the conditions for the creation of pure poetry. In his linguistic 'Notes' of 1869, Mallarmé defines the task of poetic language as "la visée du Langage à devenir beau, et non à exprimer mieux que tout, le Beau"(OC:853); language manifests itself as "Parole" and "Ecriture", behind which lies the abstract notion of "le Verbe", outside time and space (OC:854), and Mallarmé warns: "Ne jamais confondre le Langage avec le Verbe"(OC:853). In the sonnet, then, the constellation, as the final and abstract transcendence, stands to the dying light as "le Verbe" stands to "le Langage". But apart from this, the constellation also has a more direct, though more paradoxical function. If the sonnet describes the conditions of artistic creation, this implies that it ultimately describes, or enacts, its own creation, and from that point of view the constellation, as the isolation of a particular group of stars from among countless others, offers the appropriate analogy - or allegory - for the text of the poem itself, for its words selected and isolated from among

the "mots de la tribu". The poem, like the constellation, arises out of a void of darkness, negation and self-negation; the Master's absence is also Mallarmé's own withdrawal from his work; the complex incomprehensibility of the constellation reflects, ironically, the suggestive meaninglessness of the poem, and both are directly, though inversely, related to 'le Néant'.

Read thus, as a perfect 'metapoem', the sonnet embodies Mallarmé's comments on Transposition and Structure, and bears out his claim that it is "un sonnet nul et se réfléchissant de toutes les façons": the text is self-reflexive in the double sense of the word: its parts reflect and echo one another, the mirror reflects the ordered universe, the poem as microcosm reflects allegorically the transcendental macrocosm and is at the same time self-contemplation, reflection on its own existence, on its own coming into being and on the conditions of artistic creation in general; turned inward and outward simultaneously, it again reflects its own structure.

## NOTES

- (1) The following abbreviations are used in this chapter:  
OC = Stéphane Mallarmé, OEuvres complètes. Ed.H.Mondor & G.Jean-Aubry. Paris, Gallimard, 1945.  
Corr.I-IV = S.Mallarmé, Correspondance, I-IV. Ed.H.Mondor. Paris, Gallimard, 1959, 1965, 1969, 1973.  
Change 1976 = S. Mallarmé, 'Les impressionnistes et Edouard Manet', Change 26-27, 1976:178-190 (translations of the English original of 1876; not in OC).
- (2) The social origins and ideological implications of these views, important as they may be, cannot be discussed here. They are studied in, among others, Sollers 1968, Tiedemann-Bartels 1971, and Kristeva 1974. The latter two also point out some of the differences between French and German Symbolism in this respect (Mallarmé/George) (cf. Tiedemann-Bartels 1971:11-35; Kristeva 1974:429ff).  
 Also, Mallarmé's indebtedness to the Romantics, Poe, Baudelaire and the Parnassians is taken for granted and not further discussed (the question is considered in detail in Mossop 1971).
- (3) The use of notions like 'severity', 'chastity' or 'virginity' in Mallarmé's early writings is itself worthy of note. They all, clearly, denote the purity of art - in all its meanings. Thus Mallarmé also speaks of the musical score, as "le missal, vierge" (OC:257), and he refers to "ces idées severes que m'a léguées mon grand maître Edgar Poe" (Corr.I:104). Needless to say, both Hérodias and Igitur are also virgins.
- (4) The term 'structuration' is used here and in other chapters to denote, first, the (structure of the) text as a "pratique signifiante", i.e. as "un processus de production de sens" or as "un appareil qui produit et transforme le sens, avant que ce sens soit déjà fait et mis en circulation"(cf. J. Kristeva, 'Problèmes de la structuration du texte', in *Tel Quel* 1968:197ff); secondly (from the point of view of writing), the process of the actual composition (the 'structuring') of the text; and thirdly (from the point of view of reading), the "fonctionnement globalisant du texte", whereby the text is seen not so much as a Jakobsonian 'totalité en fonctionnement' but as an active "totalisation en fonctionnement"(cf. Delas & Filliolet 1973:43ff,95). In all three cases, it will be noted, the term 'structuration' indicates 'structure' in its dynamic (productive, shaping, active) aspects.
- (5) Not surprisingly, Mallarmé's criticism of Realists and Parnassians alike springs from the observation that both lack Transposition and thus remain superficial and unimaginative, because only concerned with materiality and appearances. Realism, according to Mallarmé, "cherchait, en effet, à s'imposer à l'esprit par les descriptions vivantes des choses telles qu'elles se présentent, à l'exclusion brutale de toute imagination intempestive." (Change 1976:178). And the basic error of the Parnassians consisted in "la prétension d'enfermer, dans l'expression, la matière des objets." (OC:665).

- (6) The term 'foregrounding' is used here and in other chapters in the Formalist/Structuralist sense. Thus J. Tynjanov speaks of "la promotion d'un groupe de facteurs au dépens d'un autre"(cf. 'La notion de construction', in Todorov 1965:114-119); and B. Havránek defines foregrounding as "the use of the devices of the language in such a way that this use itself attracts attention and is perceived as uncommon, as deprived of automatization, as deautomatized." (quoted in Bruns 1974:78).
- (7) The tendency to silence and suicide in Mallarmé's literary theory and practice has, of course, often been noted, from R. Barthes (1967:81) to O. Paz (1971:325ff). Commenting on 'Un coup de des', Paz also points out the paradox in this 'suicidal' tendency: although 'Un coup...' is "el poema de la nulidad del acto de escribir", it is also, and for this reason, a profoundly critical poem. This observation applies to Mallarmé's work as a whole: poetry, the only possibility for language to identify with the Absolute, negates itself in the act of writing (which is never 'pure') - except if the poem is at the same time a criticism of that attempt; poetry, then, exists as "una afirmación condicional".
- (8) The term 'isotopy' is derived from A.J. Greimas and denotes a level of coherence which results from the repetition of particular semes (cf. Culler 1975:79ff). F. Rastier extends the notion of isotopy to refer simply to "toute itération d'une unité linguistique" (in Greimas 1972:82).
- (9) A very similar example is in fact A. Gill's reading (Gill 1955) of 'Au seul souci de voyager...' (OC:72), a sonnet which is structurally akin to 'Salut' and in which a similarly 'dissimulated' meaning may be suspected in the various allusions to Chateaubriand.
- (10) To quote just one example: commenting in a letter of 1876 on a French poem by Swinburne, Mallarmé suggests that the line "Pour recueillir rien qu'un souffle d'amour" should be altered into "Pour y cueillir rien..."; the proposed change is justified, he argues, "...a cause de l'équilibre assez heurcux dans le vers de deux monosyllabes y et rien et du moins grand nombre de fois qu'apparaîtra de suite la lettre r appuyée notamment sur une voyelle muette e dans fé après avoir servi de finale à pour." (Corr.II:98).
- (11) The semantic impact of sound-repetition has, of course, often been noted. Thus R. Jakobson points out that

...ce serait commettre une simplification abusive que de traiter la rime simplement du point de vue du son. La rime implique nécessairement une relation sémantique entre les unités qu'elle lie ().

and, in general:

En poésie, toute similarité apparente dans le son est évaluée en termes de similarité et/ou de dissimilarité dans le sens. (Jakobson 1963:233,240)

Much the same point is made also by J. Lotman:

Die Natur des Reims liegt in der Annäherung des Verschiedenen und in der Aufdeckung des Unterschieds im Ähnlichen. Der Reim ist seiner Natur nach dialektisch. (Lotman 1972b:186)

Lotman also highlights, in general, the semantic impact of the repetition of phonologically similar but structurally (e.g. syntactically) different elements:

Die zahlreichen Beziehungen von Parallelismus zwischen den Worten im poetischen Text betonen nicht nur das zwischen ihnen Gemeinsame, sondern stellen auch die semantische Spezifik eines jeden von ihnen heraus. Daraus geht hervor, dass die Verknüpftheit der Worte im poetischen Text nicht zur Verwischung, sondern zur Hervorhebung ihrer semantischen 'Isolierung' führt. (Lotman 1972a:134)

- (12) The (subjective and objective) impossibility of writing the definitive Book - or, for that matter, of attaining the 'notion pure' - is of course also related, from a different angle, to the idea, commonly held among Symbolists and 'Decadents' of the period, that the (material) realization of a projected ideal, even if it were possible, would imply its desecration. Thus Villiers' Axel prefers death to the consummation of his love; Huysmans' Des Esseintes cancels his planned visit to London after daydreaming about it. The Cuban 'modernista' poet Julian del Casal would not, for all his love and admiration for Paris, destroy his illusions by visiting it. In the same style, Mallarmé once remarked: "Je crois que, si j'avais un parc merveilleux, j'irais toujours m'asseoir sur le banc de pierre extérieur, celui qui est de l'autre côté du mur, de la porte." (cf. Mondor 1941:731).
- (13) The idea of spiritual death as a condition for artistic creation will also be discussed in the third section of this chapter. Interesting to note is that Mallarmé uses the same image to characterize the poet's position with regard to society: the poet, "dans une époque comme celle-ci où il est en grève devant la société", isolates himself from the world, "pour sculpter son propre tombeau" (OC:870,869). And elsewhere:
- Le droit à rien accomplir d'exceptionnel ou manquant aux agissements vulgaires, se paie, chez quiconque, de l'omission de lui et on dirait de sa mort comme un tel. Exploits, il les commet dans le rêve, pour ne gêner personne. (OC:370)
- The ironic inversion (related to the 'idealist reversal' mentioned earlier) appears when he blandly declares in the 'Autobiographie' that the poet contents himself "de temps en temps à envoyer aux vivants sa carte de visite, stances ou sonnet, pour n'être point lapidé d'eux, s'il le soupçonnent de savoir qu'ils n'ont pas lieu." (OC:664)
- (14) The "étude projetée sur la Parole" to which Mallarmé refers is in all probability the collection of 'Notes' in OC:851-854, written at the end of 1869. These 'Notes' appear to have been part of his preliminary linguistic research in view of a proposed dissertation for a university degree; he later abandoned the project (cf. OC:1629-1630).
- (15) A further reading of 'ptyx' as 'golden vase' is suggested by A.C. Chisholm, who refers to a Larousse entry on the legend of Iris who "allait puiser l'eau du Styx dans un vase d'or" (Chisholm 1973:247), a phrasing which recalls the first version of the poem. Chisholm rejects, without much argument, the reading of



'ptyx' as 'seashell', as well as his own earlier interpretation of it as 'inkstand'.

Still another possible reading is offered by M.-J. Lefebvre (1967-68:83): apart from 'fold' or 'shell', the Greek word 'ptyx' also has the meaning of 'writing tablet', and hence, Lefebvre argues, it may mean the paper on which the sonnet is written, the sonnet itself, and poetry as such (since "le seul objet dont le Néant s'honore est la poésie"); however suggestive this is, it seems hardly possible to relate this view in any functional way to the over-all structure and development of the poem.

- (16) Here also speculation may go a good deal further. In 'Les dieux antiques' Mallarmé refers to "l'histoire de Callisto, éveillant le courroux d'Artemis, et changée en ourse. La constellation connue à présent sous le nom latinisé d'Arctus ou d'Arcturus, a tiré ce nom de la racine qui veut dire: briller." (OC:1243). The "nixé", in relation with the constellation of the Great Bear, may thus be associated with the Callisto myth (Davies 1959:136). On the other hand, the "licornes" may have kabbalistic associations (Mossop 1971:160). The suggestion that both the unicorns and the nymph also have overtones of Christian symbolism (Gengoux 1950:56) seems unlikely, not only in the context of the poem, but also in view of Mallarmé's aesthetic as a whole.

## CHAPTER 2

T.E. Hulme's Mosaic

A first group of Modernist writers to be considered may consist of T.E. Hulme, Georg Heym, and Guillaume Apollinaire; they are among the first to break with the Symbolist aesthetic canon, developing a new poetic in the years between, roughly, 1908 and 1911.

This chapter, then, is mainly concerned with Hulme's views on the nature and requirements of poetic language. The first section summarizes the broader theoretical underpinnings (derived from W. Worringer and H. Bergson) of these views. The second section discusses Hulme's distinction between prose and poetry, and his conception of the modalities of poetry, briefly contrasting some of these with corresponding notions in the Symbolist poetic. The third section, finally, looks at three of Hulme's own poems.

1.

Right in the opening paragraphs of his Speculations <sup>(1)</sup> T.E. Hulme outlines the philosophical task he set himself:

One of the main achievements of the nineteenth century was the elaboration and universal application of the principle of continuity. The destruction of this conception is, on the contrary, an urgent necessity of the present. (S:3)

The central ideas underlying his views on the world and on language are then explained in subsequent pages in terms of the postulate that reality is essentially discontinuous, and that man's response to this fundamental discontinuity - his acceptance or his refusal of it - determines the basic attitudes that have shaped the world's intellectual and cultural history.

Hulme, somewhat oddly combining ideas derived from Bergson, Worringer and Pascal (cf. Kermode 1971a:136; A.R. Jones 1960:39), distinguishes three main spheres, or regions, of reality. There is first the inorganic world of inanimate matter; then the organic or vital world of living things and creatures; and finally the sphere of ethical and religious values. The second sphere, in which man's existence and activities are located, is seen, on the whole, as a "confused muddy substance"(S:6), a flux whose characteristic is

relativity and, hence, fluidity, impermanence, and mediocrity. Only the first and the third sphere are described as having an absolute character; in other words, absolute values and the idea of perfection are conceivable in these spheres only. Key-words in Hulme's description of these two regions are "permanence", "rigidity", "objectivity", "intensity". The separation between the various spheres is total; no continuity or transition whatsoever exists between them; they are and remain divided by unbridgeable chasms.

In the same way as he posits this radical discontinuity in reality, Hulme then distinguishes between two fundamentally different attitudes towards the world: the humanist and the religious attitude (S:47ff). These attitudes, or 'ideologies' as he also calls them (S:50), are, likewise, incompatible and mutually exclusive: the difference between them, like the divisions separating the three spheres of existence, is not one of degree, but of kind.

The religious attitude, according to Hulme, consists in a clear awareness of discontinuity: it accepts the impossibility of man's attaining the perfection and the absolute and objective values of the ethical sphere (S:62). The religious man resigns himself to being limited and imperfect; his awareness of these limitations and imperfections is symbolized in the doctrine of original sin. All man can do, consequently, is, without hope of success, strive to come to terms with his relative insignificance by adopting rules of conduct which mirror the values of the ethical sphere, i.e. by subordinating himself to dogma, order, and (political as well as ethical) discipline. (S:47,51).

Humanism, on the other hand, is regarded as "the highest expression of the vital"(S:8). It denies discontinuity, ignores the absolute supremacy of the ethical sphere and refuses to resign itself to permanent imperfection. It has adopted the belief that 'life' is the source, and rational man the centre and measure of all things; the humanist attitude, therefore, leads to an anthropocentric philosophical outlook and an anthropomorphic artistic expression (S:54). It is an attitude of optimism and self-confidence (S:80,88) and it incorporates a reassuring faith in human progress and limitless expansion, allowing man to invade the ethical zone, hoping for the ultimate perfection.

In Hulme's view, however, humanism is a fundamentally false attitude (S:55): in whatever form it manifests itself (and Hulme mentions as examples: "Romanticism in literature, Relativism in ethics, Idealism in philosophy"-S:10), it blurs the strict delineation between the spheres (S:10,48), and thus its expansionism makes it a flat and messy attitude; its optimism is superficial and insipid (S:80), because based on a purely illusory self-confidence. As the main product of the humanist attitude Hulme sees the notion of individualism, as it appears in the man-centred Renaissance concept of 'personality' (S:59-60); as typical literary products he refers to romantic autobiographies and works of psychological introspection (S:48,60).

For Hulme, the knowledge of discontinuities is a fearful knowledge: the awareness of the 'chasms' in reality and of man's radical imperfection inspires unease and even horror, and as a result man instinctively attempts to by-pass discontinuity. The humanist attitude endeavours, indeed, to establish patterns of thought and perception based on continuity and human expansiveness; hence its reliance on concepts of relativity and on rational thought, with their correlatives in the belief in progress, the doctrine of human perfectibility, and the personality cult. The religious attitude, on the contrary, is conscious of the existence of absolute, unattainable values, and accepts man's natural limitations. The confrontation and the historical alternation between the two attitudes through the ages provides an outline of man's intellectual history, and of the history of the Western world in particular (S:49-50). Hulme thus arrives at a clearly cyclical view of history: Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, the Byzantine era and the Middle Ages are essentially periods when the religious vision was predominant, whereas the ages of Classical Greece and Rome, and the era from the Renaissance up to the present (i.e. the beginning of the twentieth century) are periods with a predominantly humanist outlook (S:54ff).

The present historical cycle (beginning with the Renaissance and now drawing to a close) is further divided in two complementary stages: Humanism proper, and Romanticism (S:61)<sup>(2)</sup>. Both stages are characterized by rationalism, materialism and a superficial optimism; the transition from Humanism to Romanticism amounts, for Hulme, to little more than a degeneration into sentimentalism

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(Rousseau), utilitarianism and determinism (Darwin)(S:62,80); this progressive degeneration, which continued throughout the nineteenth century, has now reached "the state of slush in which we have the misfortune to live"(S:80). In the nineteenth century Hulme discerns several reactions against the prevailing intellectual (philosophical and artistic) mood of the age, from Nietzsche, Moore and Russell (S:62,63) to the Parnassian school of poetry (FS:70), but these remained inadequate or partial, or proved short-lived. A complete and radical reaction, based on a renewal of the principle of discontinuity, would have to include a recognition of the objective and absolute character of ethical values, and the establishment of their hierarchy and unquestionable supremacy (S:62-63). And Hulme states categorically that at present "the humanist tradition is breaking up"(S:55): the fundamental change which he considers to be at hand is foreshadowed, namely, in certain forms of modern art. Being only a "side activity" or "side direction"(S:92,78) in man's intellectual pursuits, art, according to Hulme, is more susceptible to register the first stirrings of a radically new attitude precisely because of its marginal position <sup>(3)</sup>; the artist, to use Pound's phrase, is the "nostrils and the invisible antennae" of society (Stock 1974:189).

For a proper understanding, however, of Hulme's ideas about the historical significance of modern art - and hence of modern poetry and poetics - it is essential to summarize first his views on artistic expression in general <sup>(4)</sup>.

In his writings on art, as in his comments on ethics and the nature of reality, Hulme starts from the postulate of discontinuity. Explicitly and extensively drawing on the critical terminology and ideas of Wilhelm Worringer's Abstraktion und Einfühlung (first published in 1908) (S:82), he distinguishes two fundamentally different and incompatible types of art, which he calls, after Worringer, 'vital' or 'organic' art, and 'geometric' art (S:77; FS:119); each type, clearly, springs from a particular "Weltgefühl" (Worringer 1918:16).

The first type finds its natural expression in realist and naturalist modes (S:84). It corresponds to (i.e. results from and expresses) an attitude of 'continuity': man's expansive sense of confidence in himself and the world, his anthropocentric outlook, creates an anthropomorphic form of art. The assumption of continuity

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and confidence, in other words, invites an 'empathic' relationship (Worringer's "Einfühlung") with the surrounding world, and thus results in an art of reproduction and mimeticism, of "Lebenszusammenhang und Lebensabhängigkeit", incorporating "das Gefühl für die Schönheit organisch-lebenswahrer Form"(Worringer 1918:26,36).

The 'geometric' type of art, on the other hand, springs from a recognition of discontinuity, and is symptomatic of a sense of profound disharmony between the artist and his world. Whether this disharmony manifests itself as terror or contempt in the face of the flux and contingency of the organic sphere, in both cases the artist attempts to counteract the instability he perceives around him by fixing some 'emblem' of stability and permanence (S:86); the state of mind behind the art of this 'abstract' tendency is thus "a feeling of separation in the face of outside nature"(S:85). Hence the use of "rigid lines and dead crystalline forms", and of "pure geometrical regularity"(S:85; cf.Worringer 1918:4,21-22). This art wants itself separate, objective, impersonal, absolute: it is fundamentally 'life-alien' (Worringer's term is "leben-verneinend").

Worringer also presents a tentative historical and racial interpretation of his two artistic principles and the religious and philosophical attitudes behind them (he sees e.g. the "Diesseitskultur" of vital art as restricted to Europe only, and expressed mainly in Antiquity and the Renaissance; the tendency to abstraction asserts itself in Europe in the "nordische Vorrenaissancekunst" only - cf. Worringer 1918:43ff, 139ff, 171ff). Hulme adopts this interpretation; the alternation between organic and geometric art forms coincides with his general historical cycles. He then also locates modern art in this context (a practical application which is absent in Worringer's study, but which also the German Expressionists were quick to perceive - and which Worringer gratefully acknowledges in the preface to the third edition of his book in 1910; whether Hulme was aware of this is uncertain). An important point in this respect is that for Worringer the tendency to abstraction constitutes the original art form: the "Einfühlungsdrang" is seen as a later evolution, resulting from the reassuring interference of the rational intellect, and leading therefore to a less intensive artistic style (Worringer 1918:19); this point is only tacitly assumed by Hulme, who does, however, adopt the (evaluative) criteria of 'intensity' (for



geometric art) versus 'insipidity' (for vital art) (S:90); these criteria will be used in a similar way in the discussion (then largely in a Bergsonian context) of the qualities of prose and poetry.

For Hulme (as for Worringer), then, Byzantine mosaics, the pyramids of ancient Egypt or the figures and masks of 'primitive' tribal art all correspond to an attitude of discontinuity: the impermanence of the outside world inspires either fear or disgust, and the artist seeks refuge in abstraction, in the use of hard, rigid forms, geometrical patterns, monumental shapes; this art is regular, durable, lifeless, necessary (S:86,90).

The naturalistic art of Classical Antiquity and the Renaissance, on the other hand, springs from a "happy pantheistic relation between man and the outside world"(S:86). This feeling of harmony finds its correlative in a mimetic practice: the artist feels wholly confident and comfortable with regard to his world, and as he derives pleasure from the reproduction of the soft, vital forms of existing things, he resorts to the use of perspective and natural, sensual shapes (S:88-90) (5). Yet this also means, in Hulme's opinion, that this 'empathic' type of art partakes of the flux, the instability and confusion of the natural world (the vital sphere), and thus it necessarily remains a muddled and 'accidental' art form. Furthermore, the anthropomorphic expansiveness of the underlying attitude cannot but lead to a loss of intensity, to a general sloppiness of expression. And, Hulme argues, the whole modern period from the Renaissance to the early twentieth century has indeed suffered progressively from these fundamental defects; its superficial, optimistic rationalism, that is, has nurtured an increasingly anaemic and degenerate realism (S:96-97).

Hulme discerns, however, in his own period the first definite signs that a radical change is beginning to take shape: the widespread confusion in the arts, namely ("You get at the present moment in Europe a most extraordinary confusion in art, a complete breaking away from tradition"-S:93), accompanies the emergence of a new type of art, basically different - not in degree but in kind (S:76) - from the norms that have prevailed in European art since the Renaissance. This art, which assumes the particular form of a reaction against nineteenth-century realism and its sentimental derivations (such as Impressionism), displays a pronounced tendency to abstraction, and is thus seen to be at odds not only with the artistic tradition of

the last few centuries, but also with the flux and drabness of existence as such: it signals a break with the whole humanist tradition and conception. The new art, consequently, is 'inorganic': its forms are bare, clear-cut, austere (S:96), its structural organization is akin to that of modern machinery (S:98,105). Hulme makes it clear, however, that he is not advocating a new medievalism, but a return to a 'religious' attitude like that of the Middle Ages (S:57). He also specifies that the new art, whose emergence he welcomes, has nothing to do with Futurism, which, like Pound, Gaudier, and Wyndham Lewis, he regards as merely a kind of 'accelerated Impressionism', (Pound's phrase), or its "last efflorescence" (S:94). That is to say, the 'mechanical' aspect of modern art is "in no sense merely a reflection of mechanical environment. It is the result of a change of sensibility which is ( ) the result of a change of attitude which will become increasingly obvious" (S:109). As for the exponents of the new constructive and geometric art itself, Hulme points first to Cézanne (S:100), and then to artists like Jacob Epstein (whom he admires "unreservedly"-FS:134), Wyndham Lewis, and Picasso (S:103,105ff). Thus he directly links Epstein's sculptures to the "geometrical character" and "intensity" of Byzantine mosaics (S:81), and he finds a similar "abstraction of a particular kind for a particular purpose" in Picasso's work (FS:131).

At this point, Hulme's opinions on some modern artists of the period are revealing and significant, not only because they show his rather gratuitous association of the new geometric art with roughly similar styles of the past (and the implicit assumption that both correspond to a similar 'attitude' - a problem of which Hulme appears to be aware, although he merely brushes it aside; cf. S:91-92), but also because of the obvious dogmatism with which he applies 'geometricism' as a criterion to evaluate particular forms of modern art. Thus he declares his support for analytical Cubism, referring to (Gleizes and) Metzinger's book (S:94)<sup>(6)</sup> because he views this trend as "destined to create a new geometric and monumental art, making use of mechanical forms" (FS:180), and he logically places Picasso's "hard, structural work" (ibid.) in this context. But Cubism, according to Hulme, also generated "a more or less amusing by-product", which lives in the illusion that "abstract form, i.e. form without any representative content, can be an adequate means of expression" (ibid.). This side-track, however, lacks "the controlling

sensibility, the feeling for mechanical structure, which makes use of abstractions a necessity"(ibid.), and so resorts to abstraction for its own sake and in a haphazard, unsystematic way. As an example of this trend Hulme mentions Kandinsky, whose work is branded as a "romantic heresy"(ibid.). The judgment, questionable as it is<sup>(7)</sup>, sheds some light on Hulme's theoretical position: the kind of art he is advocating and defending as a sign of the times is never a completely non-representational art (although it incorporates a certain measure of distortion of conventional 'realistic' representation and perspective), and he insists on a geometric organization in rigid lines, hard angles and clear edges, the forms "associated in our minds with the idea of machinery"(S:104).

It is mainly in this respect, then, that Hulme's views on modern art and its modalities begin to converge with his comments on language and poetry. But these comments themselves are directly based on his distinction between intensive and extensive manifolds, and between the kinds of cognition obtained by intellect and intuition; this point should be considered first.

Hulme freely acknowledges that his ideas about intellect and intuition as different modes of knowledge with different fields of application are largely borrowed from Bergson<sup>(8)</sup>. The elaboration of these concepts runs roughly parallel to the distinctions between the various spheres of reality, between the humanist and religious attitudes, and between vital and geometric art: the distinctions are always seen as fundamental qualitative differences, and invariably imply a value judgment (one necessarily remains superficial and weak, the other penetrates in depth and achieves genuine 'intensity').

The starting point in this series of observations is the distinction between extensive manifolds - between, ultimately, "matter" and "life"(S:174). Extensive manifolds are, for Hulme as for Bergson, all those phenomena that can be analyzed, segmented, and subdivided into their smallest constituent particulars, in short "all complex things which can be resolved into separate elements or atoms" by means of analysis (S:177). The logical and rational intellect is the appropriate instrument to deal with this kind of static, quantitative multiplicity; or, considering the question from the opposite angle, the rational mind may be said to be limited to dealing with extensive manifolds only: incapable of grasping the

whole dynamic complexity of life, its mode of cognition is found to be restricted to what is rationally explicable, to what is open to analysis and segmentation, because the mind naturally proceeds by explanation, i.e. by un-folding, and because of the mind's natural orientation towards action and practical ends (S:146,177).

An intensive manifold, on the other hand, is a qualitative multiplicity, characterized by the "absolute interpenetration" of its constituent parts; it is

...a complex thing which yet cannot be said to have parts because the parts run into each other, forming a continuous whole, and whose parts cannot even be conceived as existing separately. (S:181)

Any mental process, or any process of motion, change or growth constitutes such a dynamic, continuous and unanalyzable whole (S:183, 195); living reality itself, ultimately, is seen as such a "flux of interpenetrated elements unseizable by the intellect"(S:146), and Hulme defines Bergson's notion of 'duration' as "continuous growth in creation"(S:197).

The rational intellect, then, is considered incapable of dealing with intensive manifolds: since it is orientated towards 'matter' and 'action', it cannot avoid the use of conceptual simplification and generalization; in so doing it also ignores the uniqueness of particular phenomena and relies on crude 'common denominators' only, on stock types, concepts and mental mechanisms, to such an extent that in the end the intellect itself becomes a prisoner of purely habitual responses and automatisms; the exclusive reliance on the intellect therefore leads to determinism or finalism (S:202). Only our intuition is in a position to grasp an intensive manifold: its mode of knowledge is complete, complex and yet direct (S:187), and it alone is able to cope with a profound and indivisible interpenetration of elements. This intuitive knowledge can only be attained at rare moments of concentration and tension (S:191), but then it allows man's fundamental self to break through the crust of rationalism and habitual responses; at these moments, namely, man no longer sees things in terms of their utility, but he contemplates them, setting aside the constraints of practical motivation. And it is also in this context that real creativity becomes possible: whereas on a superficial and utilitarian level man's actions are determined by automatisms and practical ends, genuine novelty by-passes these fixed

patterns and results in "the production of absolutely new and unpredictable states"(S:195). The discussion of the basic difference, in essence as well as in orientation, between prose and poetry, finally, inserts itself in this context.

2.

It will be obvious that the relevance of the various distinctions mentioned so far lies in their application to the discussion of language and literature, and Hulme appears to have substantially developed Bergson's scattered and cursory remarks in this respect. This fact is important in itself: in the same way as he adopts and adapts Worringer's theories to provide certain forms of contemporary art with a comprehensive conceptual and historical framework (i.e. with a justification as well as an explanation), Hulme also puts Bergson's philosophical ideas to more specific and polemical uses. Starting from the distinction between poetry and prose in terms of intuition and intellect, he will concentrate on what he takes to be the basic requirements for a new type of poetry. Hulme's conclusions in this field (as should become clear in following chapters) show some remarkable affinities with those reached by Pound and by various Continental modernists working independently of Hulme. Plainly, the question whether Pound was or was not directly influenced by Hulme is here of secondary importance only: some critical interplay between these two minds may be taken for granted, and the similarities as well as the divergencies in their respective theories leave ample room for independent thought; what seems essential, in spite of the later Pound/Hulme controversy, is the overlapping, the parallel orientation as such, in the common preoccupation with the role of the poetic image, with poetry as visualization and revitalization, with the relationship between literature and the plastic arts, and with the general social and historical justification of the new writing<sup>(9)</sup>.

As the most significant aspect of Hulme's philosophical speculations, then, appears the fact that in and through his borrowings from Bergson and Worringer he singled out and substantially elaborated for his own use precisely those elements which could be brought to bear on poetic writing. Though some of Hulme's postulates and contentions seem questionable at times, his significance would appear to lie in his attempt to buttress the new post-Symbolist writing

(as well as the new art) with a coherent and wide-ranging philosophical and historical substructure.

In general, Hulme's prophecy that "a period of dry, hard, classical verse is coming" (S:137) has a purely theoretical as well as a polemical character: it is directed against the 'progressive degeneration' of the humanist/romantic tradition, and forms part of a set of speculations on the distinction between poetry and prose as fundamentally different means of expression. The context thus presupposes Worringer and Bergson at the same time.

With respect to expression and communication, the rational intellect, according to Hulme, adopts ordinary prose language as its proper vehicle (S:134; Hulme apparently does not distinguish between 'ordinary language' and 'prose'). Prose, like an extensive manifold, is seen as expository and analytical, i.e. it traces essentially a pattern of un-folding; as an instrument of the practical mind, it proceeds principally by means of stock types, reducing particular physical objects to more easily manageable abstract ciphers (S:162ff). Though this observation refers to a clearly Bergsonian context, it also contains an echo from Worringer: for Worringer, namely, naturalism in the arts reflects a reliance on the rational intellect (which helps man to overcome his basic but irrational fear with regard to the surrounding world), so that a naturalistic art is both rationalist in origin and of secondary intensity only; transposing this idea to language, Hulme also sees prose as motivated by the rational mind, and as more indirect and less intensive than the 'primary' language of poetry.

It may be useful to distinguish from the start two aspects of Hulme's view of prose language. In one sense man's habitual perception, itself a function of the practical intellect, forces stock types on the mind, which are then handled accordingly by that 'habitual' and automatic use of language which is prose; on the other hand, the nature of prose itself is described as being such that it is restricted to dealing with extensive manifolds, and thus it cannot but operate with stock types and abstractions. This double meaning is inherent in Hulme's assertion that stock types are "embodied" in prose language (S:166). Hence prose, like the rational and practical intellect, remains a smooth but superficial instrument: it is in line with anthropomorphic and utilitarian practice in choosing, so

to speak, the path of least resistance, and always finds itself ruled by a sense of determinism (shaped by conventional moulds and habitual patterns of perception and expression) or finalism (directed towards practical ends). The close interrelation between intellect, stock perception and prose language is summed up as follows:

Between nature and ourselves, even between ourselves and our consciousness, there is a veil, a veil that is dense with the ordinary man, transparent for the artist and poet.()

My senses and my consciousness give me no more than a practical simplification of reality. In the usual perception I have of reality all the differences useless to man have been suppressed. My perception runs in certain moulds. Things have been classified with a view to the use I can make of them.

() As a rule, then, we never ever perceive the real shape and individuality of objects. We only see stock types.

In prose as in algebra concrete things are embodied in signs or counters which are moved about according to rules, without being visualized at all in the process. There are in prose certain type situations and arrangements of words, which move as automatically into certain other arrangements as do functions in algebra. (S:158-159;134) (10).

Poetry, in contrast to prose, is "not a counter language, but a visible concrete one. It is a compromise for a language of intuition which would hand over sensations bodily"(S:135) - a phrase which contains echoes from Bergson and Remy de Gourmont as well: in his comments on the 'cliché', Gourmont had pointed out in 1899 that poetry is a compromise between striking novelty and dead or abstract images, remarking that "sans images abstraites, la littérature, identique à la vie, serait, comme la vie, incompréhensible"(Gourmont 1955:203); in 'L'intuition philosophique' (1911) Bergson speaks in similar terms of the image as being "l'intermédiaire entre la simplicité de l'intuition concrète et la complexité des abstractions qui la traduisent"(Bergson 1969:119). The characteristics which apply to the intuition as a mode of cognition then also apply to poetry as a mode of expression: poetry, as opposed to prose, is direct, concrete and arresting. It offers the same direct and 'total' insight which also the intuition provides; it is both direct and concrete in that it is concerned with the particular object itself, its uniqueness and complex changing totality, rather than with some common denominator or abstracted concept; and hence it is arresting because essentially anti-conventional, consciously disrupting the patterns and moulds of habituation in perception and expression alike (be it with the ensuing paradox that, if poetry is arresting, it also draws attention to

itself, to its own structuration, so that poetic language inevitably creates one 'veil' while it removes another).

Thus in this respect also two closely related yet distinct elements are involved: perception and expression (the presentation of that perception). As it is, Bergson (1969:149-153; 1967:115ff) elaborates the point concerning artistic (intuitive) perception only in fairly general terms; in Hulme's essays and notes the emphasis is on poetic language throughout. Bergson begins by pointing out the difference between contemplation and action ("...il serait aisé de montrer que, plus nous sommes préoccupés de vivre, moins nous sommes enclins à contempler, et que les nécessités de l'action tendent à limiter le champ de la vision"-1969:151) and concludes that artists, because they devote themselves to contemplation, overcome practical stock perception, so that

...ils perçoivent pour percevoir, - pour rien, pour le plaisir. Par un certain côté d'eux-mêmes, soit par leur conscience soit par un de leur sens, ils naissent détachés; et, selon que ce détachement est de tel ou tel sens, ou de la conscience, ils sont peintres ou sculpteurs, musiciens ou poètes. C'est donc bien une vision plus directe de la réalité que nous trouvons dans les différents arts; et c'est parce que l'artiste songe moins à utiliser sa perception qu'il perçoit un plus grand nombre de choses. ('La perception et le changement', Bergson 1969:152-153).

Speaking on the other hand of the possible ways of expressing intuitive knowledge, he contends that only the image is here the appropriate vehicle:

Pouvons-nous ressaisir cette intuition elle-même? Nous n'avons que deux moyens d'expression, le concept et l'image. C'est en concepts que le système se développe; c'est en une image qu'il se resserre quand on le repousse vers l'intuition d'où il descend (). ('L'intuition philosophique', ibid.:131-132)

With the single image as the basic unit, a more complex intuitive process may then be adequately represented by the accumulation of a number of diverse images:

Or, l'image a du moins cet avantage qu'elle nous maintient dans le concret. Nulle image ne remplacera l'intuition de la durée, mais beaucoup d'images diverses, empruntées à des ordres de choses très différents, pourront, par la convergence de leur action, diriger la conscience sur le point précis où il y a une certaine intuition à saisir. En choisissant les images aussi disparates que possible, on empêchera l'une quelconque d'entre elles d'usurper la place de l'intuition qu'elle est chargée d'appeler, puisqu'elle serait alors chassée tout de suite par ses rivales. ('Introduction à la métaphysique', ibid.:185-186)



And towards the end of this essay Bergson repeats the idea of assembling a large number of diverse aspects and characteristics of reality in order to arrive at its physical solidity - but here without referring to the use of images: he only speaks of the "faits marquants" of reality which have to be collected, accumulated and merged, so that all preconceived and premature ideas about that reality are neutralized, for "ainsi seulement se dégage la matérialité brute des faits connus" (*ibid.*:226). Hulme's decisive step in this respect, then, appears to be the reorientation of the whole argument towards the specific qualities of poetic language; adopting Bergson's observation on intuitive and artistic perception, he develops them entirely in terms of visualization in poetry. The Bergsonian perspective, furthermore, allows Hulme to see in French Symbolism a direct forerunner of the kind of poetry he is advocating: in a review of 1911 (of Tancrède de Visan's L'attitude du lyrisme contemporain, in The New Age, August 1911; quoted in Pondrom 1974:58-60) he describes the Parnassian school (originally a reaction against romanticism: cf. FS:70) as aligned with Positivist philosophy, and hence a school which "strove by combinations of such 'atoms of the beautiful' to manufacture a living beauty"; Symbolism, he continues, created "a kind of central vision as opposed to analytic description", and consequently Symbolist poetry can be defined as "an attempt by means of successive and accumulated images to express and exteriorize such a central lyric intuition"; in that sense, according to Hulme, the Symbolists unconsciously anticipated Bergson's theories. Hulme's view on Symbolism is also significant in that it shows his indifference for the metaphysical/transcendental aspects of Symbolist theory proper (an attitude which other Imagists shared) as well as his blindness for the fact that Bergson's (and his own) emphasis on the 'solidity' and "matérialité brute" of reality is at the far end of the deliberate 'non-referential' vagueness of Symbolism ("an attempt to spiritualise literature", as Arthur Symons aptly called it in 1899, and "a literature in which the visible world is no longer a reality, and the unseen world no longer a dream"; cf. Symons 1958:2-3,5).

Visualization by means of images, then, is ~~an~~ imperative in Hulme's poetic. As in the case of prose language, the idea of visualization appears under two different aspects: poetry directs

the focus of attention to the physical materiality of particular objects, to "the real shape and individuality of objects"(S:159; cf. Bergson 1967:123: "l'art vise toujours l'individuel"), creating "freshness of experience"(S:162) and thus building up a "solid vision of realities"(FS:73); at the same time poetry, as language, remains continually arresting and novel because it consists in a constant search for new and striking images. The impact of the poetic use of language is thus double-edged: it recognizes the 'thingness' of things and thereby affects the reader's perception, and it re-vitalizes language by the constant introduction of new and unexpected visual images and metaphors. In poetry, "each word has an image sticking to it"(FS:78), a formulation which recalls not only Pound's (Fenollosa's) view of the ideogram, but also de Gourmont's position (with which both Hulme and Pound were familiar) on visualization in poetry. In his Esthétique de la langue française (1899) Gourmont pointed out that

La poésie, en somme, et l'art, quel qu'il soit, a pour premier outil l'oeil. Sans l'oeil, il n'y a que des raisonneurs.  
(Gourmont 1955:197)

Gourmont however seems somewhat more liberal than Hulme on the question of the particular qualities of the image; for him any 'novel' combination of words necessarily conveys an image:

...tout groupe de mots détermine nécessairement une image; elle est neuve et concrète, si les mots n'ont pas encore été groupés selon ces rapports; elle est abstraite et parvenue à l'état de cliché, si ce groupement des mots a lieu selon des rapports usuels ou connus. (ibid.:202-203)

He also remarks that "Presque tous les mots, même isolés, sont des métaphores"(ibid.), and Hulme presumably draws on these statements rather than on Bergson's ideas when he too observes that in the evolution of a language "Metaphors soon run their course and die" (S:151), describing in this sense the gradual but inevitable withering of poetic freshness into prosaic deadness through a kind of fossilization and ossification of the images. Hence "Poetry [is] always the advance guard of language. The progress of language is the absorption of new analogies"(FS:81).

Images, then, are essential - not as mere rhetorical figures, but as the very backbone of poetic language. As a general rule, however, Hulme stipulates that images are not entirely freely chosen, but must be based on significant analogies. Thus he describes the notion of inspiration as either an active or a passive faculty, as

the effort of "a deliberate choosing and working-up of analogies" (FS:85) or the elaboration of "an accidentally seen analogy or an unlooked-for resemblance"(FS:84). Consequently the image always retains a clearly recognizable representational aspect, a point which obviously recalls his comments on the plastic arts, when he dismisses Kandinsky's non-figurative abstractions as a romantic and pointless aberration. Hulme's emphasis on the need for analogies is incompatible with some of the more extreme Modernist procedures such as Arp's configurations or Ball's phonetic poems (to be discussed later); yet it brings him remarkably close to Reverdy's position in this respect, as a series of aphorisms in Le gant de crin (1927) may indicate:

L'image est une création pure de l'esprit. Elle ne peut naître d'une comparaison, mais du rapprochement de deux réalités plus ou moins éloignées.

Plus les rapports des deux réalités seront lointains et justes, plus l'image sera forte, plus elle aura de puissance emotive et de réalité poétique.

Deux réalités qui n'ont aucun rapport ne peuvent se rapprocher utilement. Il n'y a pas de création d'image. Pas davantage si l'on compare deux réalités identiques.

L'analogie est un moyen de création, c'est une existence de rapports; or de la nature de ces rapports dépend la force ou faiblesse de l'image créée. (Reverdy 1968:30-31)

(This point, however, will also be elaborated in the chapter on Reverdy.)

For Hulme, the insistence on clear visual analogies serves as a guarantee for poetry to preserve its 'definiteness', i.e. its closeness to things, in that always the direct, plastic picture is held before the reader's eyes (as opposed to the alleged conventional and utilitarian generalizations and indirectness of prose): the practice of poetry is the process of "gradually making solid the castles in the air"(FS:81), in the same way as de Gourmont (1955:210) maintained that "Des que le mot et l'image gardent dans le discours leur valeur concrète, il s'agit de littérature" (whereby 'literature' equals 'poetry', since "...en littérature il n'y a que des poèmes" - ibid.:202).

In several texts (among them the 'Lecture on Modern Poetry' delivered in 1914, and the 'Notes on Language and Style' which date from several years earlier (Read 1947:103)), Hulme, while holding on to his conception of analogies as the hallmark of poetic language,

attempts to broaden the scope of the discussion; in so doing, he gradually develops a view of the poem as a wholly autonomous, separate entity, incorporating notions of impersonality, a-temporality, and detachment from reality. In most cases his observations in this respect remain tentative and incomplete (partly because Hulme's interest in later years seems to have shifted from literature to the plastic arts, although any likely development was cut short by the war and his subsequent death in the trenches); yet the direction which these observations indicate is unmistakable, and they firmly align Hulme with various other Modernists of the time.

There are in fact several ways leading Hulme to a position where the poem itself acquires a greater measure of autonomy than would have been conceivable in a purely Bergsonian context. Having repeatedly emphasized the need for "real vision" and "solid vision" through the use of visual and plastic images, Hulme is finally brought to equate 'meaning' and 'vision' in poetry; thus he speaks of "meaning (i.e. vision)"(FS:77), and defines poetry as "intensity of meaning"(FS:91). Poetry conveys sensations, even if these are vague and indefinable, by means of the "piling-up and juxtaposition of distinct images in different lines"(FS:78); each image contributes its own plasticity and particular intensity to the general effect, so much so that "the succession of visual images should exhaust one"(FS:73). The poem as a whole then will largely derive its effect from the interplay and accumulation of the intense momentary qualities of individual images, and in that sense Hulme approaches a position akin to Pound's ideogrammatic method and to the Cubist (Reverdy, Apollinaire) and Expressionist procedures of relying on the cumulative effect and implicit architecture of isolated images. In all these cases (including Hulme's) the poem will display a stark reduction of the syntactic apparatus, while, simultaneously, the complex semantic interrelations (complex because semantically divergent and convergent at the same time) between the various images determine the course and coherence of the text. This appears to be the basic significance, and the ultimate application, of Hulme's assertion that "Poetry is neither more nor less than a mosaic of words"(FS:84): the term 'mosaic' itself bears out the idea of discontinuity and syntactic reduction and fragmentation, and implies the metonymic character of the mental reconstruction required of the reader. The poem then also becomes fundamentally non-discursive, or consciously anti-discursive: its

progression is metonymic, formally discontinuous and a-syntactical, leaping, as it were, from image to image.

Another line of thought leads likewise to a higher degree of concentration on the more purely linguistic aspects of poetic writing, and to a more pronounced emphasis on the implicit (a-syntactic) structuration of the poem. Hulme points out - here again drawing on Bergson - that an idea may itself attain a clearer shape in the effort to give it precise and concrete expression (S:211); this observation is taken a step further when he draws attention to "the absolutely transforming influence of putting [an idea] into definiteness" while trying to express it adequately (FS:80); and ultimately the focus shifts entirely to the problem of expression and writing as such, to the extent that the poem comes to write itself: initial images lead, by association, to further images, and the poem is carried forward by its own momentum (a practice which will recur, with variations, in Jacob and Arp); in this way the text seeks and establishes its appropriate form in the process, and this formal adaptability is the essential meaning Hulme attributes to the term 'free verse' (FS:70). Along these lines also, "creation by happy chance" logically implies the diminishing role of the author's shaping subjectivity in the construction of the poem: meaning follows writing and no longer precedes it:

...the very act of trying to find a form to fit the separate phrases into, itself leads to the creation of new images hitherto not felt by the poet. In a sense the poetry writes itself. This creation by happy chance is analogous to the accidental stroke of the brush which creates a new beauty not previously consciously thought of by the artist. (FS:95)

It may be useful at this stage to recall some aspects of the Symbolist poetic: Hulme's idea of the poem writing itself and the point concerning syntactic reduction are both reminiscent of Mallarmé, the former directly, the latter inversely; in both cases the contrasts are clear-cut.

Mallarmé's observation concerning impersonality and 'leaving the initiative to the words' inscribes itself in the strategies of 'Structure' and 'Transposition', both notions which are intimately related to the metaphysical/transcendental nature of his aesthetic. In general, as the role of the 'correspondences' suggests, Mallarmé's aesthetic implies a pattern of continuity, a continuity which is gradually dissolved into immateriality and Non-Being. Impersonality

and the autonomy of the poem are then, in practice, aspects of a dialectical process of negation and transcendence, in which Structure and Transposition are, as it were, both pivot and lever. Hulme, on the other hand, postulates discontinuity as the basis of his philosophy and aesthetic; although he does advocate (as pointed out above) the adoption of norms whose strictness mirrors the ethical (metaphysical) sphere, there can be no question, in his perspective, of any penetration, however tentative, of this sphere; he insists that "philosophers no longer believe in absolute truth. We no longer believe in perfection, either in verse or in thought, we frankly acknowledge the relative" (FS:71), and hence his aesthetic remains solidly, though paradoxically, materialistic. The superficial similarity in Hulme's and Mallarmé's positions on this point is misleading, in that they belong in and result from radically different contexts.

Mallarmé's conception and use of syntax, it was argued in the previous chapter, is complex and deceptive, commanding attention by its intricacy and yet, in a way, self-defeating at the same time (in that it does not reduce the polysemy of individual words). In spite of this, Mallarmé's syntax remains a prominent element in the formal structure of the poem, where it functions, among other things, as the visible expression of the underlying, more fundamental and universal coherence which every poem presupposes. In this respect, and as a text which sharply marks the contrast between the Symbolist and Modernist modes of thinking and writing, Hugo von Hofmannsthal's letter of Lord Chandos ('Ein Brief', 1902; in Hofmannsthal 1957:337-348) is of particular significance. The letter offers an account of a serious philosophical crisis, and although presented as fiction and through a persona (Lord Chandos writing to Francis Bacon in 1603), its relevance for Hofmannsthal himself may be gauged from the fact that the letter also signalled his silence as a lyrical poet. Chandos first describes his outlook on the world before the crisis as follows:

Mir erschien damals in einer Art von andauernder Trunkenheit das ganze Dasein als eine grosse Einheit: geistige und körperliche Welt schien mir keinen Gegensatz zu bilden, ebensowenig höfisches und tierisches Wesen, Kunst und Unkunst, Einsamkeit und Gesellschaft (). () Das eine war wie das andere; keines gab dem andern weder an traumhafter überirdischer Natur, noch an leiblicher Gewalt nach, und so gings fort durch die ganze Breite des Lebens, rechter und linker Hand; überall war ich mitten drinnen, wurde nie ein Scheinhaftes gewahr:

Oder es ahnte mir, alles wäre Gleichnis und jede Kreatur ein Schlüssel der andern (). (1957:340-341)

"Gleichnis" and "Einheit": in the same way as, according to Valéry (1957:658), Mallarmé's metaphors had "la valeur d'une relation symétrique fondamentale", Hofmannsthal calls the metaphor an "Erleuchtung, in der wir einen Augenblick lang den grossen Weltzusammenhang ahnen" (quoted by C. Scott, in Bradbury and McFarlane 1976:356), and Chandos here speaks likewise of the world in terms of mutual harmony and integration on all levels: a world experienced as continuity and coherence, and, in Worringer's terms, eminently open to empathy. The crisis which subsequently disrupts this harmony manifests itself clearly as a loss of coherence, on the two closely related levels of perception and expression:

Mein Geist zwang mich, alle Dinge () in einer unheimlichen Nahe zu sehen: so wie ich einmal in einem Vergrösserungsglas ein Stück von der Haut meines kleinen Fingers gesehen hatte, das einem Blachfeld mit Furchen und Höhlen glich, so ging es mir nun mit den Menschen und ihren Handlungen. Es gelang mir nicht mehr, sie mit dem vereinfachenden Blick der Gewohnheit zu erfassen. Es zerfiel mir alles in Teile, die Teile wieder in Teile, und nichts mehr liess sich mit einem Begriff umspannen. Die einzelnen Worte schwammen um mich, sie gerannen zu Augen, die mich anstarrten und in die ich wieder hineinstarren muss: Wirbel sind sie, in die hinabzusehen mich schwindelt, die sich unaufhaltsam drehen und durch die hindurch man ins Leere kommt.

Mein Fall ist, in Kürze, dieser: Es ist mir völlig die Fähigkeit abhanden gekommen, über irgend etwas zusammenhängend zu denken oder zu sprechen.

Zuerst wurde es mir allmählich unmöglich, ein höheres oder allgemeineres Thema zu besprechen und dabei jene Worte in den Mund zu nehmen, deren sich doch alle Menschen ohne Bedenken gelaufig zu bedienen pflegen. ()

...sondern die abstrakten Worte, deren sich doch die Zunge naturgemäss bedienen muss, um irgendwelches Urteil an den Tag zu geben, zerfielen mir im Munde wie modrige Pilze.

(1957:342-343;341-342)

The alienated and fragmented experience of the world (which Hofmannsthal further elaborates in the 'Briefe des Zurückgekehrten' of 1907;ibid.: 475-501) thus finds a corollary in Chandos' loss of faith in the generalizations and abstractions of conventional, expository language. To this obsession with 'things in themselves' corresponds an obsession with individual, isolated words. As D. Davie (1955:4) points out, Chandos in fact loses his faith in syntax as the linguistic instrument which embodies conceptual coherence. In Worringer's terms, the crisis would correspond to a loss of faith in conventional ('naturalistic') perspective, since perspective is precisely "der Raum (), der die Dinge miteinander verbindet"(Worringer 1918:29) (Worringer adds that

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"Soweit also ein sinnliches Objekt noch vom Raum abhängig ist, kann es uns nicht in seiner geschlossenen stofflichen Individualität erscheinen"; Chandos specifies that the only language he can now conceive of is the wordless expressiveness of isolated objects, "ein Sprache, in welcher die stummen Dinge zu mir sprechen."). In the dis-articulation of syntax, and the experience of radical discontinuity which lies at its origin, the Chandos-crisis stands practically as a paradigm of the breakdown of Symbolist values of coherence and harmony, and thus marks the contrast between the Symbolist and Modernist attitudes.

Opposing Cubism to the Symbolist and Romantic movements, R. Jakobson (1963:62-63) singles out the "orientation manifestement métonymique" of the former, as against the "primauté du procédé métaphorique" in the latter <sup>(11)</sup>. Adapting and somewhat expanding this view, Symbolist syntax itself may be said to be profoundly metaphorical in nature, as the visible articulation of those hidden interrelations which intimate a transcendental harmony. Chandos' crisis, then, as the crisis of "Einheit" and "Gleichnis", naturally hinges on syntax also. Taking this point a step further, Hulme's position largely dispenses with conventional syntax, in the same way as in Worringer's view the 'inorganic' style in the plastic arts dispenses with illusionist perspective. The discontinuous as well as metonymic character of Hulme's poetic is manifested most clearly perhaps in the technique of "piling-up and juxtaposition of distinct images in different lines": although the individual images themselves are based on 'similarity' (analogy, resemblance), their combination, and hence the construction of the poem, proceeds according to a pattern which is discontinuous (non-discursive, non-sequential) and metonymic at the same time; as a consequence, the technique of juxtaposition and superposition also requires of the reader a practice of 'metonymic' decipherment which is fundamentally different from the reading of a Symbolist poem.

Hulme's exclusive concentration on seeing the thing-in-itself (the object of Bergson's intuitive cognition, but also Worringer's 'isolated material individuality' of things) subsequently passes, via the emphasis on the physical solidity of reality, into a vision of its "air of absolute detachment"(FS:82); this sense of detachment, however, applies not only to the object or emotion in question, but also, significantly, to the words evoking it:

Dome of Brompton in the mist. Transfer that into art. Dead things not men as the material for art. Everything for art is a thing in itself ().

And the words moved until they became a dome, a solid, separate world, a dome seen in a mist, a thing of terror beyond us, and not of us. Definite heaven above worshippers, incense hides foundations. A definite force majeure (all the foundations of the scaffolding are in us, but we want an illusion, falsifying us, something independent of foundations). Putting bricks together to imitate the shape of a dome, but the mist effect, the transformation in words, has the art of pushing it through the door. (FS:82)

This is, plainly, a decisive step: the "transformation in words" of the impression allows Hulme to envisage the whole problem of expression solely in terms of the poem as artefact, i.e. as a separate, autonomous entity. It may also be noted that Hulme's view here is at the confluence, so to speak, of Bergson and Worringer<sup>(12)</sup>, reconciling the Bergsonian idea of disinterested vision (artistic and intuitive contemplation without practical motivation) with the notion of radical discontinuity (Worringer's sense of disharmony and separation, including the 'separateness' of the artistic product); this double context appears to lie at the basis of Hulme's observations on the qualities of 'isolation' and 'a-temporality' in poetry.

The notion of words replacing things in the poem (in the sense indicated above, of the words 'becoming' the dome) naturally implies the idea of the poem itself as a separate object: the emphasis on "words seen as physical things"(FS:86) makes it necessary to isolate the whole 'mosaic' of words which constitutes the sentence and ultimately the poem ("Always a border round, to isolate the sentence as a thing in itself"-ibid.). Thus the precision and concreteness of each word separates the text as a whole from the surrounding world, whereby the text itself becomes an object for contemplation, in the same way as the inorganic work of art is isolated, by virtue of its lifeless forms, from the flux of its environment. When Hulme then somewhat paradoxically asserts that modern poetry

...has become definitely and finally introspective and deals with expression and communication of momentary phases in the poet's mind. (FS:72)

he nevertheless remains fully consistent: the introspective nature of this poetry lies in its becoming increasingly self-centred, as the whole practice of writing gravitates towards the question of the search for the adequate means of expression and their organization; Hulme specifies that this modern introspection, which is "essentially

different to the lyrical impulse" of the Romantics (*ibid.*), consists in fact in the attitude of the poet selecting "certain images which, put into juxtaposition in separate lines, serve to suggest and to evoke the state he feels"(FS:73). In that perspective, the external object-matter - surprisingly perhaps - loses much of its relevance, since the focus of attention shifts towards the complex of images that will convey the individuality of an experience, i.e. towards matters of precise and unconventional expression and structuration.

The insistence on visual analogies finds itself modified in the same sense. Hulme affirms that analogies should add something new ("Not sufficient to find analogies. It is necessary to find those that add something to each, and give a sense of wonder"-FS:88); that is to say, his analogies aim essentially at a displacement of ordinary perception, not only by opening up an unsuspected dimension or perspective, but also, and perhaps more importantly, by accomplishing a semantic shift within the poem. The image or analogy, in other words, interrupts and disrupts the automatism of conventional perception, and thus creates a space of deliberate artificiality. In that respect Hulme's image approaches the status of the properly Imagist Image, as an intensive, complex and separate micro-structure (13). Its relation to the external world and to the poet's experience is highly paradoxical, since the non-discursive (discontinuous) presentation separates the Image from external elements and from conventional (discursive, expressive) discourse alike, while nonetheless the Image still contains and embodies the poet's impression or emotion (Pound's "intellectual and emotional complex"). The 'objective' or 'impersonal' aspect of this use of the Image lies mainly in its juxtapositional presentation, which lends the Image a dominant position in the poetic structure, while its semantic correlations with the rest of the text and its emotional impact have to be reconstructed and actualized by the reader. In this approach, the status of the poem amounts to that of the autonomous 'poème-objet' as Reverdy describes it in the first issue of Nord-Sud (March 1917) when he speaks of

...des oeuvres qui, en se détachant de la vie, y rentrent  
parce qu'elles ont une existence propre, en dehors de l'é-  
vocation ou de la reproduction des choses de la vie.  
(Reverdy 1975:20)

The concept of deliberate artificiality, finally, also implies a notion of a-temporality, and this in various respects. The image

itself, and the corresponding semantic shift, also induce a process of retardation: the main function of analogies is, for Hulme, "to enable one to dwell and linger upon a point of excitement"(FS:91-92), and this singular concentration is inevitably at variance with the temporal as well as spatial flux of reality. In terms of Worringer's inorganic art as well as of Bergson's disinterested contemplation, isolation and immobility are inseparable; the poem, Hulme claims, is "a static fixity"(FS:71). Thus literature becomes, predictably, "the deliberate standing still, hovering and thinking oneself into an artificial view, for the moment, and not effecting any real actions at all"(FS:95). The poem, based on isolation and contemplation, and seen as an independent and separate artefact, becomes also self-sufficient and can thus no longer be inserted in a familiar continuous time-sequence: analogies contribute to what Hulme calls the "other-world through-the-glass effect" of the poem (FS:87), and writing poetry as such can be considered as "the making of this other world" (FS:90) - a world not ontologically divorced from reality, but formally:

The separation of the high heel and the powdered face is essential to all emotions, in order to make a work of art.

All literature and poetry is life seen in a mirror; it must be absolutely removed from reality, and can never be attained. (FS:90,88)

### 3.

After the years 1909-1910 Hulme appears to have been preoccupied mainly with questions of philosophy and the plastic arts (Coffman 1951:48-49). His own poetic output is particularly slender: only seven short poems were published during his lifetime; most of these (as well as some remaining drafts and fragments which appeared posthumously in FS:214-220) were almost certainly written between 1908 and 1910 (A.R. Jones 1960:36-37). Five of his better-known poems were published in 1912, first in the January issue of The New Age, and then, as the 'Complete Poetical Works of T.E. Hulme', in an appendix to Pound's Ripostes. In the prefatory note to Hulme's poems in Ripostes, Pound linked them with "the 'School of Images', which may or may not have existed", describing the Imagist group of 1912 as "the descendants of the forgotten school of 1909"(Pound 1968: 168-270). Most of Hulme's poems, it would seem, were intended as

illustrations or exercises; there is no evidence that he granted them much significance otherwise.

The short poem 'Above the Dock', first published in the collection For Christmas MDCCCXVIII (FS:221), is fairly typical:

Above the quiet dock in mid night,  
Tangled in the tall mast's corded height,  
Hangs the moon. What seemed so far away  
Is but a child's balloon, forgotten after play.  
(in Pound 1968:269)

The poem is deceptively simple, consisting of two parts and two statements: the presentation of an impression, and its correction; the correction, in the form of the superposition of a second, more accurate perception, supersedes and abolishes the initial impression. The apparent, quiet conventionality of the poem is somewhat upset, however, by the sharp rhythmical break (the full stop) in the middle of line 3; this break is accentuated by the curious and conspicuous inner rhyme "moon/balloon": the two nouns occur in syntactically similar positions, and are semantically related (sharing the same 'roundness') and opposed (real size; domesticity/distance) at the same time; the complex relation (phonological and grammatical similarity; semantic similarity plus dissimilarity) between these terms defines the basic structure of the poem.

The first part (the first sentence) of the poem, with an inversion as its modest climax, neat regular rhyme and a relatively elaborate metaphor ("the tall mast's corded height") seems to introduce a rather traditional atmospheric description: a familiar scene, conventional 'literary' language, vague romantic overtones both of mood and of presentation, and hence an invitation, as it were, to an 'empathic' reading. In terms of structure, the first part is built up towards the phrase "Hangs the moon": the expectation is roused in the first two lines, and duly gratified in the image of the moon "tangled" in the ship's riggings. The conventional connotative potential of the scene (midnight, moon) is thus given free rein - is indeed invited by the obvious 'literariness' of the formal structure.

The second part then develops an ironic contrast: the perspective suddenly changes, and the budding empathy (on the reader's part) finds itself disrupted when the initial perception is negated and corrected. This anticlimax contains elements of parody as well as irony. The traditional overtones of the moon-image which are suggested in the

first sentence are reduced to the triviality of a child's toy, and the carefully constructed expectations of the first two lines are frustrated in the casual banality of the phrase "forgotten after play"; the foregrounding of the inner rhyme "moon/balloon" also acquires its proper ironic ring in the context of this re-orientation.

The irony which is at work in the poem, then, faces two ways: the 'correction' of the second part operates not only on the level of perception (the moon turning out to be merely a balloon), but also on a stylistic, formal level. The obvious literary conventionality of part one is emphasized precisely because it invites and shapes the tendency to empathy - which is then all the more effectively (i.e. ironically) demolished in part two. Thus the habitual and 'empathic' patterns of perception are shown to be concurrent with the use of a conventional poetic mode: both blindly follow pre-established patterns. When we take into account the poem's place in and its relation to the poetry of the period, it becomes obvious that 'Above the Dock' contains aspects of a literary parody, since it also constitutes, in Hulmean terms, a critique of the poetic practice whereby the unoriginal use of language leads to the creation of a vaguely romantic but easily mistaken impression: the poem's sobering ironic point lies in the simultaneous disruption of a conventional poetic pattern (the stylistic 'code' of the period) and the misguided perception (the visual illusion) which results from it <sup>(14)</sup>.

It may be difficult, in the light of the later evolution of the Imagist poetic, to regard 'Above the Dock' as a properly Imagist poem: it still depends, to an extent, on explanation and statement rather than mere juxtaposition. Some other poems, however, and some of the drafts and fragments, show the growing importance of images as such in the poetic structure. Two short texts will suffice to illustrate this point.

'Autumn' was also published in the appendix to Pound's Ripostes, and dates equally from 1908 (FS:221):

A touch of cold in the Autumn night -  
 I walked abroad,  
 And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge  
 Like a red-faced farmer.  
 I did not stop to speak, but nodded,  
 And round about were the wistful stars  
 With white faces like town children. (in Pound 1968:269)

At first sight, the poem seems, again, to be a fairly conventional

descriptive piece, recording the poet's impressions during a walk at night. But the quality of the images in lines 3-4 and 6-7 is unconventional in that, as in 'Above the Dock', they effectively block any potential Romantic associations or lyrical musings built upon the contemplation of the moon and stars. The poem, that is, has to be read in its literary-historical context if its real significance is to be gauged; as early as 1921 R. Jakobson pointed out that

Nous percevons tout trait du langage poétique actuel en relation nécessaire avec trois ordres: la tradition poétique présente, le langage quotidien d'aujourd'hui, et la tendance poétique qui préside à cette manifestation particulière. ('La nouvelle poésie russe', 1921; Jakobson 1973:11)

In this case, Hulme's direct and unornamented language obviously, though only implicitly, contrasts with the elaborate formal richness, the compound adjectives and delicate touches of Impressionist and 'Decadent' verse, as well as with the subtle speculations underlying most mature Symbolist poetry. From that point of view, the novelty of Hulme's poem lies in its formal economy and simplicity; the down-to-earth quality of the two images clearly implies the demystification of traditional poetic material: the commonplace modesty of the similes amounts to a deliberate deviation from the prevailing stylistic 'code' - and it is precisely the hidden presence of that code which lends the word "wistful"(line 6) its ironic ambiguity: the adjective may simply anticipate the image of the "white faces like town children", but its use may also ironically refer to the traditional (expected) Impressionist/Symbolist vocabulary. The concentration, via the images, on the visual aspect of the scene indicates the poem's consciously limited scope, and prevents the intrusion of subjective digressions. In all these senses, then, the visual images are at the centre of the poetic structure; their prominence is further enhanced by the parallelism between the images themselves ("red-faced/white faces", and "farmer/town children"), which lends the poem its balance.

The poem 'Sunset', finally, also written in 1908 (A.R. Jones 1960: 36) but published only posthumously, consists of just one image:

A coryphée, covetous of applause,  
Loth to leave the stage,  
With final diablerie, poises high her toe,  
Displays scarlet lingerie of carmin'd clouds,  
Amid the hostile murmur of the stalls.  
(in P. Jones 1972:49) (15)

This text bears some similarity to another and somewhat longer draft poem, 'A City Sunset', where the opening stanza reads:

Alluring, earth-seducing, with high conceits,  
is the sunset that coquettes  
at the end of westward streets. (FS:214)

The difference between this rendering and the poem 'Sunset' lies in the fact that the first stanza of 'A City Sunset' contains both tenor and vehicle of the metaphor; in 'Sunset' the second term of the metaphor takes up the whole body of the poem - so much so that, if the title were discarded or read metaphorically, it would be possible to see the poem as a direct description of the ballet-dancer. The static quality of 'Sunset' is clearly discernible: the whole poem consists of one sentence only, the development of which is repeatedly delayed by embedded adjectival or adverbial clauses (lines 1-3), while the two verbs themselves ("poises", "Displays") likewise convey the idea of motionlessness and lingering.

The figure of the coryphée, however, is not without literary associations: the theme of the dance, and of the ballet-dancer in particular, recurs frequently in Symbolist writings (its significance is analysed by F. Kermode in the essay 'Poet and Dancer before Diaghilev', 1971b:11-38). For Mallarmé, the dance has an essentially allegorical, emblematic, 'hieroglyphic' quality ('Crayonné au théâtre', Mallarmé 1945:296,312); the relation between dance and poetry is characterized by the description of the dance as "écriture corporelle" (*ibid.*:304), while a ballet performance is regarded as "la forme théâtrale de poésie par excellence", "le rendu plastique, sur la scène, de la poésie", and as a "poème dégagé de tout appareil du scribe" (*ibid.*:308,312,304). The dance is then for Mallarmé a spatial, visual equivalent of poetry; it is neither pattern nor dance, but "le point philosophique auquel est située l'impersonnalité de la danseuse, entre sa féminine apparence et un objet mimé", and can thus ultimately be seen as the "incorporation visuelle de l'idée" (*ibid.*:296, 306).

In 'Sunset', Hulme in one sense alludes to the complex of associations which the themes of dance and dancer carry in the poetry of the period: the mildly elaborate sentence structure and the somewhat affected vocabulary ("coryphée", "diablerie", "lingerie", "carmin'd") point to an Impressionist/Symbolist context. But the function of the extended image is entirely different. In his 'Notes on Language and Style', Hulme describes dancing as "the art of



prolonging an idea, lingering on a point"(FS:91), but in a passage where he discusses "the art of dwelling on a point, of decorating it, transforming it, until it produces in the reader a sense of novelty"(FS:92); this technique of prolonging, of lingering and dwelling on a point requires the use of "all kinds of analogy" and results in "intensity of meaning"(FS:91,90). The 'point' Hulme has in mind is an originally vague or momentary impression, which acquires the desired definiteness, fixity and accuracy through the use of adequate analogies: "Analogies must be substituted for what suggests something, a cloud of fancies"(FS:89). This is precisely what happens in the poem: the image of the coryphée belies the expected associations heaped upon it by the prevailing convention (the stylistic code) and serves on the contrary to fix a visual impression; in other words, it accomplishes the 'singularization' of the impression, in V. Shklovsky's sense:

Le but de l'art, c'est de donner une sensation de l'objet comme vision et non pas comme reconnaissance; le procédé de l'art est le procédé de singularisation des objets et le procédé qui consiste à obscurcir la forme, à augmenter la difficulté et la durée de la perception. ('L'art comme procédé, 1917; in Todorov 1965:83)

On the whole, then, the poem shows the same implicit conflict of aesthetic codes as 'Above the Dock' and 'Autumn'. The sentence structure does not just reflect the slow process of the sun's setting, but it also contains an obviously parodic element: though formally reminiscent of conventional stylistic patterns, it serves a purpose which is sharply at variance with these conventions; the affected 'Frenchness' of some of the terms makes the element of parody only more conspicuous. In this way Hulme's poetry succeeds in emancipating itself from traditional forms; his emphasis on the concrete, visual aspect of things, on the material, physical solidity of reality, on the limitations of poetry, on the qualities of hardness and clarity in poetic writing, is incompatible with the aesthetic canon of the previous generation.

Hulme's line of thought will be pursued by Pound; this evolution, however, is by no means the only possible one: although nearly all the contemporary Modernist poets on the Continent appear to share Hulme's basic view of discontinuity and his pre-occupation with the problematics of a new (non-Symbolist, non-Impressionist) poetic language, the different accents found in Heym and Apollinaire

introduce, at about the same time, a diversity ranging from visionary distortion to simultanism. The nature of these techniques will be explored in the following chapters.

NOTES

- (1) The abbreviations used in this chapter are as follows:  
S: Hulme, T.E.: Speculations. Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art. Ed. by Herbert Read. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949 (1st ed. 1924).  
FS: Hulme, T.E.: Further Speculations. Ed. by Samuel Hynes. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1955.
- (2) The term 'Romanticism' here, and elsewhere in Hulme's essays, does not so much refer to the Romantic movement in literature and art as to a Romantic attitude in a very unspecific sense (cf. A.R. Jones 1960:41-42,47).  
 The view that the present age (the early twentieth century) is a direct extension of the Renaissance, and drawing to a close, is of course also held by Eliot, Yeats, and Pound, as well as by Hans Arp. Pound appears to see the problem more exclusively in terms of the use of language (Dante's or Cavalcanti's precision versus Petrarchan verbiage); yet he too, generalizing from his observations on writing, regards his own age as a period of slush and sloppiness. In the case of Arp, who was also strongly influenced by Worringer, the similarity with Hulme's position is striking, in that he, like Hulme, locates the root of all evil in a rationalism which believes man to be the centre and measure of the universe; Arp's views in this respect will be further discussed in the chapter on Dada.
- (3) It is curious, though characteristic, that Hulme never explains why in fact this new period of discontinuity should be approaching. Transposing Worringer's ideas concerning abstraction and empathy to the present age, he obviously associates contemporary 'geometric' art with discontinuity. But art, as Hulme admits, only prefigures the new attitude and does not create it. Thus he fails to offer any clues as to the actual driving force behind history and historical change, other than the vague hint that the prevailing attitude has simply exhausted itself.
- (4) Chronologically, Hulme appears to have undergone the impact of Bergson first. He started reading Bergson in 1907 (A.R. Jones 1965: 116; Martin 1970:202), published a number of articles on him between 1909 and 1912 (mainly in The New Age), and translated his 'Introduction a la metaphysique' of 1903 (together with F.S. Flint; cf. Harmer 1975:34).  
 Worringer published his Abstraktion und Einfühlung in 1908 (the edition here referred to as Worringer 1918 is the fifth), and Hulme probably read it at an early date (cf. Kermodé 1971a:136). He subsequently met Worringer during a visit to Berlin in 1912-1913, and published a number of articles on contemporary art in 1914 (in The New Age).  
 In many ways the two influences (both generously acknowledged by Hulme) were absorbed and substantially modified: Hulme appears to have put both Bergson and Worringer to his own use, and he claimed in both cases that he was already thinking along the same lines anyway. For the sake of clarity Hulme's account of Worringer's distinction between vital and geometrical art is here given first.

- (5) In passages like this, Hulme echoes Worringer almost word for word. Hulme writes (in the essay 'Modern Art', 1914):

While a naturalistic art is the result of a happy pantheistic relation between man and the outside world, the tendency to abstraction, on the contrary, occurs in races whose attitude to the outside world is the exact contrary of this. (S:86)

Which corresponds to a passage in Abstraktion und Einfühlung:

Während der Einfühlungsdrang ein glückliches, pantheistisches Vertraulichkeitsverhältnis zwischen dem Menschen und den Aussenwelterscheinungen zur Bedingung hat, ist der Abstraktionsdrang die Folge einer grossen inneren Beunruhigung des Menschen durch die Erscheinungen der Aussenwelt und korrespondiert in religiöser Beziehung mit einer stark transzendentalen Färbung aller Vorstellungen. (Worringer 1918:19)

- (6) With regard to Hulme's view on the radical difference between Cubism and Impressionism (the latter, according to Hulme, thoroughly rooted in the mimetic tradition), it is somewhat ironic to find that Jean Metzinger himself emphasizes the affinities between the two styles, arguing that Cubism should be seen as a further step - be it a daring and decisive one - in an evolution away from servile realism. "The only difference between the Impressionists and ourselves," he concludes, "is a difference of intensity, and we do not wish it to be otherwise." (Gleizes & Metzinger, 'Cubism', 1912; in Herbert 1964:13)
- (7) Hulme's view of Kandinsky is misconceived. Kandinsky did absorb Fauvism as well as Bergson during his stay in Paris, but it is hard to see how that justifies the labelling of his art as a by-product of Cubism. It is perhaps significant in this respect that Pound, who shared Hulme's opinions of Futurism, by no means dismissed Kandinsky - on the contrary; yet Pound also saw Picasso and Kandinsky as the two poles, "father and mother, classicism and romanticism" of the modern movement in painting (Blast 1, 1914:154). Artists like Klee and Arp also produced abstract works stylistically akin to Kandinsky's, and both indicated a profound dissatisfaction with the contemporary world and its state of affairs as the principal motive for continuing on the road of non-figurative abstraction. Thus Klee, using a terminology obviously reminiscent of Worringer, noted in his diary in 1915: "Je schreckensvoller diese Welt (wie gerade heute), desto abstrakter die Kunst, während eine glückliche Welt eine diesseitige Kunst hervorbringt." (Klee 1957:318)
- (8) In various essays in his Speculations and Further Speculations Hulme deals extensively with Bergson's theories, drawing upon several of his major works. The texts which appear to have influenced Hulme most directly may be found in Bergson's La pensée et le mouvant (Bergson 1969), which contains, among other essays: 'Introduction à la métaphysique' (1903), 'L'intuition philosophique' (the address to the Bologna Congress in 1911), and 'La perception du changement' (a lecture at Oxford, 1911). Bergson's Le rire of 1899 (Bergson 1967) offers perhaps the clearest brief exposition of his views on the nature and role of art.

(9) Critical opinions on the question of the actual indebtedness of Pound and the Imagists of 1912 to Hulme's ideas are still divided. Thus H. Schneidau (1969:38ff) and N.C. De Nagy (1966:70) deny Hulme any significant role in laying the foundations of the Imagist poetic. On the other hand, E. Brandabur (1973:420), J.B. Harmer (1975:35), G. Hughes (1960:8ff), A.R. Jones (1960:53), F. Kermodé (1971a:134,150); H. Read (1947:105) and W.C. Wees (1972:73) take Hulme's direct or indirect impact on Pound and the Imagists for granted. S.K. Coffman (1951:47-48) remains non-committal. In his biography of Pound, N. Stock (1970:133-134,143) also records several instances from the years 1911-1913 which imply mutual theoretical agreement between Pound and Hulme, as well as the adoption of a common terminology in various critical essays.

(10) The first part of this quotation is virtually a literal translation of a passage in Bergson's Le rire (1899):

Entre la nature et nous, que dis-je?, entre nous et notre propre conscience, un voile s'interpose, voile épais pour le commun des hommes, voile léger, presque transparent, pour l'artiste et le poète. ( ) Mes sens et ma conscience ne me livrent donc de la réalité qu'une simplification pratique. ( ) Les choses ont été classées en vue du parti que j'en pourrai tirer. Et c'est cette classification que j'aperçois, beaucoup plus que la couleur et la forme des choses. ( ) L'individualité des choses et des êtres nous échappe toutes les fois qu'il ne nous est pas matériellement utile de l'apercevoir. (Bergson 1967:115-116)

(11) Cf. 'Deux aspects du langage et deux types d'aphasie'(1956), in Jakobson 1963:43-67. The use of the terms 'metaphor' and 'metonymy' in this context is explained as follows:

Le développement d'un discours peut se faire le long de deux lignes sémantiques différentes: un thème (topic) en amène un autre soit par similarité soit par contiguïté. Le mieux serait sans doute de parler de procès métaphorique dans le premier cas et de procès métonymique dans le second, puisqu'ils trouvent leur expression la plus condensée, l'un dans la métaphore, l'autre dans la métonymie. (1963:61)

(12) This 'confluence', or more precisely perhaps the implantation and feedback of Worringer's ideas on an initially Bergsonian train of thought, is also responsible in places for some considerable ambiguity in Hulme's terminology. For example, his use of the term 'flux' may refer to the flux of reality grasped only by the intuition, or to the flux and impermanence of reality in a continuity/discontinuity context - the connotations are obviously quite different; when Hulme forecasts the coming of a period of hard, dry, 'classical' verse, the term 'classical' would be self-contradictory if understood in Worringer's sense. Hulme, clearly, was only beginning to digest and merge the two systems into a new coherent whole.

(13) Hulme himself however never uses the term 'Image' (in the Imagist sense of Pound's definition) in his writings, although his views clearly develop in that direction. F.S. Flint also relates in 'The History of Imagism'(The Egoist, 1 May 1915:71) that in the

original Imagist group of 1909 (which had Hulme as "ringleader") there was "a lot of talk () about what we called the Image." In Poetry (March 1913) he had perviously stated that the Imagists also held "a certain 'Doctrine of the Image', which they had not committed to writing." (cf. P. Jones 1972:15-16,129).

- (14) The construction of Hulme's 'Above the Dock' and its use of irony are strikingly similar to Max Jacob's prose poem 'La mendiante de Naples':

Quand j'habitais Naples, il y avait à la porte de mon palais une mendiante à laquelle je jetais des pièces de monnaie avant de monter en voiture. Un jour, surpris de n'avoir jamais de remerciements, je regardai la mendiante. Or, comme je regardais, je vis que ce que j'avais pris pour une mendiante, c'était une caisse de bois peinte en vert qui contenait de la terre rouge et quelques bananes à demi pourries... (Jacob 1945 (1916):144)

In spite of the obvious differences in tone and theme, Jacob, like Hulme, contrives the destruction of habitual expectations and empathy by means of parody and irony, in that his poem first builds up a conventional narrative illusion, and then proceeds to a quick anticlimax; as in Hulme's poem, the point of the exercise involves the ease with which the conventional use of a literary mode or stylistic code conveys an 'empathic' perception.

- (15) The text of this poem as given in the Further Speculations (FS:219) has in fact a full stop at the end of the third line; this is probably an error: in P. Jones's anthology (1972:49) the poem consists of one sentence only, with a comma at the end of line 3, which seems more consistent.

## CHAPTER 3

Georg Heym: Subjectivity, Objectivation, Metaphor

The first section of this chapter looks briefly at some aspects of Heym's early work. Section two describes the world-view that underlies Heym's later poetry. In sections three and four several structural and thematic characteristics of the poems of 1910 are discussed, while the final section considers the poems of 1911.

The main point in the argument will concern the way in which Heym, after an initial derivative period, continually and by various means attempts formally to 'objectify' the presentation of a strongly emotional, 'visionary' image of the world.

## 1.

During Heym's lifetime only one volume of his poetry was published: the collection Der ewige Tag (1911), which contained almost exclusively poems written in the course of 1910. Heym's early poetry spans the period from his first attempts in 1899 up to 1909. It may be instructive to consider briefly some aspects of these early poems first, if only for the (structural and thematic) contrast they provide with the later work.

Generally speaking, Heym's early poems establish a fixed subjective point of view, a practice which is entirely in line with the Romantic convention, as characterized by J. Lotman:

In der romantischen Poesie laufen die künstlerischen Blickpunkte ebenfalls strahlenförmig zu einem starr fixierten Zentrum zusammen, und die Beziehungen sind selbst eindeutig und leicht vorhersagbar (). Dieses Zentrum - das Subjekt des poetischen Textes - deckt sich mit der Persönlichkeit des Autors, es wird zu seinem lyrischen Doppelgänger. (Lotman 1972b:375)

This basic subjectivity pervades the work of Heym's formative years; it is also apparent in the poem 'Sonnwendtag' (November 1904), the only early (pre-1909) poem to be included in the volume Der ewige Tag:

Es war am Sommersonnwendtag,  
Dein braunes Haar im Nacken lag  
Wie Gold und schwere Seiden.

Da nahmst du mir die feine Hand.  
Und hinter dir stob auf der Sand  
Des Feldwegs an den Weiden.

Von allen Bäumen floss der Glanz.  
Dein Ritt war lauter Elfentanz  
Hin über rote Heiden.

Und um mich duftete der Hag,  
Wie nur am Sommersonnwendtag,  
Ein Dank und Sichbescheiden. (DuS:570)<sup>(1)</sup>

This poem may be called 'subjective' in that its focus is, manifestly, the poet's lyrical sensibility: the sentimental relationship it describes is viewed from a subjective point of view, in the same way as the actual presentation of the scene is carried through in entirely subjective terms. At the same time, as especially the last line shows, the relationship in question is seen to be in perfect harmony with the natural surroundings.

The poem's descriptive level is also marked by considerable stylization, of a type which supplies evidence for the role of various traditional late nineteenth-century poetic forms in Heym's early products. The stylization indeed tends to the decorative and the ornamental, along highly conventional patterns (e.g. hair like gold and silk, the fairy-tale atmosphere suggested in the second stanza). The overtones of preciousness, the smoothness of the rhythms and movements, the tendency to the arabesque and the general idealization all inscribe the poem in the anti-naturalistic tradition of the 'Stilkunst' around the turn of the century (as characterized in Hermand 1972:188-197, and in Martens 1971:73-108). The extreme conventionalism in which the poem is steeped appears most clearly perhaps in its clichés; of these the most conspicuous is line 4 ("Da nahmst du mir die feine Hand"), where the precious "feine Hand" would normally be expected to refer to the beloved; the fact that it does not is out of key with conventional expectations, although the poem as a whole does not appear to allow an ironic reading of this transgression.

In the context of Der ewige Tag, 'Sommersonnwendtag' remains an exception, formally as well as thematically. The gap separating Heym's early poems from his later work can be measured in terms of



the changes in the function of particular motifs. Thus the 'dance' ("Elfentanz") is in the early poem an integral part of the idealization of the beloved; in later poems however the dance is usually associated with madness (as in 'Die Irren', DuS:91), the pointless dull round of years (as in 'An meinen Leichnam', DuS:343), or death (as in 'Die Toten auf dem Berge', DuS:99, modelled on Rimbaud's 'Bal des pendus'). Such a complete inversion of a thematic element is symptomatic: indeed the later poems in many ways amount to a negation of the early work - a contrast so outspoken that its structural relevance in the evolution of Heym's writing requires some further assessment.

The central position of a subjective sensibility and the harmonious relationship between subject and surrounding world are also in evidence in 'Epitaph' (September 1909):

Des Herbstes blasser Hauch liegt auf den Wäldern,  
Die weit entrückt sind in das Land hinaus,  
Ein Krahenvolk liegt auf den kahlen Feldern,  
Der Hagedorn glänzt schon in rotem Flaus.

Am Weg vereinsamt steht ein Ackergaul,  
Noch eingespannt in eines Pflugs Geschirr.  
Und manchmal streift ins Gras das alte Maul,  
Das in dem Winde zittert, welk und dürr.

O du, mein Spiegel der Verlassenheit.  
So ward auch ich in Einsamkeit geführt.  
Vor meiner Liebe floh ins Land ich weit,  
Doch fand ich nichts, das also mich gerührt. (DuS:705)

Although the emotional quality voiced here lies at the other extreme of that in 'Sonnwendtag', the approach to the theme is virtually identical: the natural scenery is conceived of as a mirror image, as a reflection of the poet's mood. Without its final stanza the poem would, interestingly enough, be practically indistinguishable from Heym's poems of 1911; but it is precisely this third stanza which determines the impact of the first two, in that it explicitly states the poem's subjective core: dejection, loneliness, the flight from love (itself, clearly, a conventional escape-motif).

The construction of the poem hinges on the word "Spiegel"; the lonely farm-horse epitomizes the poet's loneliness, and the season (autumn) provides the appropriate setting for his emotional state. It is then in the light of the third stanza that terms like "blass, entrückt, vereinsamt, kahl, welk, dürr" in the first eight lines

acquire emotional connotations. The natural scenery, that is, constitutes an atmospheric image as well as a metaphor, both in function of the subjective statement at the end. This pattern underlies many of Heym's early poems. Thus the second (and final) stanza of 'O Wolkenland' (July 1909) reads:

O Abendwolken, die in Streifen wandern  
Am Horizont, und hinterm Wald verschwinden.  
Wie gleicht eine immer doch der andern,  
Wie gleich ich euch, die keine Heimat finden. (DuS:699)

Here, as in the previous poem, the natural scene is imbued with the emotional tonality of the last line; in other words, the subjective orientation of the whole stanza determines the convergence of lyrical sensibility and natural scenery.

It is mainly in this respect that the later poems present inversions of the early work. Thus in 'Hora Mortis' (August 1911) the mirror metaphor also occurs, but its value is entirely different:

Gebannt in die Trauer der endlosen Horizonte,  
Wo nur ein Baum sich wand unter Schmerz,  
Sanken wir, Bergleuten gleich, in das Schweigen der Grube  
Unserer Qual. Und vor Leere schwoh uns das Herz.

Trüb wie die Winde, im Schierling, bei Büschen und Weiden  
Haben wir unsere Hände im Dunkel gesenkt,  
Und dann gingen wir lässig, und freuten uns unserer Leiden,  
Arme Spiegel, darin sich ein düsterer Abend fängt. (DuS:320)

Here the subjective instance appears to have lost all controlling power. The "düsterer Abend" is the dominant image in the second stanza, and man is merely a mirror image of this dark evening (whereas in 'Epitaph' the landscape mirrors the poet's emotional state). The idea of man's powerlessness is further suggested by the oxymora ("vor Leere schwoh uns das Herz"; "und freuten uns unserer Leiden"), the repeated downward movement of the "wir" ("Sanken wir..."; "gesenkt"), and the images of the human figures as victims ("Gebannt in die Trauer der endlosen Horizonte," or, elsewhere in the poem, "Nachtwandlern gleich, gejagt vom Entsetzen der Träume..."). The human figure is thus seen as caught and driven, as insignificant, dwarfed by his surroundings. In the final line of the poem the figures are referred to as "blutleere Seelen", and it is mainly in this sense that, as Mautz (1961:127ff) points out, the whole constellation of 'Hora Mortis' embodies the general image of man's predicament in Heym's late poetry.

Various individual motifs in the early poems undergo changes in the same direction. Thus the "Krähenvolk" metaphor in 'Epitaph' is wholly domestic, located in a context of conventional personification and part of a landscape which is itself the scenic correlative to the subjective mood stated at the end of the poem. In section 4 of 'Herbstliche Tetralogie' (September 1911) crows are also mentioned, but here the context is, again, totally different:

Krähen streichen manchmal vorbei  
 Oben im Himmel  
 Und schreien schön<sup>de</sup>  
 Wie irrende Seelen  
 In dunklem Ort. (DuS:376)

The image of the crows here figures in a long series of brief, largely disconnected scenes in which the human presence is extremely reduced and indeterminate. The emotional significance of the crow image is incorporated indirectly in adverbs and similes ("schön<sup>de</sup>", "Wie irrende Seelen"), but never subordinated to some central subjectivity. On the contrary: in 'Herbstliche Tetralogie' as a whole, the poetic construction excludes subjective statements: emotions and moods are continually objectified, projected on autonomous metaphors.

For a more complete appreciation of the contrast between the early and the later poetry, some further aspects of the general context of the early work should be indicated. In the early poems quoted so far, the subjective sensibility always forms the explicit thematic basis on which the poems are built. In their elaboration, two elements stand out: the harmony between the individual (the poetic voice) and the surrounding world, which is taken for granted, and the unquestioned supremacy of the subjective instance, which implies a view of this lyrical sensibility as fundamentally wholesome and confident (even when dejection or doubt are the themes: the individual always remains in command of the thematic structure, and the conventional apparatus is invariably applied on all levels). The wider context upon which these assumptions are based are clearly expressed in the poem 'Sehnsucht'(1903/1904):

Wie glänzend die Höhen sich dehnen  
 Weit in die blaue Ferne.  
 Zu ihnen fliegt mein Sehnen  
 Hin zu dem Morgensterne.

Wohl hinter ihnen sich breitet  
 Der lachende Weg zum Glück  
 Das endlos da hinten sich weit<sup>et</sup>.  
 Ich finde ihn nicht zurück. (DuS:533)

The poem again affirms the preponderance of its author's lyrical sensibility, and again the structural and thematic contrast with the later poetry is very marked: terms like "blaue Ferne" and "endlos", which are here associated with "Glück", will in the later work inevitably enter semantic fields including such terms as "leer, starr, kahl, dürr" or "endlose Ebene, Fläche, Einerlei" etc. The frame of reference from which the poem springs, however, is suggested in "Der lachende Weg zum Glück/ Das endlos da hinten sich weitet." These lines echo a still earlier poem, 'Mitternacht' (DuS:527), which ends with the rhetorical question: "Gibt es denn Wahrheit? Ist denn Licht/ Des Abglanz nur durch Wolken bricht."; and it is in pieces like this - written when Heym was a mere adolescent and his verse entirely derivative - that the Romantic and Symbolist parentage of these early stages appears most clearly. "Glück" and "Licht" are seen as abstract, integrative principles which lie behind appearances, and the whole natural world is conceived as an ordered set of elements whose interrelations (the Baudelairean and Mallarméan 'correspondences') prefigure or suggest the presence of hidden but harmonious fundamental principles. This world-image coincides with the one Hofmannsthal finally finds broken and fragmented in the Chandos crisis; but for as long as it remains intact, its basis is the network of correspondences linking the visible with the invisible order of things; in it, as Hofmannsthal put it, "Der Dichter begreift alle Dinge als Brüder und Kinder eines Blutes," and in each individual thing "bewundert er den Zusammenlauf von tausend Fäden, die aus den Tiefen der Unendlichkeit herkommen." ('Dichter und Leben', 1897; quoted in Landmann 1965:37).

At this early stage, the central position of the subjective sensibility in this context is never questioned by Heym. Thus he notes at one point in his diary: "Hässliches, graues Novemberwetter. Regen. Regen. Nun werde ich meine Stimmung in die Natur Hineinsehen." (12.11.1905; Tgb:39); and soon afterwards, commenting on the need for the man of genius to subordinate nature "mit seines Geistes Waffen," he concludes: "Das Genie muss die Natur im Dienst der Menschheit bezwingen." (21.7.1906; Tgb:55). Both statements clearly confirm the supremacy of the individual over his surroundings as an essential and central element in the poetic construction; both also are in line with Heym's summarizing note which asserts: "Ich kann ja 3mal Egoist sein, ich muss es sein (), denn die Welt in mir ist 100mal mehr wert als alle anderen." (2.10.1906; Tgb:66).

2.

As was suggested above, Heym's poetry of the years 1910 and 1911 constitutes a radical departure from the positions that underlie the early work. The essential nature of the change is aptly characterized by R. Salter (1972:184) as "die Abkehr vom Subjekt und die Hinwendung zum Objekt."

The major shift in Heym's poetic preoccupations is usually situated in the first half of 1910 (Schneider 1967:90; Martens 1971:197). The poems of this period show a marked change in subject-matter; in the sequence of poems about Berlin (spanning the period April-December 1910) the neo-romantic idealization of nature is replaced by an approach incorporating realistic and naturalistic elements (Mautz 1961:68). Concurrent with this change is the consistent and almost exclusive use throughout 1910 of a single poetic form, and the development of what J. Ziegler (1972:53) calls the "neutral perspective", that is to say, the adoption by the poetic voice of the point of view of an objective, uninvolved spectator. In the following pages it will be argued (largely in line with Ziegler) that these two structural elements - the consistent use of one poetic form and the neutral perspective - can be seen as a poetic mask which Heym adopts so as to be able to voice in a coherent and objective way his sense of fragmentation and alienation; in the poems of 1911 this formal mask will come under increasing strain, and will consequently undergo considerable modifications.

In a general sense, the development of the neutral perspective in Heym's poetic practice appears to be the outcome of a complex process. One aspect of this process involves a religious and philosophical crisis. The first (indirect) reference to Nietzsche in Heym's diary - a reference to the Uebermensch-idea - dates back to 1906 (Tgb:44-45). In the following years Heym gives evidence of a strongly Nietzschean view of Christianity (which he deems "krank am galiläischen Mitleid", Tgb:60), and his renunciations of conventional religion become progressively hostile and vehement (Tgb:134,136). As a result, the diary dwells repeatedly and under various forms and guises on a disturbing loss of stability and of an acceptable scale of values, while at the same time, by way of compensation, emphatic assertions of individuality and independence of mind succeed one another <sup>(2)</sup>. Ultra-individualism and emphatic self-assertion - often in the shape of hero-worship or a longing for

liberation, disruption, violence or revolution - are thus the counterparts of a profound feeling of fragmentation, uncertainty, oppressiveness and loss of direction. "Wir sind von einer Kette von Rätseln umgeben," Heym notes in his diary as early as November 1906 (Tgb:75); in April 1909 he writes: "Ich werde bald soweit sein, dass ich die freie Willensbestimmung des Menschen leugne" (Tgb:126) (as indeed he does in 1911), while shortly afterwards he turns to "die Idee eines bösen Gottes oder eines bösen Schicksals (). Denn alles, was geschieht, ist und wird böse." (26.6.1910; Tgb:136). The fundamental and depressing uncertainty of his position is further illustrated in the ambivalent entry for 20.7.1909:

Ich liebe alle, die in sich ein zerrissenes Herz haben, ich liebe Kleist, Grabbe, Hölderlin, Büchner, ich liebe Rimbaud und Marlowe. Ich liebe alle, die nicht von der grossen Menge angebetet werden. Ich liebe alle, die oft so an sich verzweifeln, wie ich fast täglich an mir verzweifle. () Ich würde mich heilen, wenn ich mich erst erkannt hätte. Das Furchtbarste ist die Unlust, die Verzweiflung, ehe man noch begonnen hat. (Tgb:128)

In spite of his preference for "alle, die nicht von der Menge angebetet werden", the first remedy for his predicament, in the same entry, reads somewhat surprisingly: "Das wäre der Ruhm, das wäre der Beifall einer tausendköpfigen Menge." (*ibid.*).

Heym's sense of dissatisfaction with the world is crystallized in the frequent references to the endless boredom to which he feels condemned. Thus in May 1907 he notes: "Ein Tag ist wie der andere.() Es ist alles so langweilig."(Tgb:98), and in later years this feeling acquires more general and more oppressive overtones:

Ich weiss auch gewiss nicht, warum ich noch lebe; ich meine, keine Zeit war bis auf den Tag so inhaltlos wie diese."  
(29.9.1909;Tgb:131);

Mein Unglück ruht vielmehr zur Zeit in der ganzen Ereignislosigkeit des Lebens.

(17.6.1910;Tgb:135);

Es ist immer das gleiche, so langweilig, langweilig, langweilig. Es geschieht nichts, nichts, nichts.() Wenn ich mich fragte, warum ich bis jetzt gelebt habe. Ich wüsste keine Antwort."  
(6.7.1910;Tgb:138)

As a means to overcome these frustrations and break the deadening boredom, Heym relies primarily on his "Hunger nach einer Tat"(Tgb:135), the longing for some radical upheaval. Characteristic in this respect is the vagueness and naivety of the solutions envisaged, as he repeatedly looks for an unspecific "man" to instigate some revolution

or war ("Warum macht man keine Revolution?", or "sei es auch nur, dass man einen Krieg begänne, er kann ungerecht sein."; Tgb:135,139). But these hopes, like his own prospects for public recognition, are continually dashed, and Heym concludes: "der preussische Dreckstaat lässt mich zu nichts kommen."(22.10.1910;Tgb:146). The discrepancy between on the one hand the apparent intensity of the sense of oppressiveness and uncertainty, and, on the other, the obviously illusory nature of the proposed remedies and solutions, is in itself significant: Heym's cultivation of a directionless vitality (e.g. when he claims: "Was ich vor Nietzsche, Kleist, Grabbe, Hölderlin... voraus habe? Dass ich viel, viel vitaler bin. Im guten und im schlechten Sinn." 4.7.1910;Tgb:138) seems on the whole to be more indicative of the depth and seriousness of his inner instability than of his ability to come to terms with it.

These general considerations, then, also have an immediate significance with respect to the form and structure of Heym's poetry, in the sense that, given the lack of genuine liberating action, Heym appears to regard the writing of poetry as a substitute for such action. At one point indeed this is explicitly recognized:

Mir erscheint die Dichtkunst schon nächstens albern, denn sie ist ein sehr kümmerliches Surrogat für die Tat und für das Leben. Sie bietet mir aber z. Zt. noch den einzigen Ersatz. (7.12.1910;Tgb:153)

Yet the poems themselves are by no means celebrations of vitality. They rather situate themselves in the context of Heym's dual personality, that is to say in the context of the conscious and consistent wearing of a public mask. The diary contains repeated references to this deliberate adoption of a role, a posture. Already in May 1907, commenting on the "Langeweile" of life, he continues: "Dabei habe ich wenigstens noch Humor, wenigstens im Verkehr mit anderen. Wenn ich allein bin, ist er aber fortgeblasen."(Tgb:89); and later, in May 1909: "Darin liegt der Hauptunterschied zwischen meiner Umgebung und mir: Meine Freunde suchen zu scheinen, was sie nicht sind. Ich suche nicht einmal zu scheinen, was ich bin."(Tgb:126). In the course of 1910 this attitude is then explicitly related to the idea of the mask. Thus Heym notes in his diary:

Sie meinen,() Ihnen wäre noch nie jemand so ungebrochen vorgekommen wie ich. Ach nein,() ich bin von dem grauen Elend zerfressen (). Was Sie sehen, ist nur die Maske, die ich mit soviel Geschick trage. (6.7.1910;Tgb:138)

Ich bin stark, weil ich das Gegenteil der Charaktereigenschaften, die ich habe, in Erscheinung treten lasse. (10.11.1910;Tgb:149)

Problem Heym - van Hoddis. Hoddis ist der verhaltene, Heym der laute.() Re vera: Hoddis trägt eine Maske, Heym ist maskiert. (31.12.1910;Tgb:155)

This whole attitude, as especially Heym's comment on the distinction between van Hoddis and himself bears out, has an obvious relevance for Heym's poetry. Indeed it would appear that much the same type of mask as Heym's public posture applies to the structure itself of his poems. Its two main manifestations in the work of 1910 will be the use of a 'monumental style' and the previously mentioned 'neutral perspective'.

The relation between the idea of the mask and the 'monumental' or 'robust' style of the poems is made clear in the diary entry for 17.6.1910, where Heym notes:

Im allgemeinen Sinne bin ich jetzt glücklicher, ruhiger, wie in den früheren Jahren. Ich lebe mich auf den robusten Stil ein, der mich wie eine Festung umschanzt. - Teils bin ich es ja auch. (Tgb:135)

And towards the end of 1911, when this mask has been superseded, Heym reflects on the "göttliche Ruhe" of the poems of 1910, when the stylistic and formal mask was instrumental in keeping his imagination under control (Tgb:174). In other words, the particular formal elaboration of the poems acts as a defence, both against the outside world (the public, the reader) and against his own disturbing imaginative powers, in the same way as Heym's public stance both disguises and contains his inner instability.

In Der ewige Tag, the 'monumental style' manifests itself primarily in the virtually exclusive use of a single conventional poetic form. As R. Ziegler (1972:33ff) shows in a statistical analysis, nearly all the poems in this volume make use of the iambic pentameter, mostly in four-line stanzas and with embracing or cross-rhyme. The formal requirements of the metrical and rhyming pattern are strictly adhered to, and very few deviations occur. Heym's iambic pentameter appears to be derived from both the French alexandrine (Baudelaire, Rimbaud)<sup>(3)</sup> and George (Ziegler 1972:45-47). His consistent and rigorous use of the form is "geradezu auffallend unauffällig"(Vietta and Kemper 1975:52), and creates a characteristic monotony in rhythm and rhyme. However, in the context of the 'squareness' of the monumental style - Heym himself calls it "vierkantig"(Tgb:166)<sup>(4)</sup> - this monotony is clearly not accidental, but deliberate: it is "kein



ungewolltes Nebenprodukt, sondern ein wesentlicher Teil der künstlerischen Struktur der Gedichte" and its main function consists in the prevention of "subjektive Anteilnahme"(Ziegler 1972:52). The apparently derivative (conventional) formal elaboration is thus highly functional in that it establishes an objective distance between the poem and the reader and writer alike. And this point then leads directly to the main paradox in Heym's poems of 1910: the peculiar tension between the monotony of formal uniformity and the proliferation and diversity of the images. In this respect the view of the monumental style as a mask is again essential: the disruptive, gigantic, demonic overtones of most of Heym's images suggest the presence of a powerful and obsessive subjectivity, which is however neutralized by the strict adherence to pre-established formal constraints. As a result, the 'monostylistic' (Lotman) character of these poems has two paradoxical but complementary aspects: it is a symptom of the all-embracing subjectivity of Heym's world view as well as of the deliberate imposition of a formal, 'monumental' mask on the presentation of this view.

The notion of the 'neutral perspective', then, is related to the adoption of an objective and detached stance, of a neutral point of view, allowing the presentation of images and scenes in objective terms. It is thus mainly a structural principle <sup>(5)</sup>. Heym's diary entry for 17.11.1910 provides evidence for his awareness of this principle as a basic element in his poetic practice:

Trotz aller Attaquen, die ich noch durchmachen muss, bin ich jetzt viel glücklicher, wie die Jahre vorher. Denn ich habe gelernt, zu schauen, ohne zu wünschen, einfach zu betrachten. Wie ich vielleicht 17 Jahr alt war, hoffte ich auf das Glück, auf etwas fernes, wesenloses, eine Chimäre. Jetzt bin ich 23, ich habe gelernt, mit den Dingen zu rechnen, und auf ihre Blösse und Torheit zu stehen und allem eine neue Schönheit abzugewinnen. Natürlich ist das noch nicht die Krone, aber es ist das Fundament. (Tgb:150)

The distinction between the early and the mature work is here clearly indicated in terms of a shift from a subjective to an objective approach, the latter being simply the stance of an observer ("schauen, betrachten"). In later entries Heym also describes himself as "der Mann der Dinge" and "der Spiegel des Aussen"(Tgb:164). On the level of poetic construction, this approach implies considerable objectivity of presentation and the elimination of the lyrical 'I' as the centre of gravity of the poem; or, as Ziegler (1972:65) puts it: "Subjektivität und neutrale Perspektive stehen also in einem sich gegenseitig ausschliessenden Verhältnis."

The adoption of the neutral perspective does not, of course, alter the fact that ultimately Heym's poetry - with its obsessive images and metaphors, its element of 'demonization' - remains profoundly subjective in character. Indeed the whole world of his poems is rooted in an "isolated subjectivity"(Kaufmann); what is under discussion here is a question of technique: the presentation of this world view is consistently carried through in impassive, neutral terms, creating an objective distance between poet and poem, and eliminating the poet's subjective sensibility as the thematic and structural focus of the poem. In that sense, as H. Kaufmann observes, there is no contradiction between the basic subjectivity which determines Heym's outlook and the "Versachlichung der lyrischen Darstellungsart, das vollständige Verschwinden des Ichs."(Kaufmann 1969:231). As a result, "eine leidenschaftliche Subjektivität der Weltbegegnung ist in die Objektivität der Seinsaussage verwandelt, die das Ich verschweigt." (F. Martini in Mann & Rothe 1967:312). The objective presentation is then the major outcome of the application of the neutral perspective, which itself, as the conscious adoption of a stance, functions essentially as a mask, and stands in close correlation with the dialectic of fragmentation and self-assertion.

### 3.

Heym's first city poems, the sonnets about Berlin, date from April 1910. They mark a formal as well as a thematic change: the empathetic evocation of landscapes is replaced by the objective description of townscapes and industrial scenes. The naturalistic streak in these poems is evident in the choice of the subject-matter itself, and in the particularity of the scene (modern Berlin). As K. Mautz (1961:68ff) points out, the Berlin poems do contain some 'pathetic' and visionary overtones - mainly concentrated in the metaphors - but these remain on the whole subordinate to the descriptive concern. In this sense Heym's later city poems differ from the Berlin sonnets in at least two respects: as the focus shifts from a particular city to unspecified, formless towns, the foregrounding of demonic metaphorization increases accordingly. And concurrent with these changes is a third aspect: the gradual elimination of the 'I', as the most conspicuous symptom of the adoption of the neutral perspective.

The tendency to objectivity and neutrality of presentation can

be traced in the successive drafts of particular poems. Thus the first stanza of 'Berlin I' (April 1910) reads in the first draft:

Wir sassen, wo der Strasse Dämme ragen  
 Zum Walde auf, und sahen in der Enge  
 Den Strom des Grosstadtvolks in riesger Länge  
 Den Städten zu, die schon im Dunkel lagen. (DuS:56)

which becomes in the final version:

Der hohe Strassenrand, auf dem wir lagen,  
 War weiss von Staub. Wir sahen in der Enge  
 Unzählig: Menschenströme und Gedränge,  
 Und sahn die Weltstadt fern im Abend ragen. (DuS:57)

In both versions the use of the collective "wir" as subject stands already in opposition to the lyrical 'I' of the early poems; it is significant, moreover, that of the eight Berlin poems only the first three (in chronological order) contain indications of the subject of perception at all. In the opening stanza of 'Berlin I' the difference between the first and final version lies mainly in the deletion of the initial "wir": in the second version it is relegated to a secondary place, while at the same time the important "sahen" is repeated. The impression of descriptive realism in the final version is further enhanced by the introduction of the colon in line 3, directing the reader's attention to the actual scene in view, and by the replacement of the plural "Städte" by the singular, and thus more particular, "Weltstadt"(Berlin). Further changes in punctuation and word choice in the rest of the poem equally bear out the tendency to objective presentation. Where in the first draft the second stanza reads:

Die Kremser mühten sich durch das Gedränge,  
 Zerrissne Fähnchen waren drangeschlagen,  
 Die Omnibusse, die verstaubten Wagen,  
 Automobile, und der Huppen Klänge.

this becomes in the final version:

Die vollen Kremser fuhren durch die Menge,  
 Papierne Fähnchen waren drangeschlagen.  
 Die Omnibusse, voll Verdeck und Wagen.  
 Automobile, Rauch und Huppenklänge.

Terms like "mühten sich" and "Zerrissne" have here been changed into the more neutral "fuhren" and "Papierne". In general, also, the punctuation in the final version is more abrupt (from six full stops to ten, plus the colon), and the final text tends in places to mere juxtapositions of noun phrases, as successive observations lead to the registration of various discontinuous scenes. The impact of this is twofold: the "wir" is established only as the - otherwise unimportant - receptacle of diverse impressions, and at the same

time the abruptness of the juxtapositions means the breaking-up of the conventionally ordered continuous description; in both cases the description comes to lean towards impartiality and neutrality of observation.

Perhaps the clearest example of the gradual growth of a poem towards juxtaposition and the elimination of subjectivity is provided by the successive drafts of 'Die Ruhigen' (April-May 1910). The first, untitled version of this poem reads as follows:

So ruhig, wie ein Boot im stillen Hafen  
Am Nachmittag an seiner Kette wiegt,  
Wie Liebende verschlungener Hände schlafen,  
Ein Stein, der tief im alten Brunnen liegt,

Wie eine Wolke, die im Blauen steht,  
Und in dem Lichte wie der Rauch zerfliegt,  
Wie stumm ein Maulwurf wandert unterm Beet,  
Und wie ein Herz, das vieles Leid besiegt,

Eh ich dich wiedersah, geliebtes Herz,  
Noch eben Friede. Nun der Wunden Brennen,  
Wie ein Vulkan von Reue, Neid und Schmerz.  
Ich kann mich selber nicht mehr wiederkennen. (DuS:54)

This version is in line with Heym's early poems in that it revolves entirely around the subjective instance of line 9. Stanzas 1 and 2 focus on "So ruhig", and consist of a series of five similes, all subordinated and geared to the elucidation of the emotional state described in the final stanza. The similes themselves contain a mixture of emotional and natural elements, and derive their coherence and continuity from the common thematic focus and, formally, from the sentence construction which spans the first nine lines. The third stanza then plays on a sudden thematic inversion ("Nun der Wunden Brennen"), and the simile is altered accordingly ("Wie ein Vulkan..."); the interesting point in this inversion, however, lies in its purely introspective nature, as the poem hinges on the emotional state of the "Ich".

The second draft of 'Die Ruhigen' has not been preserved. In the third draft the poem bears the title 'Ruhig', and has doubled in length. Stanzas 1-2-3-4-6 of this version read:

Ein morsches Boot, das in dem stillen Hafen  
Am Nachmittag an seiner Kette wiegt.  
Wie Liebende verschlungener Hände schlafen,  
Ein Stein, der tief im alten Brunnen liegt.

Wie wildes Bergland grüsst der Abend lind,  
Ein Adler, der noch spät im Blauen fliegt.

Der Maulwurf, wandernd unter Tage blind,  
Ein altes Herz, das vieles Leid besiegt.

Der Pythia Schlummer, der dem Ruhen gleicht  
Der Gotter selber nach dem Freudenmahl.  
Die weiße Kerze, die den Toten bleicht,  
Des Jägers Abendgang in stillem Tal.

Das ungewisse Lächeln eines Blöden,  
Verstaubte Krüge, drin noch wohnt der Duft.  
Zerbrochne Geigen in dem Kram der Böden,  
Vor dem Gewittersturm die träge Luft.

( )

Ein Segel, das am Horizonte glänzt,  
Der Rose Duften, das den Falter führt.  
Des Herbstes Gold, das Laub und Stamm bekränzt,  
Der Dichter, der des Narren Bosheit spürt. (DuS:55)

The most conspicuous difference with the first version is, clearly, the deletion of the subjective focus: the entire subjective orientation of the similes has disappeared, together with the emotional conflict of the "Ich" (the only remnant of the previous "Ich" lies, arguably, in the "Dichter" of the final line, but even so the objectivation remains obvious). The punctuation in this version also transforms the poem into a series of juxtapositions; the successive images which replace the previous similes are still held together by the semantic field of the title, but "Ruhig" here no longer has subjective connotations but simply refers to a common quality of the otherwise disconnected images. Grammatically, the poem consists largely of isolated noun phrases, complemented by adverbial adjuncts or relative clauses; the two surviving similes have become somewhat ambiguous, referring either in a general sense to the title or to the images with which they are grammatically linked.

The fourth draft, consisting of seven stanzas and now entitled 'Die Ruhigen', preserves the general shape of the third version. It may be sufficient to quote just the first two stanzas:

Ein altes Boot, das in dem stillen Hafen  
Am Nachmittag an Seiner Kette weigt.  
Die Liebenden, die nach den Küssen schlafen.  
Ein Stein, der tief im grünen Brunnen liegt.

Des Abends Gruss auf wildes Bergland lind.  
Ein Adler, der noch spät im Blauen fliegt.  
Der Maulwurf, wandernd unter Tage blind,  
Ein Bach, der in verwachsener Schlucht versiegt. (DuS:75)

The similes have been entirely dropped in this draft and are replaced

by noun phrases, in line with the series of noun phrases that became the poem's constitutive element in the previous version. The shortening of the sentences also continues (except in stanzas 3 and 4, which are both new; but they are deleted again in the final version and are thus inconsequential). The tendency to a more neutral vocabulary (as noted in the Berlin sonnet) is here also in evidence, in that the more atmospheric aspects of images, or images with sentimental connotations, are deleted; thus "Ein morsches Boot" becomes "Ein altes Boot", "Ein altes Herz, das vieles Leid besiegt" becomes "Ein Bach, der in verwachsener Schlucht versiegt", and "Der Rose Duften, das den Falter führt" becomes "Der Duft der Heiden, der die Bienen führt" (again with one exception: "Des Jägers Abendgang..." becomes "Ein Wölkchen, das sich löst im goldenen Strahl"; but again the change is inconsequential, as in the final version the line is stripped of its ornamental preciousness, into: "Der Wolken Löwenhäupter um ein Tal").

In the final version, then, the poem has been greatly reduced in length:

Ein altes Boot, das in dem stillen Hafen  
Am Nachmittag an seiner Kette wiegt.  
Die Liebenden, die nach den Küssen schlafen.  
Ein Stein, der tief im grünen Brunnen liegt.

Der Pythia Ruhen, das dem Schlummer gleicht  
Der hohen Götter nach dem langen Mahl.  
Die weisse Kerze, die den Toten bleicht.  
Der Wolken Löwenhäupter um ein Tal.

Das Stein gewordne Lächeln eines Blöden.  
Verstaubte Krüge, drin noch wohnt der Duft.  
Zerbrochne Geigen in dem Kram der Böden.  
Vor dem Gewittersturm die träge Luft.

Ein Segel, das vom Horizonte glänzt.  
Der Duft der Heiden, der die Bienen führt.  
Des Herbstes Gold, das Laub und Stamm bekränzt.  
Der Dichter, der des Toren Bosheit spürt. (DuS:77)

The notion of 'calm' suggested in the title ('Die Ruhigen') is here entirely embodied in the images themselves and in the poem's grammatical structure: the exclusive use of noun phrases with their complements, and a limited number of verbs which nearly all denote immobility and quiet. The drift towards a neutral vocabulary still continues ("nach dem Freudenmahl" has become "nach dem langen Mahl"; "Das ungewisse Lächeln eines Blöden" in the third draft, subsequently altered to "Das steingewordne Lächeln...", has been 'metaphorized' into "Das Stein gewordne Lächeln...").

This final version is also one of the rare applications in Heym's work of pure juxtaposition ('Reihungsstil') as the basic principle of construction (other cases are 'Die Vorstadt' and 'Nachtgesang', where disconnected stanzas rather than lines are used throughout). The essence of the 'Reihungsstil' is described by S. Vietta (in a discussion of van Hoddis' 'Weltende' and Lichtenstein's 'Die Dämmerung', in Vietta & Kemper 1975:31-33) in terms of "Auflösung der Bildkontinuität", "Simultaneität des Disparaten", and "Atomisierung und Isolierung der einzelnen Bilder, thematisch vermittelt nur noch durch den im Titel gegebenen () Rahmen". In the greater part of Heym's mature work, as Vietta also points out (*ibid.*:55), the "Metaphorik ins Dämonische" - more precisely: the connotative level of discourse created by this 'demonic' metaphorization - lends the poems a coherence superseding and running counter to the effect achieved by sheer juxtaposition. In the case of 'Die Ruhigen' however, the various drafts clearly move away from a central (unifying) subjective principle, developing instead towards the depersonalized objectivity inherent in the mere registration of a sequence of disparate, isolated images, linked by no more than the tenuous thematic field indicated in the title, and by the predominance of one basic type of syntactic structure. The unity of the poem, that is, is established in the reader's mind on the basis of the uniform linguistic pattern and the thematic convergence of the images, and this in spite of considerable semantic disparity and the absence of a subjective focus.

## 4.

The technique of demonic metaphorization characteristic of the later city poems appears to have its origin in the use of visual distortion. This becomes evident when one considers the poem 'Ophelia' (November 1910).

The first section of Heym's 'Ophelia' is based on Rimbaud's poem 'Ophélie', and develops a fairly close parallel to its model. In the second section, however, Heym suddenly departs from Rimbaud's treatment of the subject in introducing the scenery of the modern industrial city; but the metaphorical and connotative aspects of the presentation of the scene clearly outweigh the descriptive concern:

Hall voller Strassen. Glocken und Geläut.  
 Maschinenkreischen. Kampf. Wo westlich droht  
 In blinde Scheiben dumpfes Abendrot,  
 In dem ein Kran mit Riesenarmen dräut,

Mit schwarzer Stirn, ein mächtiger Tyrann,  
 Ein Moloch, drum die schwarzen Knechte knien.  
 Last schwerer Brücken, die darüber ziehn  
 Wie Ketten auf dem Strom, und harter Bann.

Unsichtbar schwimmt sie in der Flut Geleit.  
 Doch wo sie treibt, jagt weit den Menschenschwarm  
 Mit grossem Fittich auf ein dunkler Harm,  
 Der schattet über beide Ufer breit. (DuS:161; stanzas 7-9)

The whole Ophelia-theme is here radically updated, and indeed the focus of the poem has shifted from the dead girl to the industrial scene, whereby the floating body acts as little more than a mobile point of view. In the context of Heym's later city poems, the central issue here is the 'demonic' metaphor associated with the image of the crane. The metaphor itself is obviously based on the anthropomorphic traits read into the visual aspect of the crane. In its presentation, two elements stand out: first, the overtones of violence and menace, applied to the city scene in general ("Maschinenkreischen. Kampf", "droht", "Ketten", "ein dunkler Harm") and to the crane in particular ("Tyrann", "Moloch"); and, secondly, the position of absolute power of the industrial world in regard to man (... "drum die schwarzen Knechte knien."). In the later city poems, both these aspects of the 'demonic' metaphor are intensified, culminating, in 'Der Gott der Stadt', in the image of a whole town worshipping a brutal and omnipotent industrial idol.

Rimbaud's poem described a gentle process of individuation, and its colour contrasts (black/white) were functional in a sympathetic and harmonious context. Heym's text is dominated by "schwarz" and "Dunkel" only (the notion of 'darkness' is referred to eight times in all) - as indeed are all of the city poems. In both sections of Heym's 'Ophelia', the darkness has not only descriptive meaning (evening, night), but it also conveys a sense of alienation and menace: in part one it is associated with the wandering sun, wind and bats, and in the second part it is related primarily to the image of the crane. Both these colour constellations seem to be present in the "dunkler Harm" which frightens the human masses. This "dunkler Harm" may directly refer to 'death' as such accompanying Ophelia's body, but through its position in the poem and through the



various echoes it takes up, it also refers back to the image of the crane as Moloch and tyrant, as well as to the image (in the first section) of the wind and the bats. In other words, throughout the poem 'darkness' comes to be associated with a connotative sphere of meaning centred around the notions of violence and alienation. It is this atmosphere that pervades most of Heym's 'demonic' city poems.

The evolution of the 'demonic' metaphor in these city poems is highly significant in Heym's work, not least because, in its most intense moments, it appears to stretch the technique of the neutral perspective to a breaking point.

The Berlin sonnets, as was pointed out above, are based mainly on realistic and detached observation; only occasionally do the city scenes acquire 'gigantic' overtones (Mautz 1961:69; Vietta & Kemper 1975:51), in metaphors like "Riesensteinmeer" (in 'Berlin I'), "Des Rauches Mähne" or "Der Riesenschlote Nachtfanale"(in 'Berlin II'). In 'Die Vorstadt'(September 1910) the overtones are clearly demonic as well as gigantic:

In ihrem Viertel, in dem Gassenkot,  
Wo sich der grosse Mond durch Dunste drängt,  
Und sinkend an dem niedern Himmel hängt,  
Ein ungeheurer Schädel, weiss und tot,

Da sitzen sie die warme Sommernacht  
Vor ihrer Höhlen schwarzer Unterwelt,  
Im Lumpenzeuge, das vor Staub zerfällt  
Und aufgeblähte Leiber sehen macht.

Hier klafft ein Maul, das zahnlos auf sich reisst.  
Hier hebt sich zweier Arme schwarzer Stumpf.  
Ein Irrer lallt die hohlen Lieder dumpf,  
Wo hockt ein Greis, des Schädel Aussatz weisst. (DuS:133)

'Die Vorstadt', like the Berlin poems, remains essentially descriptive, but its orientation is different: the suggestions of death and the underworld go hand in hand with the virtually exclusive concentration on the sordid aspects of urban life (cf. Eykman 1965:27ff; Sheppard 1975:100). A heightened sense of alienation is also apparent in the description itself, in the foregrounding of grotesque features, the preoccupation with marginal human figures, and the 'dehumanized' references to human beings by means of parts of the body only. In contrast with the Berlin sonnets, the position of the 'spectator' (the poetic voice) is not mentioned, though the succession of scenes seems to imply a constantly changing point of view, a walk through the deprived areas of the town.

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Da sitzen sie die warme Sommernacht  
Vor ihrer Höhlen schwarzer Unterwelt,  
Im Lumpenzeuge, das vor Staub zerfällt  
Und aufgeblähte Leiber sehen macht.

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The same kind of perspective also prevailed in 'Ophelia', though there the succession of scenes was directly linked with the movement of the floating body. The 'demonic' metaphor in 'Ophelia' is visually based on the crane; yet, although this image (of the crane as Moloch) is temporarily in evidence, the progression of the poem as a whole follows the movement of Ophelia's body, floating through the forest, the countryside, the city and then "durch Ewigkeiten fort". In 'Die Vorstadt' the point of view remains implicit, and the demonic overtones are more pervasive, though more difficult to localize.

In 'Die Dämonen der Städte'(December 1910) the demons dominate the poem from beginning to end (the poem has twelve stanzas), though their actual shape remains vague and elusive:

Sie wandern durch die Nacht der Städte hin,  
Die schwarz sich ducken unter ihrem Fuss.  
Wie Schifferbärte stehen um ihr Kinn  
Die Wolken schwarz vom Rauch und Kohlenruss.

Ihr langer Schatten schwankt im Häusermeer  
Und löscht der Strassen Lichterreihen aus.  
Er kriecht wie Nebel auf dem Pflaster schwer  
Und tastet langsam vorwärts Haus für Haus.

Den einen Fuss auf einen Platz gestellt,  
Den anderen gekniet auf einen Turm,  
Ragen sie auf, wo schwarz der Regen fällt,  
Panspfeifen blasend in den Wolkensturm.  
( ) (DuS:186)

The particularization of the description was a common characteristic of the city poems examined so far: thus in the Berlin sonnets, precise scenes are presented as seen from a fixed point of view; in 'Die Vorstadt' each stanza records a particular aspect of the industrial slums, as the poet wanders through the streets; in 'Ophelia' the floating body is used as a mobile vantage point for evocations of changing but always particular scenes. In 'Die Dämonen...' however the location is immediately given as an unspecified plural ("Städte"), or an equally unspecific metaphor ("Häusermeer"). The actual shape of the demons is not based on some particular piece of industrial machinery (as in 'Ophelia'), but is rather established gradually as some gigantic, vaguely anthropomorphic, malevolent omnipresence. The demons are thus clearly autonomous creatures, symbols or personifications (rather than metaphors) of some dark, violent power, linked with the night and the city alike. Eventually, whilst their towering dimensions are emphasized throughout, their appearance is

likened to fauns (in stanza 6, in line with the "Panspfeifen" of the third stanza), and the demons themselves emerge as conventional devil-figures with horns and hoofs.

The faun-motif, as well as the fairly traditional personification are traced back by K. Mautz to Jugendstil-art, though their function is here the opposite of their traditional meaning: not idealization, but alienation; thus, speaking of "das personifizierende Verfahren" in Heym's poetry, Mautz points out:

Diente es zuvor einer vergöttlichenden Ueberhöhung und Verklärung des Wirklichen, so dient es jetzt der Veranschaulichung der Uebermacht einer dem Menschen fremden, ihn bedrohenden Wirklichkeit und der Demaskierung ihres negativen, ungeheuerlichen Wesens. Die Personifikation vergöttlicht nicht mehr, sie dämonisiert. Dabei verraten die Gestalten, durch die das übermächtige und drohend unheimliche Wesen der industriellen Wirklichkeit personifiziert wird, noch ihre Abkunft von den mythologischen Jugendstilpersonifikationen.() Aus dem Zusammenprall der Jugendstilantike mit der Realität des Industriezeitalters gehen deformierte mythologische Idealgestalten und eine mythologisch verwandelte, dämonisierte Wirklichkeit hervor. (Mautz 1961:83)

The demons, then, are mythical rather than metaphorical figures; yet, although the motif as such has its origins in Jugendstil, within the context of Heym's own work the demon-figures themselves develop directly out of visual metaphors. The growth from demonic metaphor to mythical demon-figure is also concurrent with other shifts: the objects and scenes described grow themselves more monumental in character (the gigantic shape of the demons, of the cities in general), and the grotesque features are more heavily emphasized (thus the demons "schrein wie Katzen auf zum Firmament", and "der Teufel Häse wachsen wie Giraffen.") In both cases, clearly, the description supersedes mere observation and acquires more visionary and distorting aspects. This is also apparent in the prominence of 'darkness' in the poem: the terms "schwarz" and "dunkel" occur up to nine times in the first twenty-three lines, a frequency which underlines the foregrounding of the visionary distortion. The whole approach to the city in 'Die Dämonen...' appears to be quite different from the Berlin poems, 'Die Vorstadt' or 'Ophelia' in that description has become (Expressionist) vision: what was metaphor or connotation in the previous poems has grown into mythical figure and monumental distortion. This is especially clear in the final stanzas of the poem:

Der Teufel Häse wachsen wie Giraffen.  
 Das Kind hat keinen Kopf. Die Mutter hält  
 Es vor sich hin. In ihrem Rücken klaffen  
 Des Schrecks Froschfinger, wenn sie rückwärts fällt.

Doch die Dämonen wachsen riesengross.  
 Ihr Schläfenhorn zerreisst den Himmel rot.  
 Erdbeben donnert durch der Städte Schoss  
 Um ihren Huf, den Feuer überloht.

where both man's impotence and the power of the demons is presented  
 in images at once grotesque and violent, gigantic and unreal.

Compared with stanza 6 of 'Die Vorstadt',

Bei alten Weibern löschen ihre Lust  
 Die Greise unten, trüb im Lampenschimmer,  
 Aus morschen Wiegen schallt das Schreien immer  
 Der magren Kinder nach der welken Brust. (DuS:133)

where the realistic - if morbid - element still prevails, 'Die  
 Dämonen...' moves towards ever more intensely gripping images of  
 fright and destruction. Yet in spite of this intensification, the  
 writing itself does not attempt to convey either sympathy or horror:  
 the objectivity and detachment in the presentation, introduced in the  
 Berlin sonnets and applied throughout 'Die Vorstadt' and 'Ophelia',  
 is also used here: the thematic concentration of monumentality and  
 distortion does not annul the distance guaranteed by the formal  
 mask.

In the final piece in the series of demonic city poems, the  
 focus is on just one mythical figure personifying the destructive  
 power of the industrial world, namely 'Der Gott der Stadt'(December  
 1910):

Auf einem Häuserblocke sitzt er breit.  
 Die Winde lagern schwarz um seine Stirn.  
 Er schaut voll Wut, wo fern in Einsamkeit  
 Die letzten Häuser in das Land verirrn.

Vom Abend glänzt der rote Bauch dem Baal,  
 Die grossen Städte knien um ihn her.  
 Der Kirchenglocken ungeheure Zahl  
 Wogt auf zu ihm aus schwarzer Turme Meer.

Wie Korybanten-Tanz dröhnt die Musik  
 Der Millionen durch die Strassen laut.  
 Der Schlote Rauch, die Wolken der Fabrik  
 Ziehn auf zu ihm, wie Duft von Weihrauch blaut.

Das Wetter schwelt in seinen Augenbrauen.  
 Der dunkle Abend wird in Nacht betäubt.  
 Die Stürme flattern, die wie Geier schauen  
 Von seinem Haupthaar, das im Zorne sträubt.

Er steckt ins Dunkel seine Fleischerfaust.  
 Er schüttelt sie. Ein Meer von Feuer jagt  
 Durch eine Strasse. Und der Glutqualm braust  
 Und frisst sie auf, bis spät der Morgen tagt. (DuS:192)

Here the city god is not associated with conventional devils or faun figures, but remains a faceless, primitive idol (a "Baal" surrounded by "Korybanten"). Various anthropomorphic traits are still attributed to him ("Stirn", "Augenbrauen", "Faust"), but his shape is not further specified, though again, and even more so than in 'Die Dämonen...', his colossal size is in evidence (his form encompasses the whole horizon, storms are hovering in his hair). There is also a corresponding advance in the overwhelming power of the god: whereas in the previous poem the demons wander through the towns, bringing disaster with them, here the god is imposing and destructive on a much larger scale; the grotesque features have disappeared, but complete towns worship him as an idol. The lines

Vom Abend glänzt der rote Bauch dem Baal,  
 Die grossen Städte knien um ihn her.

which echo a scene in 'Ophelia' ("...ein mächtiger Tyrann,/Ein Moloch, drum die schwarzen Knechte knien."), clearly show the shift in emphasis that has taken place: the transition from metaphor to mythical figure and faceless idol, and the monumental, visionary expansion from "die schwarzen Knechte" to "die grossen Städte". The final stanza, as in 'Die Dämonen...', presents an image of disruption and upheaval, with suggestions of fire and blood. With respect to this demonic violence, a peculiar ambivalence seems to pervade the poem: both the "Gott" and the "Dämonen" are cruel, malicious and destructive powers, but at the same time Heym appears to consider violence also as a liberation, not only in his diary, where war and violent disruption are consistently regarded as liberating forces, but also in a story like 'Der fünfte Oktober', where revolution and liberation are heralded by Maillard, who is subsequently described as "ein Dämon der Verzweiflung, ein schwarzer Belial, der Gott der Masse, der düstres Feuer aus seinen Händen warf." (Prosa:16); the images of 'fire' and 'blood' accompanying sunrise are also related to a further set of motifs focusing on the sun as an emblem of revolution (Mautz 1961:270-296).

The mythical 'gods' and 'demons' thus enter a constellation in which violence has connotations of liberation as well as oppression; this ambivalence itself is highly significant, in that it offers

another indication of Heym's consistent detachment from his subject-matter. As the figures of the demons grow more imposing, anonymous and autonomous, the poetic voice is seen to withdraw further into neutrality and impartiality. This stance, however, is basically paradoxical: the continued metaphorization and distortion in one direction (demonization) obviously implies a movement away from the former descriptive objectivity and towards the visionary creation of (anti-)mythological figures - a treatment which appears to involve the presence of a strongly subjective and emotional poetic voice. Yet the formal elaboration of the poems counteracts and even negates this subjective element through the consistent use of monotonous and predictable rhythms and rhymes, and the recourse to impartiality and ambivalence in the presentation. As a result, the thematic level of the poems increases in intensity, while subjective evaluation is withheld by formal means - that is to say, by upholding the 'monumental style' and the 'neutral perspective' as objective masks throughout.

These observations are also largely borne out by R. Sheppard's linguistic analysis of 'Die Vorstadt', 'Die Dämonen...' and 'Der Gott der Stadt' (Sheppard 1975:103-108). In 'Die Vorstadt', Sheppard detects a "fascinated curiosity" in the various scenes of city life, presented in a poem with a high frequency of attributive adjectives with mostly descriptive quality. In 'Die Dämonen...' predicative adjectives are much more in evidence, giving concrete shape to abstract movements and processes, and suggesting a cosmic background against which human events and empirical objects lose their stability and reality; the point of view here is one of "horrified detachment". 'Der Gott der Stadt', finally, differs from the previous two poems in its starkness and compression, showing drastic syntactic simplifications and a substantial reduction in the number of adjectives, while the scene is compressed in spatial and temporal terms into a moment of imminent cataclysmic violence (whereby Sheppard also points to Heym's "barely suppressed exultation in the imminence of that doom", a conclusion which appears to rely on evidence from other poems and the diary, but which overlooks the serious ambivalence surrounding the motif of violent upheaval in the other city poems and the story 'Der fünfte Oktober').

In the poems of 1910, the tension between the growing visionary distortion and the preservation of the objective mask is of central importance. In the city poems, the deviation from realistic description takes place mainly in terms of the increasingly demonic and monumental features attributed to the various scenes and figures. In other poems, where the neutral perspective is also kept intact throughout, a number of other, similar means are employed which equally contribute to the development away from observation and description towards the establishment of the poem as a visionary world. Periphrastic images and the peculiar use of colour terms both function in this context.

The term 'periphrastic images' (derived from Ziegler 1972:61ff) is used to describe series of attributive adjuncts and images which, though held together in one syntagmatic chain, cease to refer to their syntactic kernel, but appear to perpetuate themselves on a principle of contiguity (in Jakobson's sense)<sup>(6)</sup>. The sestet of the sonnet 'Die Züge' (December 1910) is a case in point:

Die Züge donnern auf dem Meilendamme,  
Der in die Wälder rennt, des Tages Schweif.  
Ihr Rauch steigt auf wie eine Feuerflamme,

Die hoch im Licht des Ostwinds Schnabel zaust,  
Der, goldgefiedert, wie ein starker Greif,  
Mit breiter Brust hinab gen Abend braust. (DuS:189)

In six lines, three relative clauses and two similes are heaped together. The interesting point, however, is the progression of the images: in the last four lines, the "Rauch" is compared to "eine Feuerflamme" which is then located in "des Ostwinds Schnabel", and then this wind itself is further described in a simile and an elaborate metaphor (alternatively, the simile "wie ein starker Greif" may refer only to "goldgefiedert", but this changes little). In other words, the elements in the attributive clauses and images take on further complements and adjuncts themselves, so that, in the process of reading, the various complements recede further and further from the original conceptual and syntactic kernel. The whole complex, that is, reads like a concatenation with a certain self-perpetuating quality. As each complement itself is further complemented by various adjuncts, a number of semantic shifts<sup>(7)</sup> are created which progressively obscure the grammatical and conceptual hierarchy of the sentence and divert the attention from the original centre to the successive images themselves.



In 'Die Schläfer' (also December 1910) such series of periphrastic images are used twice:

( ) Und auf dem dunklen Tal,

Mit grünem Fittich auf der dunklen Flut  
Flattert der Schlaf, der Schnabel dunkelrot,  
Drin eine Lilie welkt, der Nacht Salut,  
Den Kopf von einem Greise gelb und tot.

( )

Die grossen Bäume wandern durch die Nacht  
Mit langem Schatten, der hinüber läuft  
Ins weisse Herz der Schläfer, die bewacht  
Der kalte Mond, der seine Gifte trauft

Wie ein erfahrener Arzt tief in ihr Blut. (DuS:177)

The first series is mainly a chain of metaphors; these remain semantically fairly coherent, but they are deployed in a very loose grammatical construction, using three appositions and an adverbial clause ("Drin eine Lilie welkt," with the adverbial pronoun separated from its referent, while at the same time - as also Ziegler (1972:57-59) points out - adverbial clauses introduced by 'darin, darunter, darauf' etc. tend rather more to a paratactic construction than clauses introduced by 'worin, worunter, worauf' etc.).

The second series is again one of recession: it opens with a metaphor (trees wandering through the night), one of whose subsidiary elements is further extended and applied to the sleepers, who are then seen as guarded by the moon, and finally the image of the moon is further elaborated. As the concatenation of the images proceeds, spanning several lines and even stanzas, the role of the 'tenor' as centre of the construction diminishes, and consequently the images themselves acquire a considerable measure of autonomy. Their autonomous quality is comparable, in a way, to that of the juxtaposed scenes in 'Die Ruhigen': through the various drafts of this poem the conceptual and grammatical centre of the poem was weakened and eventually deleted altogether, leaving a series of autonomous, objective images; in the case of the periphrastic constructions the images themselves appear to generate further modifying images, until the syntactic and conceptual hierarchy has become so tenuous as to be purely nominal, while the reader's attention is directed to the successive images in their own right and the semantic shifts which each new subordination or apposition implies. Thus the use of periphrastic images does not aim at precise objective description by

means of accumulation of detail: rather, the progression of the images and the movement away from the hierarchic centre precludes their being used in function of the elucidation of a central 'object' of description. In that sense the technique is concurrent with the progressive demonization in the city poems: there the demonic element is at first brought to the surface only on a subordinate level, as connotation or metaphor, but is gradually granted more significance and prominence, until it finally comes to dominate the entire poem - which is then no longer descriptive in any realistic sense, but 'visionary'. In a similar manner, though on a reduced scale, the periphrastic images mean a radicalization of the frequent use of metaphors and similes, to the extent that their self-perpetuating progression weakens the link with the original 'object', while simultaneously the images tend to a degree of autonomy which makes their imaginative dimension (their semantic diversity) stand out more prominently in the poetic structure.

The technique of the periphrastic image also has its significance for the relation between poem and poet in that, always within the context of the 'neutral perspective', the poet's role as the determining instance of the poetic structure naturally diminishes with the tendency to allow the images, as it were, to perpetuate themselves. Whereas in, say, the first draft of 'Die Ruhigen' the 'I'-figure is both the focus and the organizing principle of the poem, the sequences of periphrastic images rather contain the principle of their contiguous development within themselves.

Colour terms occur with extraordinary frequency in Heym's work, and Heym himself seems to have been well aware of this. In his diary he speaks of his "geradezu wahnsinnigen Sinn" for colours (25.9.1910; Tgb:144). In contrast with a poet like Trakl, though, Heym's colour terms retain a consistently representational and descriptive basis. Nonetheless his use of colours does play a significant part in the development towards visionary distortion.

Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic in this respect is the virtually exclusive use of stark colours: black, white and the bright, unbroken colours of the spectrum. The index to Heym's poetry from 1910 to 1912 (Brown 1970) shows that colour adjectives are among the most frequently used (of these "schwarz" has 268 entries, "weiss"

200 and "rot" 182). The exclusive use of bright colours in itself already implies a certain schematization in the representation, as (doubtless in direct opposition to Impressionist and Neo-Romantic writing) the objects and scenes observed are reduced to surfaces of one uniform colour.

In some cases the colour element is so much in evidence that it practically dominates the poem, as in 'Blau.Weiss.Grün.'(April 1910):

In grünen Wiesen steht ein kleiner Hain  
 Von weissen Birken, die zum Lichte steigen.  
 Das erste Hellgrün auf den schwanken Zweigen -  
 Wie eine Wolke, wie ein Haar so fein.

Die weissen Wolken wachsen in die Luft  
 Wie Berge grundlos aus dem Blau der Seen. ()(DuS:62)

In 'Autumnus'(September 1910), a more advanced application of this technique (which still has the same overtones of adolescent idealization as the previous poem), the colours themselves acquire substantive value:

Der Schwäne Schneeweiss. Glanz der blauen Flut.  
 Des breiten Strandes Gelb, das flach verläuft.  
 Gelärm der Badenden und Freude laut  
 Der braunen schlanken Leiber, die mit Zweigen  
 Sich peitschen blankes Wasser auf das Haupt.

Doch aufwärts steigt der Wald in blauen Farben  
 Des Nachmittags. Sein breites grünes Haupt  
 Ist sanft gerundet in den blassen Himmel (). (DuS:129)

The composition here strikingly illustrates the pictorial imagination which pervades Heym's poetry, a point Heym also discusses in his diary ("Warum hat mir der Himmel die Gabe der Zeichnung versagt. Imaginationen peinigen mich, wie nie einen Maler vor mir."-Tgb:159). The schematization is apparent not only in the prominence of bright colours as such, but also in the grammatical construction of the text, which clearly foregrounds the colour terms (in the metaphorical noun phrases which have colour terms at their centre: "Der Schwäne Schneeweiss", or "Des breiten Strandes Gelb").

The prominence of the pictorial element becomes apparent mainly in the obsessive use of particular colours and in the creation of stark colour contrasts. Here the colours acquire a certain non-representational dimension in so far as a secondary expressive (connotative) level of signification is developed over and above the purely referential. Thus 'Die Irren'(DuS:253ff) is elaborated mainly in terms of a black/white contrast (the poem's 25 stanzas contain 29

colour terms; "weiss" occurs ten times, "schwarz" nine times); the transcendence of the purely referential value of the colour terms is particularly apparent in such pleonastic uses as "Des fernen Abendrotes rote Flammen"(stanza 5) or "Das schwarze Dunkel"(stanza 8), and in the interchangeability of some of the colours (dreams come to the madman "auf roten Schwingen", and later "Um ihre Häupter wehen schwarze Schwingen,/ Rauchende Fackeln wie ein Trauerflor", which is then echoed towards the end in the view of the men as "ein weisser Trauerchor").

In the opening stanzas of 'Die Schläfer', colours are also very much in evidence, and loaded with suggestions of death:

Es schattet dunkler noch des Wassers Schoss,  
Tief unten brennt ein Licht, ein rotes Mal  
Am schwarzen Leib der Nacht, wo bodenlos  
Die Tiefe sinkt. Und auf dem dunklen Tal,

Mit grünem Fittich auf der dunkeln Flut  
Flattert der Schlaf, der Schnabel dunkelrot,  
Drin eine Lilie welkt, der Nacht Salut,  
Den Kopf von einem Greise gelb und tot. (DuS:177)

The colours are here made to interact with notions of darkness and depth, until in the final stanzas the suggestions of death are made explicit ("Ein Ton von krankem Violett/Stösst an den Raum. Der Tod geht.").

It is not surprising, in the context of this suggestive use of colours, to find their obsessive presence interwoven with the wealth of metaphors and similes in Heym's work. This is particularly the case in some of the prose sketches. In the short piece 'Die Bleistadt' (Prosa:115-118; unfinished), consisting of twelve paragraphs of varying length, the term "weiss" occurs ten times, and the text has about twenty similes. The short sketch 'Die Sektion' (Prosa:35-37), which consists of nineteen paragraphs (mostly of one sentence only), has "weiss" repeated ten times, and twelve similes. Their combined impact, naturally, establishes a variety of secondary semantic fields, constantly halting the narrative or the description, and undermining the referential aspect of the text. Although all the colour terms remain clearly referential in themselves, their very prominence contributes to the creation of further meanings.

Where colour terms are used in metaphorical phrases, again a certain measure of expressive abstraction appears in those cases where metathesis occurs. Thus in 'Ophelia' Heym speaks of "Der

Felder gelbe Winde" and "der Senses blanke Melodien", or, in 'Der Winter', of "Der Horizonte violette Schweigen"(DuS:163); or again, in 'Bastille': "Von den Stirnen/ Loht der weisse Zorn."(DuS:86). In each case the grammatical subordination clashes with the conceptual relations, and this conflict, concentrated in the colour term, lends the colour its abstract and suggestive value.

Heym himself relates his pictorial outlook to the work of Van Gogh (8). In a letter of 2.9.1910 he comments on his affinity with the painter:

Den er sieht alle Farben so, wie ich sie sehe. Ich habe beim Lesen mir so und so oft gesagt: Donnerwetter, genau so würdest Du ein Gedicht machen: Die Matrosen vor der Sonnenscheibe. Die lila Kähne. Der Samann in einem unendlichen Feld, etc. Nur: das Maßen sehr schwer ist. Und Dichten so unendlich leicht, wenn man nur Optik hat. Wobei nur gut ist, dass das so wenig wissen. (Tgb:205)

Apart from highlighting the obsession with colours as such, the passage derives its interest from the use of the term "Optik", the particular view of an object that will convey its significance. Heym here clearly situates himself in the line of Die Brücke and Der Sturm rather than Der blaue Reiter, and this position determines the measure of abstraction in his work: the type of abstraction encountered in Heym is clearly not that of the radically non-representational kind of a Kandinsky or a Klee, but that of the visionary and expressive distortion of Kokoschka or Ensor or Van Gogh. The significance of Heym's colour terms lies entirely in this context of visionary distortion: the colours remain rooted in objective description, but their use transcends representation. At the same time, through their dual function on a referential and a visionary level, they allow Heym to preserve his objective mask, in that emotional connotations are consistently compressed in the colour terms. This explains their role in the process of distortion, and the function and limits of the technique of the neutral perspective: the ambivalence of Heym's procedure is such that his neutral perspective allows him to produce an objective and detached kind of poetry which is yet emotionally loaded, which remains rooted in realism and reaches out towards abstraction without coinciding with either.

5.

As was pointed out earlier, a number of tensions are seen to be gradually building up in Heym's poems of 1910. On the thematic level the 'demonization' grows more intense and imposing, while structurally the monumental style and the neutral perspective still guarantee the detached objectivity of the presentation.

The poems of 1911 (a number of them were published posthumously in the volume Umbra Vitae) show a much greater formal diversity than those of 1910 (as the statistical analysis in Ziegler 1972:35-37 bears out). Heym's diary offers some indication as to the origins and significance of this exploration of new verse forms. In the entry for 27.9.1911 Heym rejects rhyme as "eine Gotteslästerung" and the iambic metre as "eine Lüge", adding: "'Durchsichtiges, vierkantiges' ist eine Kette am Gedanken." (Tgb:166). Soon after, he also notes:

Jetzt habe ich den Kampf. Denn meine Phantasie ist gegen mich aufgetreten und will nicht mehr wie ich will. Meine Phantasie, meine Seele, sie haben Angst und rennen wie verzweifelt in ihrem Käfig. Ich kann sie nicht mehr fangen. Wo ist die göttliche Ruhe des Tages, der Ophelia, des Fieberspitals.  
(Tgb:174)

The three poems mentioned ('Der Tag', 'Ophelia', 'Das Fieberspital') all date from the period October-December 1910; the "Ruhe" of these pieces would appear to be essentially a structural notion: the result, namely, of Heym's ability to control and contain his 'imagination' ("Phantasie") by formal and stylistic means. The rejection of the monumental style, for which the formal diversity of Umbra Vitae offers abundant evidence, is thus indicative of a structural change in Heym's poetic, i.e. of the readjustment of the mask of formal detachment. At the same time a curious concurrence can be observed between on the one hand, the thematic relation, within the poems, between man and the industrial world (the human figure as progressively more enslaved by the city demons in a context of imminent violent disruption), and, on the other hand, the 'structural' relation between Heym's poetic persona and the world of the poems themselves (the growing importance of the visionary element, leading to an ever increasing strain on the formal mask).

The poetry of 1911 also means, to an extent, a return to the early work - a point Heym himself noted in his diary:

In einer grossen Curve bin ich dahin zurück gekehrt, wo ich einst ausging, wie jemand der in den Windungen einer Bergstrasse geht, und plötzlich an der selben Stelle des Berges steht, nur eben um einen weiten Abhang höher. (27.9.1911; Tgb:166)

As was shown above, the early poems are mainly characterized by an overt emotionality, a Romantic and Symbolist-inspired view of the world as an ordered and meaningful set of relations, and the supremacy of an individual sensibility as the poetic focus. The work of 1910 then is largely a negation of these assumptions; the ultimate subjectivity of the world-view persists, but is masked by techniques of detached presentation, thus leading to the paradox (tension) opposing description and demonization. The foregrounding of demonic distortion in the city poems of 1910 appears to undergo, in the poems of 1911, a reorientation towards a preoccupation with the poem as an emotional cipher. The direct emotionality of the early work is thus transformed into a technique of presenting metaphorical and symbolic landscapes, where the scenery itself embodies the emotional value. Hence the late poems stand "um einen weiten Abhang höher" than the early work in the elimination (a result of the practice of 1910) of the formal centrality of the subjective aspect. Thus in the context of the poems themselves even the position of the poetic persona as (implicit or explicit) observer is now abandoned, while in the relation between poet and poem the overt subjectivity of the early work is entirely suppressed, so that the poems concentrate exclusively on the presentation of imaginative scenes loaded with connotations of alienation and death.

The long poem 'Herbstliche Tetralogie' (September 1911; DuS:370-377) brings together most of the themes and techniques of Heym's late work. The difference in emphasis between the early and the late poems also becomes clear when the first stanza of the second section ("Herbstmorgen") of the 'Tetralogie':

Niemand ist weit zu sehen  
Bis unten am grauen Saum.  
Ueber den Feldern braun  
Verlassene Pflüge stehen  
Im leeren Raum.

is contrasted with the early 'Epitaph' (quoted above in section 1). In 'Epitaph' the lonely farm-horse ("Am Weg vereinsamt steht ein Acker-gaul") is addressed as "O du, mein Spiegel der Verlassenheit", upon which the poet's dejection appears as the central theme of the poem, so that the scenery in the opening stanzas functions as a mirror-image

for his mood. In the 'Tetralogie' no such projection takes place: the scene is presented in isolation (and the whole poem is built as a discontinuous series of similar scenes), though the obvious emotional overtones suggest emptiness and desolation (in the word-choice as well as in the sound-pattern of "grauen Saum", "Feldern braun", "leeren Raum").

The meaning of each particular scene in the series becomes clear only in its correlation with other parts of the poem. Thus stanza 3 of the second section employs basically the same vocabulary:

Endlose Wege dehnen  
Sich über die brachen Furchen,  
Ueber Hügel und Schluchten,  
Als ob sie suchten  
Irgendwo hinten ein Ziel.  
Und ersticken am Ende  
In einem Stoppelfeld  
Wo eine einsame Mühle  
Die starren Hände  
Ins Morgengrauen hält.

The first stanza of the third section again hinges on a similar image:

Herbstesregen rauscht  
Traurig im Dunkel  
Ueber die grauen Flächen hinunter.  
Ein paar Baume verloren.  
Alle Dinge sind ferne  
Fort in die Nacht geschoben.

In this way the poem constructs its central theme by means of accumulation and variation, thus minimizing the referential value of each individual word by making it dependent on a context of disconsolate bleakness. The major semantic fields are also established mainly by means of repetition and overlapping. Thus "Dunkel" occurs seven times (as noun or as adjective) and is extended to related words like "schwarz", "finster" and "Nacht"; "traurig" is also repeatedly used, and related to a substantial group of words denoting or connoting suffering and death; a large group of interrelated adjectives finally includes words like "grau", "öde", "dürr", "brach", "ärmlich", "mager", "verdorrt", "kalt", "starr", "verlassen", "leer" and "verloren", and a series of negative adjectives like "nestlos", "wortlos", "endlos", "grenzenlos".

The poem as a whole is further characterized by a lack of specificity in the scenes presented, a certain indefiniteness of outline and location (which Ziegler 1972:101 terms "Entgrenzung"; Martens 1971:219 speaks of "entgrenzende Metaphorik"), manifesting



itself primarily in the "Diffusion von Raum und Zeit"(Ziegler), through adverbs like "selten", "bald", "manchmal", "ewig" or "irgendwo", "fern" etc.<sup>(9)</sup>, through the negative adjectives noted above, or, in general, through the blurring of all definite contours. The similes also allow no clear visualization, but tend rather towards vagueness; thus the "Krähen () schreien schnöde/ Wie irrende Seelen/ In dunklem Ort.", and in the final stanza of the poem: "Alles ist tot und kalt/ Wie ein endloser Traum." The human presence in the poem is likewise indicated by an indeterminate "sie" and by several unspecific terms referring to random, faceless figures ("ein Wanderer", "die Liebenden", "die Bettler", "ein Kranker", "eine Gestalt").

In general, most of the poems of 1911 offer the same type of constellation, so that the whole body of poems becomes as it were a system of echoes: the cumulative effects at work in the 'Tetralogie' repeated on a larger scale. Thus the overtones of forlornness, desolation and death are also prominent in 'Und die Hörner des Sommers...'(August 1911):

Und die Hörner des Sommers verstummt im Tode der Fluren,  
In das Dunkel flog Wolke auf Wolke dahin.  
Aber am Rande schrumpften die Wälder verloren,  
Wie Gefolge der Särge in Trauer vermummt. () (DuS:321)

In the first line, the positive connotations of the opening words are destroyed in the second half of the line, in the same way as in the 'Tetralogie' the lovers ("Die Liebenden") are seen as "Wortlos und stumm" and in the process of parting. In the third and fourth lines, death is strongly suggested in the view of the "Wälder" as "Gefolge der Särge", a simile which parallels the image in the 'Tetralogie' of the birch-trees which stand "Wie Klagefrauen". The final stanza of 'Und die Hörner...' continues in the same vein:

Und es sank der Schatten der Nacht. Nur die Raben noch irrten  
Unter den drückenden Wolken im Regen hin,  
Einsam im Wind, wie im Dunkel der Schläfen  
Schwarze Gedanken in trostloser Stunde fliehn.

And this stanza again gives rise to a parallel between the non-visual image of "die Raben" as "schwarze Gedanken" and the previously noted simile of the crows as wandering souls in the 'Tetralogie'.

The semantic fields developed in 'Und die Hörner...' also largely coincide or overlap with those of the 'Tetralogie', though they seem more concentrated in a number of suggestive genitive metaphors (such as "im Tode der Fluren", "im Schrecken der bleichenden Felder", or "im Dunkel der Schläfen"). Similar words and images recur throughout

the poetry of 1911. As a result, the thematic diversity of the earlier work is now substantially restricted in scope, and the emotional significance of the recurrent patterns grows both more evident and more intense. In 'Mitte des Winters'(October 1911) the various images of bleakness, uncertainty, denial of life and lack of direction build up to a more direct general statement:

Das Jahr geht zornig aus. Und kleine Tage  
Sind viel verstreut wie Hütten in den Winter.  
Und Nächte, ohne Leuchte, ohne Stunden,  
Und grauer Morgen ungewisse Bilder.

Sommerzeit. Herbstzeit, alles geht vorüber  
Und brauner Tod hat jede Frucht ergriffen.  
Und andre kalte Stauden sind im Dunkel  
Die wir nicht sahen von dem Dach der Schiffe.

Weglos ist jedes Leben. Und verworren  
Ein jeder Pfad. Und keiner weiss das Ende,  
Und wer da suchet, dass er Einen fände,  
Der sieht ihn stumm, und schüttelnd leere Hände. (DuS:438)

The poem again contains a number of obvious echoes from the 'Tetralogie' and 'Und die Hörner...', but appears to go further than either of these in its progressive generalization from the initial images of autumn (accompanied by the increasing frequency of 'absolute' terms like "alles", "jede Frucht", "jedes Leben", "jeder Pfad", "keiner"). The overtly metaphorical character of the whole nature-image is also clearly stated in a stanza from 'Was kommt ihr...'(July 1911):

Was ist das Leben? Kleines Schiff in Schluchten  
Vergessner Meere. Starrer Himmel Grauen.  
Oder wie Nachts auf kahlen Feldern  
Verlornes Mondlicht wandert und verschwindet. (DuS:311)

and its significance is finally summed up in the central lines of 'Die Bücher'(October 1911):

Worte, einst schön, und Weisheit, einmal mächtig,  
Wie leere Spreu geworfelt hoch in Haufen,  
Alles ist wirr, und einsam, und zerlaufen.  
Denn das dunkle Leben ist übermächtig. (DuS:439)

The rhyme 'mächtig/übermächtig' in these lines is symptomatic in a double sense, in that it conveys both the overwhelming power of "das dunkle Leben" over any human attempt to create order and meaning (whereby "Worte" may be assumed to include also Heym's own poems), and the insignificance, in this set-up, of the human element as such (whence again the absolute term "Alles", in contrast to the accidental and totally inconsequential "wir" in 'Mitte des Winters').

Interestingly enough, however, the poems seem to move directly from metaphorical cipher to general (absolute) statement, and thus avoid formal subjectivity in the expression. This peculiarity is intriguing as well as significant, since in his diary - in an entry dating from the same month as 'Mitte des Winters' and 'Die Bücher' - Heym refers to his own position and state of mind in terms which directly recall the poems: "Ich weiss nicht mehr, wo mein Weg hingeht. Früher war alles klar, einfach. Jetzt ist alles dunkel, auseinander, zerstreut." (Tgb:168). Yet in the poems this agonizingly personal sense of loss is continually disguised.

The growing sense of oppressiveness and forlornness, already in evidence in the demonic metaphors of the city poems and more obvious still in the obsessive images of desolation in the poems of 1911, has its correlate in several diary entries. Whereas in 1909 Heym ends his second diary with the question: "Wo geht der Weg nun hin?" (Tgb:134), the fifth diary opens in December 1911 with the inscription: "Tagebuch des Georg Heym. Der dacht den Weg weiss." (Tgb:175). Similarly, whereas in July 1910 he observes that "meine Grösse darin liegt, dass ich erkannt habe, es gibt wenig Nacheinander. Das meist liegt in einer Ebene. Es ist alles ein Nebeneinander." (Tgb:140), this recognition acquires even more desperate and extreme overtones when in September 1911 he describes himself as "der Mann der Dinge, ich, ein zerrissenes Meer, ich immer im Sturm, ich der Spiegel des Aussen, ebenso wild und chaotisch wie die Welt" (Tgb:164). In view of this intensification, the construction of the poems as emotional ciphers is highly functional, allowing as it does to present subjective experience in the impersonal form of metaphorical landscapes or direct universal statements.

The readjustment of the techniques of the 'monumental style' and 'neutral perspective' are concurrent with this reorientation. Thus in the poem 'Robespierre' (June 1910) a process of dehumanization is at work within the poem, through the use of verbal metaphors (Robespierre "meckert vor sich hin") and references to isolated parts of Robespierre's body; although the poem remains essentially historical, its importance for Heym becomes evident when he signs a letter (dated 30.5.1910) with his own name, "alias Robespierre auf dem Thespiskarren." (Tgb:203). As opposed to this precise identification however (itself related to the descriptive realism of the Berlin sonnets and the stance

of detached observer), the Heym of 1911 is simply the "Spiegel des Aussen", i.e. of a world seen as "wild und chaotisch". This view then links up with the previously noted quality of indefiniteness ('Entgrenzung') in the late poems. It is also revealing in this respect that in his diary Heym notes at one point: "Jemand concentriert in glücklichster Weise seine Gedanken auf seine Kleidung, und lenkt sie so von sich ab." (2.9.1911; Tgb:161), whereby "Jemand" is later underlined and the word "Ich" entered above it. Thus, in the same way as the poems turn away from description and demonization towards metaphorical landscapes which in their totality reflect a state of mind, the forms of depersonalization to which Heym has recourse also evolve towards a certain universality and indefiniteness.

A final point, then, concerns the relation between these tendencies and the increasingly problematic nature of 'language' and 'expression' as such in Heym, as well as the sense of relative abstraction in his later work.

One type of abstraction (discussed in Stegmaier 1973) concerns the geometrical patterns which recur frequently in Heym's poetry; in that sense the vertical line and especially the circle can be read as abstract patterns into a number of different scenes (e.g. in 'Die Gefangenen' or in the story 'Der fünfte Oktober'). The establishment of these patterns however, as E. Stegmaier (1973:464-465) rightly points out, remains tentative and speculative; in the poems of 1911, though, the circular pattern in particular enters a properly symbolic sphere, as an image of senseless movement and endless repetition (in a spatial as well as a temporal sense); as such it acquires a functional role in the context of the poem as an emotional cipher.

On the whole, Heym's mature work - including the demonization poems and the later work - contains a non-mimetic element only to the extent that various metaphorical and imaginative readings are continually superimposed on the descriptive structure of the poems (and in that sense Heym's work shows a remarkable affinity with Hulme's position in matters of abstraction). Eventually these non-mimetic strata appear to become the dominant construction principle, though even then the representational basis is never completely discarded. The frequency however with which Heym returns again and again to the same constellations of demonization and desolation validate the view of a strong non-mimetic principle of imaginative

distortion as one of the key elements in the complex structure of subjectivity and objectivation.

As was pointed out above, the formal diversity of the late poetry (as opposed to the thematic convergence - an inversion of the earlier relation) clearly points to a reorientation of Heym's poetic. Commenting on his own writing Heym notes in his diary (as quoted above): "meine Phantasie ist gegen mich aufgetreten und will nicht mehr wie ich will. Meine Phantasie, meine Seele, sie haben Angst und rennen wie verzweifelt in ihrem Käfig." (20.11.1911; Tgb:174).

The loss of control which this passage bespeaks also reflects the inversion of the former relation of formal and objective control by the poet over his material. In addition to this, Heym begins to doubt the adequacy, even the possibility, of any evaluative standards; and when even aesthetic standards are considered insufficient, Heym concludes that "alles was geschieht muss geschehen (), eine Verantwortung gibt es nicht," and "Erst wenn man sich daran gewohnt hat, überhaupt nicht mehr Maßstäbe anzulegen, - wird man einen richtigen Standpunkt für den Aspekt des Menschlichen gewinnen." (20.12.1911; Tgb:176).

In this - properly nihilistic <sup>(10)</sup> - line of thought, all former certainties, however relative, have vanished; as a result, the attempt to create a new poetic practice becomes highly problematic, an ever uncertain search, without genuine perspective, in the face of "dieser trüben und vor Wahnsinn knallenden Zeit." (Tgb:175). The formal diversity and thematic (metaphorical) convergence of Heym's late poetry then becomes understandable as a dialectic of pressure and search, bearing out Heym's earlier remark: "Mir erscheint ein Gedicht nur dann noch gut, wenn ich es noch nicht gemacht habe. - meistens wenigstens. Danach interessieren sie mich nicht mehr." (Tgb:151). Needless to say, Heym's premature death in January 1912 prevents the emergence of a full picture or a definitive style. The picture that does emerge is clearly one of constant struggle with the poetic material, as each attempt to create some objective and ordered poetic stability comes up against the demands of a cornered subjectivity.

NOTES

- (1) The abbreviations used in this chapter are as follows:  
DuS: Georg Heym: Dichtungen und Schriften. Band I: Lyrik.  
 Edited by K.L. Schneider. Hamburg/München,  
 E. Ellermann, 1964.  
Prosa: G. Heym: Dichtungen und Schriften: Band II: Prosa und  
 Dramen. Ed. by K.L. Schneider. Hamburg/München,  
 Ellermann, 1962.  
Tgb: G. Heym: Dichtungen und Schriften. Band III: Tagebücher,  
 Träume, Briefe. Ed. K.L. Schneider. Hamburg/  
 München, Ellermann, 1960.
- (2) "Verunsicherung des Selbstverständnisses des menschlichen Ichs"  
 (Eykman 1974:112) and the rhetorical reaction against it, has  
 come to be seen as the most fundamental characteristic of  
 Expressionism as such in several recent, more sociologically-  
 oriented studies of the movement (cf. several essays in Rothe  
 1969; also Krispyn 1964; Vietta & Kemper 1975). This point  
 requires no further elaboration in the present context.
- (3) As Ziegler (1972:47) also points out, Heym's diary provides  
 evidence that he saw his iambic pentameter as the equivalent of  
 the French alexandrine (iambic hexameter), for example when he  
 speaks of the iambic metre as "eine lateinische Form"(Tgb:166).  
 R. Ziegler adds that it is uncertain whether Heym knew Baudelaire  
 and Rimbaud in the original or in translation, but suggests that  
 he read them in French. K. Mautz (1961:71) however thinks that  
 Heym knew Rimbaud mainly through K.L. Ammer's German translation  
 (published in 1907) and his view seems more likely, given the  
 syntactic peculiarities in Ammer's versions (such as shortening  
 of sentences) which are also found in Heym. By way of example  
 one might compare Rimbaud's 'Le dormeur du val'(stanza 1) with  
 George's and Ammer's translations:

Rimbaud: C'est un trou de verdure où chante une rivière  
 Accrochant follement aux herbes des haillons  
 D'argent; où le soleil, de la montagne fière,  
 Luit: c'est un petit val qui mousse de rayons.

George: Ein grüner winkel den ein bach befeuchtet  
 Der toll das gras mit silberflecken säumt,  
 Wohin vom stolzen berg die sonne leuchtet -  
 Ein kleiner wasserfall von strahlen schäumt.

Ammer: Ein grünes Loch. Ein Bach singt seine Lieder,  
 der wild das Gras mit Silberstaub umsäumt.  
 Die Sonne glüht vom stolzen Berge nieder.  
 Ein kleines Tal, von Strahlen überschäumt. (in Gsteiger  
 1971:216-217)

Heym's poem 'Der Schläfer im Walde'(DuS:40) is based on Rimbaud,  
 but its syntax shows a close affinity with Ammer's version:

Seit Morgen ruht er. Da die Sonne rot  
 Durch Regenwolken seine Wunde traf.  
 Das Laub tropft langsam noch. Der Wald liegt tot.  
 Im Baum ruft ein Vögelchen im Schlaf.

- (4) Heym's use of the term "vierkantig" to describe his major verse form of 1910 is interesting also in another respect, namely in the context of Worringer's concept of geometric, 'life-alien' art forms as expressions of a relation of disharmony between the individual and the surrounding world. Whereas Heym's early poems clearly tend towards empathy ('Einfühlung'), both the monumental style and the neutral perspective of the later poems fall within Worringer's categories of 'Abstraktionsdrang' and 'Ruhebedürfnis' (Worringer 1918:1-33). In that sense Heym's work is curiously in line with T.E. Hulme's position concerning the nature of modern art.
- (5) The term 'neutral perspective', as was already mentioned, is derived from K. Ziegler, who falls back himself on H. Rölleke's notion of the "starre Perspektive" in Heym and on C. Heselhaus' view of Heym's position as that of a "Registrierender oder Reproduzierender" (Ziegler 1972:53). The same point is also made by H. Kaufmann (1969:231) who observes that in Heym's mature poems "grundsätzlich alles als Vision des starren Ichs gesehen ist."
- (6) Cf. 'Deux aspects du langage et deux types d'aphasie', in Jakobson 1963:43-67. Contiguity functions on the level of combination in language, similarity on the level of selection and substitution: "c'est une relation externe de contiguïté qui unit les constituants d'un contexte et une relation interne de similarité qui sert de base à la substitution." The figure of speech related to the dimension of contiguity is metonymy; the metaphor is related to the principle of similarity and substitution. These ideas are also expounded in Jakobson 1973:136,225.
- (7) Since each of the grammatical complements contains images and metaphors highlighting particular aspects of the 'tenor' and establishing imaginative parallels, different semantic fields are brought into play as well. In this respect V. Shklovsky's observations (in 'L'art comme procédé, 1917) on parallelism and the function of the image remain pertinent: "...ce qui importe dans le parallélisme, c'est la sensation de non-coïncidence dans une ressemblance. Le but du parallélisme, comme en général le but de l'image, représente le transfert d'un objet de sa perception habituelle dans la sphere d'une nouvelle perception; il y a donc un changement sémantique spécifique." (in Todorov 1965:94).
- (8) The availability of Van Gogh's work in Germany and his significance for the Expressionists is discussed in Salter 1972:200-206 (from 1905 onwards regular and successful exhibitions of Van Gogh's paintings were held in Berlin and elsewhere. A German translation of his letters was first serialized in Kunst und Künstler, 1904-1905, and subsequently published in book form in 1906). Significantly enough, Hofmannsthal also refers to Van Gogh as a kindred spirit in the fourth of his five 'Briefe des Zurückgekehrten', which continue the comments on the 'crisis'

described in the letter of Lord Chandos of 1902, and are dated April to May 1901 (though they were written in 1907); looking at a painting by Van Gogh, Hofmannsthal writes:

Wie kann ich es dir nahebringen, dass hier jedes Wesen - ein Wesen jeder Baum, jeder Streif gelben oder grünlichen Feldes, jeder Zaun, () - sich mir wie neugeboren aus dem furchtbaren Chaos des Nichtlebens, aus dem Abgrund der Wesenlosigkeit entgegenhob; dass ich fühlte, nein, dass ich wusste, wie jedes dieser Dinge, dieser Geschöpfe aus einem furchterlichen Zweifel an der Welt herausgeboren war und nun mit seinem Dasein einen grässlichen Schlund, gähnendes Nichts, für immer verdeckte! (Hofmannsthal 1957:496)

The contrast between this experience and the views of the early Hofmannsthal (cf. the quotation from 'Dichter und Leben' in section 1 above) runs almost exactly parallel to that between the later and early Heym.

- (9) Ziegler (1972:101) also points out that the adverb "manchmal" occurs 54 times in Heym's work (1910-1912), but 40 of these occurrences are in the period from August 1911 to January 1912. Martens (1971:219) also indicates that the adjective "endlos" is used almost exclusively in poems written in the autumn of 1911.
- (10) In Der Wille zur Macht Nietzsche defines Nihilism as follows: "Was bedeutet Nihilismus? - Dass die obersten Werte sich entwerten. Es fehlt das Ziel. Es fehlt die Antwort auf das 'Wozu'." and he describes "die Enttäuschung über einen angeblichen Zweck des Werdens" as the first cause of nihilism (quoted in Vietta & Kemper 1975:60,136). In the final sections of Der Wille zur Macht Nietzsche does, however, regard art as "die grosse Ermöglicherin des Lebens, die grosse Verführerin zum Leben, das grosse Stimulans des Lebens", which leads to the conclusion "Dies Buch ist dergestalt sogar antipessimistisch: nämlich in dem Sinne, dass es etwas lehrt, das stärker ist als der Pessimismus, das 'göttlicher' ist als die Wahrheit: die Kunst." (Nietzsche 1964: 577,578). Heym's radical doubt, his "brachliegender Enthousiasmus" notwithstanding, appears to involve even these potentialities of artistic production.



## CHAPTER 4

Apollinaire's Perspectives

This chapter, like the previous one, traces a poetic development away from a Symbolist-inspired model and into Modernist experimentation; more attention however will have to be paid to the correlation between painting and poetry. The first section deals with Apollinaire's early poems and their relation to the Symbolist aesthetic. Section two discusses the departure from the Symbolist paradigm in the poems of 1908 (in particular 'Les fiançailles'). In section three Apollinaire's position with regard to Cubism and Orphism is examined, while section four looks in some detail at the application of Cubist and Orphist (simultanist) principles of construction in three major poems of the years 1912-14 ('Zone', 'Le musicien de Saint-Merry', and 'Les fenêtres'). The final section then briefly considers further aspects of Apollinaire's simultanism, of the calligrammatic experiment, and of the notion of 'L'esprit nouveau'.

## 1.

In his posthumous tribute to Apollinaire, Reverdy described him as "un poète de transition d'abord, un novateur et un précurseur ensuite" ('Apollinaire et son oeuvre', 1918; Reverdy 1975:136). The characterization could hardly be more apt: not only does the evolution of Apollinaire's poetry, like Heym's, show the transition from a Symbolist-dominated to a modernist aesthetic, it also seems clear - as will be argued in the following pages - that his theoretical positions, even at their most advanced stage (in the years 1912-14), lack the rigorous but radical consistency of the views held by a Reverdy or a Jacob. At the same time however there can be little doubt that his various technical experiments and innovations had a liberating impact on the work and ideas of the avant-garde of the day.

Apollinaire's earliest poems date from before the turn of the century; the first poem to be published appeared in 1901, signed

Wilhelm Kostrowitzky. It is not difficult to detect in the exquisite melancholy, the erudite exoticism and the Verlainean overtones of many of these early pieces the general imprint of mainstream Symbolism, and in later years Apollinaire also repeatedly pays homage to Symbolists and Neo-Symbolists alike; as for Mallarmé, he notes in a letter to Breton in 1916 that "...si Mallarmé a toujours été dans l'air autour de moi, je n'ai jamais beaucoup médité sur son compte."(OC4:874)<sup>(1)</sup>. Yet it also appears, as various commentators have pointed out (Durry 1964a:50; Raymond 1970:209-210; Renaud 1969:50ff; Steegmuller 1963:61), that, although these early poems develop largely within a Symbolist context, several among them also develop an insidious critique of the Symbolist mode of writing. It is this aspect which, in the light of Apollinaire's subsequent evolution, requires closer inspection.

The usual verse form in such poems as 'Le larron', 'L'ermite', 'Merlin et la vieille femme' or 'Clair de lune' is the rhymed or assonant alexandrine; their subject-matter commonly implies references to supernatural, fantastic or magic worlds. The conspicuous abundance of rare and learned words, the obscure symbolism and the often complex and oblique allusions to mythology, legend, history or the Bible all leave room for an ironic reading, in particular when the repeated stylistic incongruities which occur in these poems are taken into account as well. Thus in the second stanza of 'L'ermite' (1902) the phrase "...quand je dis mes prières" is grotesquely rhymed with "...un morceau de gruyère"(Alc.:79); the following stanza then reads:

O Seigneur flagellez les nuées du coucher  
 Qui vous tendent au ciel de si jolis culs roses  
 Et c'est le soir les fleurs de jour déjà se closent  
 Et les souris dans l'ombre incantent le plancher (ibid.)

where the mock solemnity of the images and metaphors in the second and fourth line reveal the obvious intention to ridicule. Similar though less crude instances are to be found in 'Le larron'(1903), a poem which oddly combines Biblical (New Testament) and Ancient Greek references, and contains stanzas like

Puisque l'absolu choit la chute est une preuve  
 Qui double devient triple avant d'avoir été  
 Nous avouons que les grossesses nous empêvent  
 Les ventres pourront seuls nier l'aseïté (Alc.:73)

where equally the connotative contrast (abstract versus physical) between the first two and the last two lines lays bare the 'burlesque gravity' (Renaud 1969:50) of an otherwise extraordinarily obscure

poem (- a perfectly deliberate obscurity: the text as originally published gave no indication as to the identity of the different voices speaking in the poem; these indications are only introduced in the Alcools version; at the same time the obscurity in matters of allusion and symbolism precisely creates the conditions for the poem's peculiar type of irony). A more subtle subversion of the conventional style appears in line 3 of 'Clair de lune'(1901):

Lune mellifluente aux lèvres des déments  
 Les vergers et les bourgs cette nuit sont gourmands  
 Les astres assez bien figurent les abeilles  
 De ce miel lumineux qui dégoutte des treilles  
 Car voici que tout doux et leur tombant du ciel  
 Chaque rayon de lune est un rayon de miel ( ) (Alc.:123)

Here the somewhat elaborate moonlight/honey metaphors, buttressed by such assonances as "miel lumineux/mellifluent", is undermined by the reservations expressed in "assez bien", since the adverbial phrase implies an authorial meta-poetic statement on the adequacy of the poem's imagery itself.

It is through such stylistic ruptures, which usually take the form of unexpected shifts in the semantic and connotative range of the terms employed, that a number of the early poems develop a certain ironic and highly self-conscious duplicity, not unlike the combination of absurdity and solemnity characteristic of the whole of Jarry's literary enterprise. This duplicity however has a clear intertextual dimension to it, in that it continually demonstrates the distance between the conventional code (Symbolism, fin-de-siècle in general) which underlies the poems and the poems themselves: the coexistence of a lavish display of erudition, a contrived obscurity and repeated stylistic incongruities points to over-saturation, and reveals an element of parody. The poems, in other words, evince an awareness of the critical distance between themselves and the literary code in which they still inscribe themselves. Yet at this stage, and for several years to come, Apollinaire does not appear to have a viable alternative poetic at his disposal. The poems consequently exploit the Symbolist apparatus to the full and occasionally parody it, thereby laying bare its technical inventory and instituting a process of de-automatization (in the Formalist sense) by means of exaggeration and occasional but conspicuous deviations from the obtaining norm. It is part of this tactic, on the other hand, that a certain ambivalence always persists, in that

the poems never voice a univocal or direct critique of the conventional code. But what emerges in the end is not so much a continuation of Symbolist writing as an ambiguous and ironic pseudo-Symbolism, marked by the sense that

Trop de tentations malgré moi me caressent  
Tentations de lune et de logomachies ('L'ermite'; Alc.:79)

The 'pseudo-Symbolist' poems however present only one aspect of Apollinaire's early work, and should be considered in relation to at least two other types of poems, both of which appear in their own manner to move beyond the pseudo-Symbolism of the poems above. In the sequence of Rhine poems ('Rhénanes') the lingering Symbolist overtones give way to more soberly descriptive concerns, while on the other hand a poem like 'Palais' represents a turn towards the grotesquely fantastic.

The Rhine poems, though roughly contemporary with some of the longer pseudo-Symbolist pieces (1901-1902), strike an entirely different note; in P. Renaud's words: "Le langage des Rhénanes procure une sorte de bien-être qui tient à l'aisance de la phrase, au naturel des images, à la continuité de la ligne, à l'égalité de la voix." (1969:54). The first poem of the sequence, 'Nuit rhénane', may suffice to indicate where the difference with the above-mentioned poems lies:

Mon verre est plein d'un vin trembleur comme une flamme  
Ecoutez la chanson lente d'un batelier  
Qui raconte avoir vu sous la lune sept femmes  
Tordre leurs cheveux verts et longs jusqu'à leurs pieds

()

Le Rhin le Rhin est ivre où les vignes se mirent  
Tout l'or des nuits tombe en tremblant s'y refléter  
La voix chante toujours à en râle-mourir  
Ces fées aux cheveux verts qui incantent l'été

Mon verre s'est brisé comme un éclat de rire  
(Alc.:94; stanzas 1,3,4)

The element of legend, fantasy and imagination has anything but disappeared ("sept femmes", "cheveux verts", "fées"), but it is as it were twice enframed, in that it is located in the boat-man's song, which is in turn presented as part of a scene seen and heard by the poetic persona. In addition to this the evocative quality of the song is accounted for in terms of the persona's imagination, aroused as it is by what appears to be his state of intoxication. In this way a clearly recognizable experience and a common, realistic scene

are offered as the basis and explanation of what goes on inside the poem itself. This principle of applying a descriptive and realistic frame also holds true for the sequence as a whole: poems like 'La Loreley' and 'Schinderhannes' - already based on legends or anecdotes connected with the Rhine region as such - are themselves enframed within the context of the entire sequence, and thus subordinated to its predominant, descriptive concern: the place of the purely imaginative element, when it occurs, is thus precisely circumscribed, and relegated to a secondary plane.

If the Rhine poems are characterized by their proximity to the referential directness of the spoken language, 'Palais' (1905) proceeds along quite different lines. The poem (originally called 'Dans le palais de Rosemonde') has its point of departure in history: the castle built by Henry II (the "monarque adultère" to whom the text refers) for his mistress Rosemonde. But in marked contrast with the Rhine poems, 'Palais' is developed in terms of pure and burlesque imagination. The poem is dedicated to Max Jacob, and indeed the probable indebtedness of the kind of fantasy displayed in the poem to both Jacob and Jarry <sup>(2)</sup> has been pointed out more than once (Durry 1964a:28-29; Renaud 1969:66). Considered in relation to the pseudo-Symbolist poems, 'Palais' offers not so much a gentle parody of fin-de-siècle themes and techniques as a straightforward satire: the satirical element is more obvious in being more consistent as well as a good deal cruder (- and it is for this reason rather than for its flights of fantasy that the poem's affinity with the work of Jarry and Jacob is significant). M.-J. Durry (1964a:27) neatly sums up this relation when she remarks that "...dans Alcools, Palais blague le Symbolisme."

The various contradictions, incongruities and stylistic anomalies of 'Palais' are too conspicuous to escape notice, as even a brief glance will make clear:

Vers le palais de Rosemonde au fond du Rêve,  
 Mes rêveuses pensées pieds nus vont en soirée  
 Le palais don du roi comme un roi nu s'élève  
 Des chairs fouettées des roses de la roseraie

On voit venir au fond du jardin mes pensées  
 Qui sourient du concert joué par les grenouilles  
 Elles ont envie des cyprès grandes quenouilles  
 Et le soleil miroir des roses s'est brisé

( )

Sur les genoux pointus du monarque adultère  
 Sur le mai de son âge et sur son trente et un  
 Madame Rosemonde roule avec mystère  
 Ses petits yeux tout ronds pareils aux yeux des Huns

Dame de mes pensées au cul de perle fine  
 Dont ni perle ni cul n'égale l'orient  
 Qui donc attendez-vous  
 De rêveuses pensées en marche à l'Orient  
 Mes plus belles voisines

(Alc.:34-35; stanzas 1,2,4,5)

The dream atmosphere ("Rêve", "rêveuses pensées", but also more particularly the scenic dream land: "au fond du Rêve", "au fond du jardin"), charged with overtones of flagellation and eroticism, is clearly indicated from the first stanza onwards; formally the poem is held together by various patterns of repetition, echo and assonance. Some of the anomalies and contradictions can readily be explained in terms of dream images (thus "Mes rêveuses pensées pieds nus vont en soirée"), but others are evidently of a different nature, being either self-contradictions (like "...petits yeux tout ronds pareils aux yeux des Huns") or stylistic incongruities. Among the latter one counts the curious use of the preposition "sur" (stanza 4), first as an adjunct of place ("Sur les genoux..."), and then twice as an adjunct of time - but in the latter sense first in a 'poetic' phrase ("Sur le mai de son âge") and then colloquially ("sur son trente et un"), with the additional complication that both or either of these phrases may refer to the "monarque adultère" as well as to "Madame Rosemonde". In the following stanza a similar though somewhat more obscene stylistic contrast emerges when the pedestrian "cul" is applied to "Dame de mes pensées" (itself ironic through its association with the mocking "Madame Rosemonde"). Whereas, however, these shifts in linguistic registers and connotations are in this case enveloped in the grotesque humour of the whole of 'Palais', their subversive effect becomes clear when they are seen in connection with, first, the allusions to the fin-de-siècle themes and images in the rest of the poem (e.g. "Rêve", with capital R), and, secondly, with comparable dissonant constructions in other poems which do not possess the element of farce found in 'Palais': not only 'L'ermite' (cf. above), but also the 'Chanson du mal-aimé', still steeped in a traditional elegiac and confessional mode and thematically related to the Rhine poems, contains lines like

Et moi j'ai le coeur aussi gros  
 Qu'un cul de dame damascène (Alc.:26)

where the sound-repetition in "dame damascène" only underlines the satirical impact of the "coeur/cul" alliteration.

On the level of metre, the stylistic ruptures of 'Palais' are accompanied by deliberate anomalies in the treatment of the alexandrine. Thus in stanza 5 (and again in stanza 10), where the manuscript version of the poem still has regular alexandrines (cf. Décaudin 1965: 109-112), the separated lines "Qui donc attendez-vous/()/Mes plus belles voisines" form in fact one broken twelve-syllable line. The same practice occurs elsewhere too: in the first published version of 'Les colchiques' (1907, dated "Neu-Glück 1902"; Décaudin 1965:107) the second line was still a regular alexandrine ("Les vaches y paissant lentement s'empoisonnent"), which was subsequently broken up in the proofs of Alcools (into: "Les vaches y paissant/Lentement s'empoisonnent"). Similarly, whereas the first published version of 'Les cloches' (1906, dated "mai 1902"; Décaudin 1965:182) has eight-syllable lines throughout, in the Alcools version the poem ends on a truncated five-syllable line. Indeed examples of this kind could be multiplied almost at will. As the comparison between final and earlier (manuscript or magazine publication) versions shows, the introduction of metrical irregularities is perfectly deliberate, and Apollinaire's policy of tampering with regular metres - and mainly with the alexandrine - has the same subversive function as Pound's and Eliot's practice in 'breaking the pentameter'. Yet Apollinaire's position in this respect remains peculiar in so far as in his work regular verse forms continue to coexist with free verse and/or 'broken' metres. This applies not only to the Alcools volume as a whole, where poems in regular metre are found side by side with free verse poems, but also to individual poems as such, which may consist of a mixture of regular, free and 'broken' metres. The liberty with which Apollinaire handles verse forms is further exemplified by his treatment of 'La maison des morts', which was first published in prose (as 'L'obituaire', 1907; Décaudin 1965:117ff) and subsequently as a poem in free verse (Alc.:39-46).

The ambivalence which characterizes Apollinaire's attitude towards the Symbolist poetic, then, finds a correlative in this curious and constant coexistence of regular and free metres: in both cases parody and deviation from the conventional norms are seen to go hand in hand with continued respect and a frequently expressed concern not

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to negate but to continue and enrich the tradition. This duality underpins such late texts as 'L'esprit nouveau et les poètes' and the poem 'La jolie rousse' (both 1918), but is already voiced as early as 1906, when Apollinaire declares in a reply to a questionnaire that

Vers libre et classique, poésie et prose, théâtre, poème et roman me paraissent des formes également excellentes. Je ne pense pas qu'aucune d'elles soit sacrifiée au bénéfice des autres. (OC3:780)

And he makes a similar point when he argues, in an article of 1908 on the Neo-Symbolist poet Jean Royère, that free verse is neither a negation of conventional metre nor a 'prosaic simplification' of poetry, but simply a complementary 'personal prosody' (*ibid.*:782).

In spite of assurances like this - which may well be inspired by tactical motivations - the doubtless intentional violations of conventional metrical norms do imply a definite sense of liberty in regard to the whole traditional, and in particular the Symbolist, code. This growing distance is clearly expressed also in another part of the above-mentioned questionnaire of 1906, where Apollinaire's remark: "Evidemment, ce que vous appelez l'art de la pénombre et de la mélodie créé par la mystique intuition m'inspire une défiance insurmontable" (*ibid.*:780) obviously reveals a profound dissatisfaction with one of the basic tenets of Symbolist poetic practice. Instead he declares his preference for "un art de fantaisie, de sentiment et de pensée, aussi éloigné que possible de la nature avec laquelle il ne doit avoir rien de commun" (*ibid.*), which foreshadows a number of later observations (in 'Les trois vertus plastiques', 1908) on the 'inhumanity' of the artist and the creative and transforming nature of the artistic imagination.

Generally speaking, Apollinaire's early poetry seems to point to a position which is both critical and hesitant. Time and again the major poems of this period evince a critical (parodic) distance between themselves and the model (the code) from which they derive, and various attempts are made to handle a different subject-matter or to employ different techniques. As a result the picture that emerges is that of an uncommon receptivity and uncertainty, as several genres and styles are allowed to exist simultaneously; the editorial note in the first issue of Le festin d'Esopé (1903; with Apollinaire as editor) contains the characteristic announcement that

the magazine "...publiera des oeuvres en tous genres des littératures d'imagination et d'idées" (quoted in Adéma 1968:86). This openness, while explicable at this stage in terms of Apollinaire's explorations into a viable alternative poetic not based on Symbolist-type procedures and assumptions, appears nevertheless in later years to remain a constant factor in his approach: even in the crucial period 1912-14 radical formal experiments are counterbalanced by an adherence to traditional verse forms, and in spite of his later ardent defence of Cubism and Orphism he continues to view his own position as basically outside and above the "petites chapelles" (OC3:878) and the polemics between the various ephemeral literary and artistic groups, schools and movements. This observation however does not invalidate the fact that the years from Apollinaire's earliest publications up to about 1908 are essentially a period of critique and unrest, leading almost inevitably to a crisis: in the lean years between 1903 and 1907 he produced few and (formally and thematically) diverse poems, with no poetry published at all in 1906; in what is perhaps his most significant reply to the 1906 questionnaire he flatly states: "Je ne possède point de composition significative et je le regrette." (OC3:780).

2.

The year 1908 is commonly, and rightly, regarded as a first turning point in the evolution of Apollinaire's poetic. It is also a moment filled with a curious ambivalence. From 1908 onwards Apollinaire's critical writings turn more and more towards art criticism, and towards the defence of the Cubist painters in particular. Yet the biographical evidence indicates that his initial reaction to Picasso's early Cubist experiments (such as the 'Demoiselles d'Avignon' of 1907) was one of bewilderment and incomprehension (Adéma 1968:143). At the same time his lecture 'La Phalange nouvelle' of April 1908 strongly emphasizes his respect for the poetic tradition: he declares among other things that "...aucun parmi les jeunes poètes que j'aime () ne se tient en dehors de la tradition poétique française" (OC3:758), adding that there is "...aucune solution de continuité, la tradition est ininterrompue" between the younger generation ("nous-mêmes") and the older poets - among whom he mentions Vielé-Griffin, Kahn, Ghil, Moréas, Verhaeren, Rognier and Maeterlinck (ibid.:759). Gustave Kahn,

consequently, is largely (though only superficially) justified when in 1908 he still refers to Apollinaire as one of the "nouveaux symbolistes" (Adéma 1968:136). But it is also in 1908 that Apollinaire writes the essay 'Les trois vertus plastiques', in which he observes that "On ne peut pas transporter partout avec soi le cadavre de son père. On l'abandonne en compagnie des autres morts." (OC4:93) - and it is precisely this essay that will be reprinted in 1913 as the first chapter of Les peintres cubistes. It thus becomes clear that the impulse towards innovation - as a break with the traditional models and masters - is closely linked to his growing interest in the work of the younger painters and in the Cubist revolution especially.

This debt however can be no more than partial: the innovation in Apollinaire's poetic writing makes itself clearly felt at a time when his views on Cubism are still in ferment. It is highly significant in this respect that in the first part of his lecture on 'La Phalange nouvelle' he apologizes at some length for his ignorance of the work of many younger traditional poets ("...pardonnez-moi de ne pas avoir découvert vos retraites; pardonnez-moi d'ignorer la beauté de vos harmonies"; OC3:757), whereas a virtually identical confession of ignorance in the poem 'Les fiançailles' (also of 1908) ("Pardonnez-moi mon ignorance/ Pardonnez-moi de ne plus connaître l'ancien jeu des vers" Alc:118) reads not as an apology but as a poetic programme, as a public declaration of the break with the inherited modes and forms, in the context of a poem which itself embodies a new principle of structuration. The poetry thus seems to be well ahead of Apollinaire's own critical positions - a state of affairs that will later recur in connection with the simultanist technique. And yet it is again in an essay on a painter ('Henri Matisse', December 1907) that he mentions the first requirement for the construction of a new and non-Symbolist aesthetic: in concluding his discussion with the observation that "...il y a un rapport de nous au reste de l'univers, nous pouvons le découvrir et ensuite ne plus essayer de le dépasser" (OC4:86), he also appears to turn his back on the whole thematic and metaphysical apparatus of Symbolism: the new poetic, that is, will take account of the material world, without constantly attempting to transcend it. The categorical statement in the same article: "Ordonner un chaos, voilà la création" (ibid.:85) may then come to have two specific meanings: to make sense of the world in its own terms, and to bring about an

artistic structure that does not rely for its coherence on the postulate of an unattainable transcendental unity. In this way the emphasis comes to fall entirely on the way in which the artist 'orders a chaos': it shifts formally from suggestion and symbolization to self-reliant structure, and thematically from myth to reality.

The poem 'Les fiançailles' first appeared at the end of 1908, and is in theme, structure and conception closely related to 'Le brasier' (May 1908; originally called 'Le pyrée'), which is in turn described by Apollinaire as one of the 'parents' of the prose piece 'Onirocritique' (cf. OC4:697). Between them, these texts point the way to the further innovations and experiments of the years 1912-14. 'Les fiançailles', dedicated to Picasso, was afterwards clearly regarded as an important poem by Apollinaire himself: in a letter of 1915 he writes that, of the poems of Alcools, "le plus nouveau et le plus lyrique, le plus profond ce sont les Fiançailles", adding that "nul doute qu'avec le Brasier il ne soit mon meilleur poème sinon le plus immédiatement accessible"(OC4:495).

Several of the nine sections of 'Les fiançailles' consist of or contain fragments of earlier poems. Thus the entire first section is made up of the first three stanzas of a poem dating from 1902 ('Le printemps', OP:556), except for the omission of the last line of the first stanza (a line with definite Romantic and symbolic overtones: "...l'oiseau bleu/ Prince charmant du conte et de tendre aventure"), an omission which also effectively disrupts the formal harmony of 'Les fiançailles': the poem begins and ends with three rhymed four-line stanzas, but the deletion of one line in section one ironically undermines this neat balance, while reflecting with equal irony on Apollinaire's apology (there no doubt in good faith) to the aspiring Neo-Symbolists of 'La Phalange nouvelle' for being ignorant of "la beauté de vos harmonies": composition in terms of formal harmony is precisely what the new poetic avoids. The second section of 'Les fiançailles' also contains several lines from an earlier (undated)<sup>(3)</sup> poem (OP:563), though this time with various alterations; one line from this early poem also figures in section seven. As a result the whole poem presents an aspect of being, to an extent at least, patched together, thus enhancing the effect of thematic as well as formal discontinuity - which is nevertheless consistent in the sense that 'Les fiançailles' is evidently and

essentially a poem about coming to terms and settling accounts with the past.

Discontinuity and juxtaposition appear, on the whole, to be the dominant principles of construction in 'Les fiançailles'. The formal elaboration is marked by a mixture of regular and free verse parts, with in the free verse sections the use of occasional rhymes (several of which are unorthodox, being assonances or identical terms). Semantically also the various sections, in spite of a number of repetitions and echoes, develop widely different isotopies, while often even within the sections themselves individual lines bear little relation to each other. The position of the poetic 'I' is also affected by this over-all discontinuity: whereas in an early poem like the 'Chanson du mal-aimé', which equally makes use of juxtaposed sections and the insertion of fragments from older poems, the poetic 'I' remains the definable single focus around which the thematic structure of the poem is ordered and arranged, in 'Les fiançailles' the persona has lost this centralizing role. This shift in emphasis is clearly deliberate, as becomes evident in a comparison between the draft version and the final text of the poem. Section two of the final version reads as follows:

Mes amis m'ont enfin avoué leur mépris  
 Je buvais à pleins verres les étoiles  
 Un ange a exterminé pendant que je dormais  
 Les agneaux les pasteurs des tristes bergeries  
 De faux centurions emportaient le vinaigre  
 Et les gueux mal blessés par l'épuration dansaient  
 Étoiles de l'éveil je n'en connais aucune  
 Les becs de gaz pissaient leur flamme au clair de lune  
 Des croque-morts avec des bocks tintaient des glas  
 A la clarté des bougies tombaient vaille que vaille  
 Des faux cols sur des flots de jupes mal brossées  
 Des accouchées masquées fêtaient leur relevailles  
 La ville cette nuit semblait un archipel  
 Des femmes demandaient l'amour et la dulie  
 Et sombre sombre fleuve je me rappelle  
 Les ombres qui passaient n'étaient jamais jolies (Alc:115)

The draft version however still has:

Mes amis, ne craignez pas de m'avouer votre mépris  
 J'ai l'orgueil de me souvenir de mes souhaits glorieux  
 /J'ai rêvé/ des poèmes si grandioses que j'ai dû les laisser  
 inachevés  
 Moi-même j'ai tenté de rythmer  
 Parce que mon souci de perfection  
 Dépassait mon goût même et les forces d'un seul homme  
 /Puis j'ai reconnu que chaque moment porte en soi sa propre  
 perfection/

Mais j'ai eu cette force ce goût et cette science  
 Et je me suis endormi  
 Un ange a exterminé pendant mon sommeil  
 Les agneaux, les pasteurs des tristes bergeries.  
 De faux centurions emportaient le vinaigre  
 Les gueux mal blessés par l'épuration dansaient  
 Puis après la fuite et la mort de mes vérités poétiques  
 Je m'éveillai au bout de cinq ans une nuit citadine  
 /Et/ les becs de gaz pissaient leur flamme au clair de lune  
 ()  
 A mes yeux dehors dans les rez-de-chaussées  
 La ville aux lueurs nocturnes semblait un archipel  
 Des femmes, demandaient l'amour et la dulie  
 Et sombre éveil si faible je me rappelle  
 Les passantes ce soir n'étaient jamais jolies

(Decaudin 1965:205)

In this version the reflections of the 'I' persona remain the central motif, due to the prominence given to his considerations on poetic form and because the disparate images in the middle part are all clearly linked to the position of the persona. In the final text this unity based on the persona is shattered, while at the same time the former sequential development is abandoned in favour of a series of juxtaposed lines throughout. Thus the reduced role of the poetic 'I' appears to go together with the disruption of discursiveness, a tendency which is even more obvious when the various images related to the city (at the end of the section) are compared with the earlier (undated) poem from which they are taken (OP:563), and where the city scenes are presented sequentially and discursively as so many impressions received by the persona on his walk through the town at night. Clearly, even in the final version of the poem the series of images is ultimately still related to the persona (as dream or as perception); the difference however lies in the presentation, in the organization of the textual structure, from which the unifying figure, originally both focus and motif, has virtually disappeared, and is replaced by a discontinuous arrangement of juxtaposed and isolated lines.

As was noted above, 'Les fiançailles' and 'Le brasier' are companion pieces, both springing from a single original draft. The two poems, not surprisingly, overlap in various respects. 'Le brasier' complements 'Les fiançailles' in the sense that the latter revolves around the idea of a painful break with the "ancien jeu des vers" (Alc.:118), while the former emphasizes the more positive theme of renovation and renewal ("Voici ma vie renouvelée"; "Il n'y a plus rien de commun entre moi/ Et ceux qui craignent les brûlures");

Alc.:91). Both are essentially poems about the end of a period and the end of a poetic; their very form (their formal and semantic structure) embodies the principle of discontinuity and juxtaposition of the new mode of writing. The survival of traditional metres in both texts, however, serves as yet another reminder of the continuing duplicity in Apollinaire's poetic practice, in that the new style derives from and at the same time opposes the conventional modes of poetic discourse. Yet in spite of the fact that Apollinaire never ceases to explain this duplicity in terms of coexistence and continuity, the radically different structuration of 'Les fiançailles' and 'Le brasier' makes them eminently poems of rupture: both establish their own principles of construction as their discourse develops, and in that sense both are in fact also poems about poetry, about the "diversité formelle" ('Fiançailles', Alc.:118) which will become a major characteristic of the new poetic. The reduction of the role of the 'I' persona is accompanied by an increased unpredictability in the transitions, associations and connections, the apparently gratuitous and random concatenation of lines and images. The images themselves are deprived of a coherent context, which renders their isolation and semantic disparity all the more obvious; several among them also carry ironic overtones: whereas in a poem like 'Clair de lune' (1901) the moonlight is referred to as "ce miel lumineux" and, in a synaesthetic metaphor, as "chaque rayon de lune est un rayon de miel" (Alc.:123), 'Les fiançailles' has an isolated line: "C'est la lune qui cuit comme un oeuf sur le plat" (Alc.:120; derived from the earlier poem 'Les villes...', where however the image was fully integrated in the context: "Les meurt-de-faim les sans-le-sou voyaient la lune/ Etalée dans le ciel comme un oeuf sur le plat", OP:563), which in its unconventional everyday directness and banality produces the same ironic effect as Hulme's moon-image in 'Above the Dock'.

Thus, considered in their totality, both 'Les fiançailles' and 'Le brasier', while deriving a sense of unity from a (fragmented) over-all theme and from the recurrence of particular motifs, are able to use the possibilities of discontinuity to retain and even further to exploit the element of fantasy present in earlier poems; only this time this element is not developed in terms of myth or legend (or a parody of these), but as part of a poetic structure based throughout on semantic disparity and abrupt juxtaposition,

from line to line, from image to image, from section to section. A curious paradox thus ensues, which marks Apollinaire's writings in these years: on the one hand the poetic persona is consistently presented as fragmented, multiple, unstable and dispersed, while, on the other, the insistence on the absolute ('divine') power of the artistic imagination becomes more and more pronounced. Both these elements, it will be seen, eventually merge in the Cubist aesthetic.

The notion of a dual self occurs frequently in the poems of Alcools. As early as 1902-1903, in the 'Chanson du mal-aimé', a duality consisting of "moi" and "mon ombre" is established:

Ténébreuse épouse que j'aime  
Tu es à moi en n'étant rien  
O mon ombre en deuil de moi-même (Alc.:26)

The idea has several echoes throughout the volume: in 'Signe' (1911) the poet writes that "Une épouse me suit c'est mon ombre fatale" (Alc.:111); a draft version of 'Vendémiaire' (probably dating from 1909) has the lines: "Un homme m'appela (/ Et m'étant retourné je m'aperçus moi-même" (Décaudin 1965:225). In 'Cortège' (1912, though this is another poem largely made up of older fragments) the theme is further elaborated in terms of a multiple, de-centred self:

Un jour je m'attendais moi-même  
Je me disais Guillaume il est temps que tu viennes  
Et d'un lyrique pas s'avançaient ceux que j'aime  
Parmi lesquels je n'étais pas  
(  
Le cortège passait et j'y cherchais mon corps  
Tous ceux qui survenaient et n'étaient pas moi-même  
Amenaient un à un les morceaux de moi-même  
On me bâtit peu à peu comme on élève une tour  
Les peuples s'entassaient et je parus moi-même  
Qu'ont formé tous les corps et les choses humaines (Alc.:49.50)

It is this protean 'I' figure which also appears in the 'Onirocritique' ("Je me vis centuple. La troupe que j'étais s'assit au bord de la mer..."; OP:372) and in 'Le brasier' ("Je flambe dans le brasier à l'ardeur adorable/ Et les mains des croyants m'y rejettent multiple innombrablement"; Alc.:91). In 'Zone' finally the view of the dual/multiple self is developed in two ways, first in the interchangeability of the pronouns "je" and "tu", and then in the application of the (Cubist) multiple point of view.

It should however be pointed out here that the 'dédoublement' of the self in Apollinaire's poems is entirely different from the double personality in Heym's work. Whereas in Heym's case the split



personality, as commented upon in his diary, is elevated into a formal mask which determines the totality of his poetry by the recourse to an 'objective stance' and conventional verse forms, for Apollinaire the multiple persona is primarily a thematic and formal principle within the poetic structure, transformed eventually into a Cubist-style sense of ubiquity. Far from acquiring Heym's anguished and rebellious overtones, Apollinaire's fragmented self is both expansive and receptive; this position is captured in lines like "Mes yeux nagent loin de moi" in 'Les fiançailles' (Alc.:119), and, in 'Vendémiaire':

J'ai soif villes de France et d'Europe et du monde  
 Venez toutes couler dans ma gorge profonde  
 ()  
 Mondes qui vous rassemblez et qui nous ressemblez  
 Je vous ai bus et ne fus pas desaltéré  
 ()  
 Je suis ivre d'avoir bu tout l'univers (Alc.:136,142)

Although for both Heym and Apollinaire the appearance of the 'split personality' question coincides with the emergence of city scenery in their poems (in any significant sense), in Heym's case this leads to the impassive and static presentation of massive 'demonic' visions, in a poetic structure connoting monumentality and destruction and the alienation and insignificance of the human figure; Apollinaire's position is almost the exact opposite of this: an approach akin to that of Unanimism and Futurism, in which an open world-image is unfolded together with a fluctuating, de-centred and trans-individual sensibility. For Heym, also, the consistent use (apart from the poems of 1911) of a conventional, 'square' verse form is part of his formal mask; in Apollinaire's case the coexistence of traditional metres and free verse forms is a constantly ambivalent signal, implying both continuity and opposition, always lyrically adaptable, and tending to the heterogeneous.

If the theme of the multiple self is a purely poetic phenomenon for Apollinaire, the exaltation of the artistic imagination appears mainly in essays and reviews. It amounts, in one way, to a further elaboration of his remark on the 'art of fantasy' to which he refers in the above-mentioned questionnaire of 1906 (OC3:780); at the same time the notion of 'absolute' fantasy in the style of 'Palais' seems in these and subsequent years to be abandoned in favour of a view in which 'artistic imagination' is more narrowly understood as the power to assemble and arrange diverse elements derived from external

reality. Also, Apollinaire's comments in this respect reveal yet again a characteristic ambiguity: though they are mostly applied to (Fauvist and Cubist) painting, they undoubtedly originate from and presuppose a Symbolist-inspired frame of thought.

A first explicit and extensive statement occurs in 'Les trois vertus plastiques' (originally published in June 1908 in a catalogue for an exhibition of Fauvist paintings; OC4:92-95), which opens with the observation that "Les trois vertus plastiques: la pureté, l'unité et la vérité maintiennent sous leurs pieds la nature terrassée". The sovereign and non-imitative principle indicated here is later opposed to the 'reproductive' nature of photography; art, in other words, distorts and transforms (it possesses "la pureté qui ne souffre rien d'étranger et transforme cruellement en elle-même ce qu'elle atteint."; ibid.:93), and it is this necessary disjunction between art and reality which constitutes the 'inhumanity' of art and its 'artistic truth':

Avant tout, les artistes sont des hommes qui veulent devenir inhumains.

Ils cherchent péniblement les traces de l'inhumanité, traces que l'on ne rencontre nulle part dans la nature.

Elles sont la vérité et en dehors d'elles nous ne connaissons aucune réalité. (OC4:94)

On the basis of these qualities and this essential freedom, then, the work of art is to be seen as a world in which the artist, while deriving his material from outside, wields absolute power: "...le peintre doit avant tout se donner le spectacle de sa propre divinité" (ibid.:93).

These ideas are subsequently applied to the Cubist aesthetic, when (as mentioned above) the essay 'Les trois vertus plastiques' is incorporated in Les peintres cubistes. Already in November 1908, however, Apollinaire uses the terminology of 'Les trois vertus...' when he writes about Braque (who spent the summer of 1908 in L'Estaque painting Cézanne-like landscapes, but in the newly evolved Cubist manner):

Puisant en lui-même les éléments des motifs synthétiques qu'il représente, il est devenu un créateur.

Il ne doit plus rien à ce qui l'entoure. Son esprit a provoqué volontairement le crépuscule de la réalité et voici que s'élabore en lui-même une renaissance universelle. ( )

Ce peintre est angélique. Plus pur que les autres hommes, il ne se préoccupe point de ce qui étant étranger à son art le ferait soudain déchoir le paradis qu'il habite. ( )

Pour le peintre, pour le poète, pour les artistes (c'est ce qui les différencie des autres hommes, et surtout des savants), chaque oeuvre devient un univers nouveau avec ses lois particulières. (OC4:96,97)

The validity of these comments in poetic matters is only casually indicated here; but in a review of August 1908 the new concepts are transferred more explicitly to the literary work as well:

Le poète est analogue à la divinité. Il sait que dans sa création la vérité est indéfectible. Il admire son ouvrage. Il connaît l'erreur qui anime sa creature, fautive au regard de nos visions mais qui présente aux puissances momentanées une vérité éternelle. Aussi, l'organisme d'une creature poétique ne contient-il pas moins de perfection que celui d'une de celles qui tombent sous nos sens. ( )

Chaque jour peut-être une volonté toute puissante change l'ordre des choses, contrarie les causes et les effets et anéantit le souvenir et la vérité même de ce qui existait la veille pour créer une succession d'événements établissant une nouvelle réalité. Et ces nouveautés sont le mensonge de l'ancienne vérité. Tel est l'ouvrage poétique: la fausseté d'une réalité anéantie. Et le souvenir même a disparu. La comparaison est impossible. La vie et la vérité sont indéniables. (OC3:802)

The Mallarméan overtones in these paragraphs are unmistakable (though probably quite unintentional). But as was observed in Hulme's case, the similarities are superficial and potentially misleading because they are functionally different: although there can be little doubt that ultimately the anti-realistic bias of the Symbolist aesthetic still lies at the basis of Apollinaire's views on this point and although Apollinaire's and Mallarmé's positions seem to converge in their descriptions of the work of art in terms of "un faux" and in their conception of art as a negation of the contingent nature of reality, the context and orientation of both approaches remains fundamentally different. For Mallarmé the poem amounts to a sign for something universal and properly inexpressible, with the poet fulfilling in the process of negation and transcendence the role of (at best) worshipper and mediator - priest or alchemist. For Apollinaire however, as for Reverdy or Jacob, the artist grows into something of a god himself, extracting from the external world a poem which exists completely in and for itself, an organic entity with a life of its own. It is this contrast which reveals one of the fundamental reorientations of the Modernist poetic away from and in opposition to the Symbolist outlook: the work of art is no longer an intimation of a universe beyond, but an alternative universe: a heterocosm ("un univers nouveau avec ses lois particulières").

This approach, then, is echoed in several later passages. Thus in another review, shortly afterwards (November 1908), Apollinaire denounces "ce faux semblant de réalisme"(OC3:805) which only succeeds in offering a platitudinous reproduction of things instead of establishing an immanent artistic world; in Les peintres cubistes he remarks on the irrelevance of the criterion of "vraisemblance" between art and reality (OC4:18); and in his reply to a questionnaire in 1914 he defines 'artistic truth' paradoxically as "vérité: authentiques faussetés, fantômes véritables"(OC3:892).

Two closely related ideas stand out in all this: that of the autonomous artistic imagination, and, as its corollary, that of the self-sufficiency of the artistic product (poem or painting), seen as both deliberate fiction and organic structure. This also implies that the apparently disparate and discontinuous nature of the artistic construct (the poem) is to be understood in the context of the particularity of the work of art as such: since the poem is essentially closed upon itself, its formal or thematic fragmentation is entirely subordinate to - is, paradoxically, the clearest expression of - its status as a separate and autonomous artefact. This 'otherness', then, also accounts for the self-reflexive nature of the artistic product, which, by virtue of the rejection of "vraisemblance" with an external model, offers in its very form a meta-poetic reflection on its own structuration; this is ultimately the sense of Apollinaire's characterization of Cubism and Fauvism as a 'return to the principles' of painting (OC4:218), and of his description of Braque's work as a "science de la construction"(ibid.:88). Similarly, the fragmented and multiple self of the poetic persona figures as a structural element within the contours of this closed art-world: instead of conveying the de-humanized and alienated overtones of depersonalization encountered in a Heym or a Trakl, Apollinaire's gesture is one of appropriation, the expansive and receptive vehicle which assembles the diverse elements of the poetic universe.

### 3.

Apollinaire's comments on the Cubist painters <sup>(4)</sup> are to be approached with caution and reservation; their significance, it would appear, lies not so much in their genuine critical value as illuminations of the Cubist aesthetic as such, but rather in what

they reveal about Apollinaire's own opinions and positions. The biographical evidence suggests that Apollinaire, after some bewilderment at the initial manifestations of Cubism, defended the new painters out of a sense of solidarity rather than out of conviction (Adéma 1968:164); his interest also shifted fairly soon from Cubism proper to Delaunay's Orphism. The artists themselves moreover do not appear to have been particularly impressed by Apollinaire's Peintres cubistes (Adéma 1968:215-216; Durry 1964a:188-189), a book which is often indeed more lyrical than informative.

The continuity in Apollinaire's thinking is indicated by the presence in Les peintres cubistes(OC4:13-54) of the essay on the "trois vertus plastiques", with its emphasis on the 'transforming' and 'creative' (in Apollinaire's sense of non-imitative) nature of the work of art and the relative irrelevance of the external subject; this point is taken up again in one of the chapters written in 1912 (which constitute the bulk of the text):

Ces peintres, s'ils observent encore la nature, ne l'imitent plus et ils évitent avec soin la représentation de scènes naturelles observées et reconstituées par l'étude.

La vraisemblance n'a plus aucune importance, car tout est sacrifié par l'artiste aux vérités, aux nécessités d'une nature supérieure qu'il suppose sans la découvrir. Le sujet ne compte plus ou s'il compte c'est à peine. ( )

Ce qui différencie le cubisme de l'ancienne peinture, c'est qu'il n'est pas un art d'imitation, mais un art de conception qui tend à s'élever jusqu'à la création. (OC4:18,24)

This general observation is obviously valid (in spite of the vagueness of the wording), and is also made in André Salmon's 'Anecdotal History of Cubism' (1912), when he notes that Cubism paints things "such as they are and not at all as our eye has recognized them in the past" (in Chipp 1968:204). Thus the external subject (the 'model') is not abandoned entirely, but reduced to a number of essential formal traits, to what D.-H. Kahnweiler calls its 'primary qualities': the object's form and its position in space (cf. Chipp 1968:204; though 'form' here is obviously complex: as Gleizes and Metzinger point out in their book: "An object has not one absolute form, it has several; it has as many as there are planes in the domain of meaning."; in Herbert 1964:13); in this sense Salmon refers to the process of "reducing the concrete to essentials" (Chipp 1968:200), while Apollinaire, in the draft version of his book, speaks of the elimination of the "accident visuel et anecdotique"(OC4:930).

This reduction of the external model to its 'primary qualities' appears to entail several elements. As early as 1908 Apollinaire had pointed to the role of photography (cf. above); painting, consequently, strives towards a more 'profound' and 'conceptual' (as opposed to 'anecdotal' and 'illusionist') realism, which offers a 'total' and 'immanent' representation of the object as it is known to be and not as it is perceived from one particular angle. Apollinaire here rightly emphasizes the systematic and 'quasi-scientific' character of the Cubist approach (as in Braque's "science de la construction", or a Picasso who, he says, "étudie un objet comme un chirurgien dissèque un cadavre", OC4:19), viewing Cubism as a "réaction nécessaire" against the Impressionists (ibid.:218), whom he describes as attempting "d'exprimer fiévreusement, hâtivement, déraisonnablement leur étonnement devant la nature" (ibid.:95) (- though Apollinaire will soon revoke this disparaging view of Impressionism). Cubism, finally, is also seen as animated by a desire for 'purity', in the sense that, continuing the Fauvist revaluation of colour and composition, it instigates a further renovation "en revenant aux principes pour ce qui concerne le dessin et l'inspiration" (ibid.:218). Ultimately, Apollinaire claims, the new painters are striving for a "peinture pure", a purely 'plastic' (i.e. presumably, non-figurative) art which however "n'en est qu'à son commencement et n'est pas encore aussi abstrait qu'il voudrait l'être." (ibid.:19).

The feature, then, which most clearly differentiates Cubism from previous styles consists in its non-illusionist aspect, its tendency - which is never more than a tendency - to the non-iconic, the non-figurative; the corollary of this orientation is that, as the reliance of the external model diminishes, the process of the composition of the actual two-dimensional painting itself becomes increasingly the focus of the artist's preoccupations. In its early phases Cubism appears as both an 'analytical' and a 'critical' movement: it offers a conceptual analysis of the object, de-composing ('dissecting') it into its 'primary' constituent parts by means of a shifting (multiple) point of view, while simultaneously this process of analysis and reconstruction, not intent on producing a simple visual resemblance, implies a systematic, critical and self-conscious reflection on pictorial procedures as such. As J.-C. Chevalier (1969: 102) points out in this respect:

La composition du tableau est donc une méditation critique sur les processus de la création, elle dégage des règles d'interprétation, comme le fait le discours critique, comme le fera le poème apollinarien.

The distinctive aspect of the conceptual (non-illusionist) representation practiced by Cubism lies, in turn, in its 'metonymic' character: the multiple point of view, that is, forms the basis of what R. Jakobson (1963:63) has called the "orientation manifestement métonymique du cubisme, qui transforme l'objet en une série de synecdoques." Whereas mimetic (iconic) representation entertains an essentially metaphoric relation with its model (based on resemblance: iconicity), the Cubist technique employs a metonymic principle of de-construction and re-construction, thereby creating a greater degree of autonomy with regard to the model (- as Metzinger once remarked: "We never had the curiosity to touch the objects we were painting."; quoted by Salmon, in Chipp 1968:204), as well as stressing the distinctness of the finished product as an artefact which constantly draws attention to its own internal structuration.

For Apollinaire, the systematic single-mindedness of the Cubist anti-illusionist pursuit makes for an objective, cerebral art ("... des oeuvres plus cérébrales que sensuelles", OC4:21) in which the schematization of form and, in general, the critical/analytical quality also contains an 'inhuman' aspect. In a review dated April 1911, he speaks of Cubism as "un art dépouillé et sobre dont les apparences parfois encore rigides ne tarderont pas à s'humaniser" (*ibid.*:188) - implying that the movement is still in its polemical, self-assertive phase, and that its 'inhumanity' is only temporary. This view is hard to reconcile with the earlier comments (in 'Les trois vertus plastiques') on the 'inhumanity' of non-imitative art, unless the notion of 'inhumanity', in the Cubist context, is understood as referring to the geometric quality ("les apparences () rigides") of Cubist painting; schematization of form and geometricism are then only temporary, provisional aspects, and when soon afterwards Apollinaire turns to Delaunay's Orphism as the attainment of the desired "peinture pure", all references to geometricism are indeed dropped; and since he describes Orphism as "lyrisme plastique" and "peinture poétique" (OC4:283,282), the central opposition between Cubism and Orphism appears to revolve around the contrast 'cerebral' (implying schematization, geometricism) versus 'lyrical' (implying

totality and harmony of contrasts, as will be shown below). Yet some considerable inconsistency remains, at least in Apollinaire's discussion of Cubism, as he asserts emphatically that geometricism is "l'essentiel du dessin": it is "la règle même de la peinture", and "on peut dire que la géométrie est aux arts plastiques ce que la grammaire est à l'art de l'écrivain" (*ibid.*:20) (- a view not shared by some of the more authoritative art critics of the day, such as Kahnweiler or Gleizes and Metzinger, for whom geometricism is only an accidental result of the Cubist technique; cf. Chipp 1968:255, 257; Herbert 1964:13); he equally explains that "l'aspect géométrique () [des] premières toiles cubistes venait de ce que la réalité essentielle y était rendue avec une grande pureté" (*ibid.*:289 and 24), and he thus seems to conceive of geometricism as both a basic property of the plastic arts (subsequently abandoning this view too when he embraces Orphism in 1913) and as an inherent feature of the schematization of form practiced by the Cubists.

It may also be noted here that, whereas for T.E. Hulme the concept of geometricism is placed in a wide-ranging historical and philosophical context (derived from Worringer) and directly related - in its modern applications - to the shapes and lines of industrial machinery, Apollinaire's notion of geometricism is a purely formal and pictorial property <sup>(5)</sup>. Hulme and Apollinaire do, however, seem to be in full agreement in their condemnation of Futurism. In spite of his L'antitradition futuriste of June 1913 (a provocative gesture of little consequence), a series of three essays and reviews published in the course of 1912 (*OC4*:227-228, 230-231, 272-273) clearly shows Apollinaire's lack of sympathy with the Futurist positions. Apart from the somewhat partisan objection disputing the Futurist claim to originality (Boccioni, he says, builds on Picasso, Severini on Van Dongen, Carrà on Rouault, etc.), he joins Hulme in maintaining that Futurism is in fact no more than a traditional, mimetic art. Applying his newly acquired criteria, Apollinaire argues that Futurism has apparently not abandoned the principle of illusionist representation of a particular (often mobile) model, and remains utterly subjective: "Ils se préoccupent avant tout du sujet. Ils veulent peindre des états d'âmes"; *OC4*:231). The Futurists cannot solve the problems of representing 'simultaneity' and 'motion' ("la simultanéité des états d'âmes", "les formes en mouvement"; *ibid.*:227) because they lack the theoretical foundations which underpin the Cubist approach,



namely the idea of 'conceptual' reality and the purely plastic preoccupation and "discipline rigoureuse" of the Cubists (ibid.:231,273). In later years, Futurist literary experiments are treated in the same way: the technique of "mots en liberté" and the "style télégraphique" may bring "un renouvellement de la description", but they also mean "un retour offensif de la description."(OC3:884).

In Apollinaire's view, the striving towards 'pure painting' which animates and motivates the artists of the new generation implies, at a first stage, the 'reduction to essentials' and the preoccupation with 'conceptual reality' found in Cubism. This means in turn that the external subject (the model) loses in significance and becomes pictorial material to be taken apart and re-arranged, as the painter's attention shifts from visual representation to the complexities of multiple viewpoints and the systematic composition of the painting itself:

Les jeunes peintres scrutent la nature, ils la dissèquent, ils l'étudient avec patience. Ainsi ne doit-on point s'étonner que les plasticiens aussi purs ne se préoccupent point du sujet et que leurs tableaux soient maintenant intitulés: peinture, étude ou paysage: (OC4:231)

Orphism, then, appears to be basically a further evolution (in Delaunay's case leading eventually to non-figurative painting) of the principle of multiplicity towards simultaneity, combined with a more pronounced emphasis on the final product as a harmonious and purely pictorial whole of colour contrasts. The instantaneous perception of totality thus replaces systematic analysis, and colour replaces linear construction.

In Les peintres cubistes the general picture of the historical place of Cubism in the pictorial series presents Impressionism as an extension of conventional Realism, with Fauvism reacting against both and becoming the "préambule au Cubisme"(OC4:25); both Fauvism and Cubism are seen as moving towards 'pure painting', with Orphism as the clearest exponent of this tendency within the Cubist camp. The 'purity' of Orphism lies in its superior 'creative' aspect: whereas Cubism ('scientific Cubism') is defined as "...l'art de peindre des ensembles nouveaux avec des éléments empruntés, non à la réalité de vision, mais à la réalité de connaissance"(OC4:24), Orphism ('Orphic Cubism') is

...l'art de peindre des ensembles nouveaux avec des éléments empruntés non à la réalité visuelle, mais entièrement créés

par l'artiste et doués par lui d'une puissante réalité. Les œuvres des artistes orphiques doivent présenter simultanément un agrément esthétique pur, une construction qui tombe sous les sens et une signification sublime, c'est-à-dire le sujet. C'est l'art pur. (ibid.:25)

In Les peintres cubistes Apollinaire still distinguishes four tendencies within Cubism. In subsequent articles (the two major ones being 'Réalité, peinture pure', of December 1912, which consists almost entirely of quotations from Delaunay, and 'La peinture moderne', of January 1913; both published in Der Sturm; OC4:276-279, 280-284) Orphism is granted much more prominence as a movement in its own right. In 'La peinture moderne' Apollinaire sees the whole new generation of painters as stemming from Impressionism (a substantial modification of his earlier opinion, doubtless under Delaunay's influence), which is now described as having reversed the classical perspectivist tradition. Within the new style he now distinguishes two tendencies only: Cubism (Picasso, Braque, Metzinger, Gris and others), which is geometric and 'conceptual' and aims at rendering the "vérité objective" of a model (OC4:282), and secondly Orphism, which stems from Seurat, and is based on the pictorial "contraste des couleurs complémentaires" (ibid.:283), but transcends the Impressionists in abandoning all imitative concerns. The major representative of Orphism is obviously Delaunay, but Apollinaire also refers to Léger, Picabia and Duchamp, as well as to the artists of Der blaue Reiter (Kandinsky, Marc, Macke and others - a favour quickly withdrawn after the outbreak of the war), and even to the Futurists. The list is then extended to include a parallel movement in poetry, 'dramatisme', represented among others by Barzun and Apollinaire himself (though Apollinaire soon quarreled with Barzun, adopting thereafter the designation 'Orphism', as synonymous with 'Simultanism', for his own poetry). In the articles of the years 1913 and 1914 he goes still further in championing Orphism, presenting it now as the successor to Cubism (OC4:302), and declaring that 'simultanism' was in fact the ultimate goal to which the whole artistic avant-garde had tended since about 1907 (OC3:891).

Geometricism has no place in Delaunay's Orphism <sup>(6)</sup>, which, as was indicated above, is based entirely on colour contrasts and the pictorial harmony resulting from these contrasts. The only reality, according to Delaunay, is light (OC4:277), and "Light in Nature creates the movement of colors" ('Light', 1912; in Chipp 1968:319).

Movement is reproduced "by the rapport of oddi elements", which constitutes "Rhythmic Simultaneity", or "harmony, the rhythm of colors"(ibid.). Orphism, consequently, appears to be concerned with a total (as opposed to 'analytical' in the Cubist sense) and simultaneous perception of a dynamic reality, with, as Delaunay puts it, "the synchronous movement (simultaneity) of light which is the only reality"(ibid.:320). The Orphist work of art, then, focuses exclusively on "le contraste simultané", which is "la seule base de toute expression pure en peinture actuelle"(OC4:278). As for the 'subject' of Orphist art: "le sujet, c'est la proportion harmonique et cette proportion est composée de divers membres simultanés dans une action"(ibid.:279) - a dynamic conception which leaves little or no room for representation as an end in itself: "If Art relates itself to an Object, it becomes descriptive, divisionist, literary" (in Chipp 1968:320). Instantaneity, totality, dynamism, multiform and contrastive luminosity and impulsive openness thus emerge as the catch-words of the Orphist approach: in contrast with the 'closed' world of Cubist mono-coloured still-lives, Delaunay opts for all-inclusive townscapes and semi-abstract or abstract (in the sense of non-figurative) compositions of coloured planes. In a letter to Kandinsky in 1912, he remarks on "the transparency of color, whose similarity to musical notes drove me to discover the 'movement of color'"(ibid.:318). Yet in spite of his wariness of the systematic objectivity of Cubist-style analysis, Delaunay's art remains highly self-conscious: to the simultaneous perception of light-patterns corresponds the dialectic of colour harmonies and contrasts, which is a purely pictorial phenomenon, establishing the picture as a set of relations (between colours) in its own right.

The attraction of the Orphist aesthetic for Apollinaire is obvious enough, and he does not hesitate to draw a parallel between Delaunay's "lyrisme plastique" and 'simultanism' in poetry, "ce lyrisme concret, direct, auquel des auteurs descriptifs ne sauraient atteindre"(OC4:283). For Apollinaire, the Orphist principles offer a framework which allows the further practical elaboration of the techniques of discontinuity and juxtaposition and the use of the receptive and expansive ego (the multiple self) underlying the major poems of the years 1908-1910 ('Les fiançailles', 'Le brasier', 'Cortège', 'Vendémiaire').

In one of his key statements, Delaunay maintains that "Le créateur tient compte de tout ce qui se trouve dans l'univers par entité, succession, imagination et simultanéité"(OC4:178), and it is the pictorial presentation of this simultaneous and dynamic multiplicity, viewed in terms of colour, that the Orphist work of art consists. It follows however that, if the work is to avoid becoming 'descriptive' or 'literary', its aspect of formal construct will come to the foreground: the painting itself is a separate world of related colour planes, not justifiable in terms of the external model. It is this duality, then, that appears to fit in with Apollinaire's previous poetic practice: the use of juxtaposed and semantically disparate images and lines and of multiple and simultaneous perception on the one hand, and, on the other, the implied notion of the poem as a separate organism with its own compositional principles and laws, irreducible to a reflectionist or illusionist isomorphic (iconic) scheme.

Both Cubism and Orphism emphatically resist the visual ('anecdotal' or descriptive) coherence of isomorphic representation; whereas Cubism opts for the dislocation of perspective, Orphism uses the juxtaposition of coloured planes. In his comments on 'simultanist' art (under which heading he groups Cubism as well as Orphism; cf. OC3:891), Apollinaire indeed repeatedly points to the elimination of the 'successive' or 'anecdotal' element; describing a painting by Delaunay ('Equipe de Cardiff, troisième représentation'), he notes: "Rien de successif dans cette peinture; chaque ton appelle et laisse s'illuminer toutes les autres couleurs du prisme. C'est la simultanéité"(OC4:303), and a year later, in June 1914, he writes in the same vein that Delaunay "opposa le simultané au successif et y vit le nouvel élément de tous les arts modernes: plastique, littérature, musique, etc."(OC3:891)

In its poetic applications, simultanist inevitably implies non-discursiveness and, developing within the framework of non-discursive discourse, a writing based on semantic diversity, multiple viewpoint, contrast and complementarity, association and contiguity: a mobile, tactile mode of writing which eliminates logical compatibilities and transitions, and incorporates rapid shifts in grammatical (syntactic, semantic) and stylistic categories. By these means the simultanist poem may be expected to create as it were its own poetic world, its

own universe of meaning, establishing a relation with the outside world as a totality. In line with the earlier strategies of multiplicity and the fluctuating (receptive/expansive) self, Apollinaire's simultanist writing becomes an appropriation of the world. At the same time however a movement in the opposite direction will manifest itself, as, in its avoidance of discursiveness and conceptual cohesion, the poem also draws attention to the disjunction between itself and the (fragmented) reality of which it treats. In this respect the Orphist emphasis only reinforces a basically Cubist technique: the Cubist deformation of the model, the consistent deviation from conventional isomorphism, the dislocation of conceptual cohesion and traditional poetic and syntagmatic structures has the effect of enhancing rather than reducing the status of the work as artefact (as J.-C. Chevalier 1969:106 points out: "La déformation affirmée de l'objet, du modèle () est le signe éclatant qu'il s'agit d'un faux."). In the same way the Cubist collage technique - in Apollinaire's poetry: such devices as the introduction of lines in other languages, of unrelated bits of conversation - underlines precisely the fact that the work as a whole is an artificially 'made' construct (collage highlights "la souveraineté de l'act poétique de transformation"; Chevalier: *ibid.*). It is this duality of the work (the poem) as appropriation of the world and as artificial construct, finally, that makes up the 'poème-créé' (the term stems from Lockerbie 1966), referring as it does to Apollinaire's notion of a simultanist "lyrisme concret, direct" which registers and compresses disparate realities in a single instant, as well as to the implied concept of the simultanist poem as artefact (itself in a double sense: the poem as a non-mimetic 'otherness' in its own right, and as construed entirely by the poetic imagination).

## 4.

The impact of the Cubist and Orphist aesthetic on Apollinaire's poetic practice seems to make itself most strongly felt in 'Zone' (1912) and in the poems of the 'Ondes' section of Calligrammes (1918) (all the 'Ondes' poems except 'Les collines' were written in the years 1913 and 1914).

Broadly speaking, the volumes Alcools and Calligrammes show marked differences in poetic technique, subject-matter and linguistic structure. The listing of some general statistical data bearing on lexical and

syntactic elements may help to clarify the nature of these differences. Thus, as far as word choice is concerned, there is a clear reduction in the frequency of a number of thematically relevant substantives: from Alcools to Calligrammes <sup>(7)</sup> there occurs a marked drop in the use of nouns like "feuilles" (from 11 occurrences to 4), "fruits" (9/2), "mai" (9/1), "flammes" (18/8), "feu" (22/14) and a substantial number of related nouns ("aube/matin/soir/mort/printemps/automne" etc.). On the other hand a noun like "avenir", which in the thematic universe of Calligrammes acquires connotations of discovery and novelty, shows a markedly increased frequency (from 6 to 20 occurrences). As J.-C. Chevalier (1962:44) observes, the change in the morpho-semantic fields developed in the two volumes points to a different thematic focus:

Apollinaire quitte, avec Alcools, un sentimentalisme allégorique chargé de fleurs, de feuilles et de fruits, une poésie de printemps et d'automne, pour embrasser un désir qui fond bonté et beauté dans l'amour des belles choses neuves.

This thematic shift, plainly, is to be seen in function of the formal reorientation of Apollinaire's poetic as a whole.

Also, the marked increase in the use of the conjunction "mais", Chevalier (ibid.:44-45) notes, does not so much imply a new antithetical mode of thought as a turn towards the colloquial, spoken language (in which context "le 'mais' souligne l'étonnement, le passage à une autre tonalité") and a poetry of novelty and surprise: "on pourrait dire qu'à une esthétique de 'mai' succède une esthétique du 'mais'" (ibid.). Against the increased frequency of "mais" a clear reduction in frequency occurs in the use of some conjunctions of subordination ("cependant": from 16 to 6; "parce que": 17/5; "puisque": 8/3), suggesting a more intense use, from Alcools to Calligrammes, of paratactic constructions and, in general, syntactic simplification and discontinuity. This tendency is also indicated in the lines:

Tu lis les prospectus les catalogues les affiches qui chantent  
tout haut  
Voilà la poésie ce matin et pour la prose il y a les journaux  
(Alc.:7)

in 'Zone', the poem which marks the end of the Alcools aesthetic and the beginning of the Cubist and simultanist experiments of the 'Ondes' section of Calligrammes. The programmatic line "Rivalise donc poète avec les étiquettes des parfumeurs" (Call.:50) in 'Le musicien de St-Merry' bears on the same point. In both cases a new urban

environment (mostly absent in the pre-1908 period) as well as a new directness of style are connoted, while the references to catalogues, posters and the like suggest the introduction of traditionally non-poetic procedures, formally marked by juxtaposition, the predominance of isolated noun phrases, and syntactic reduction.

In this sense two of Apollinaire's further references to extra-literary media are highly relevant. As early as April 1911 he describes Metzinger's Cubist paintings as "Cet art cinématique", whose aim it is "de nous montrer la vérité plastique sous toutes ses faces et sans renoncer au bénéfice de la perspective"(OC4:188) (perspective here clearly means 'multiple perspective'). The montage principle of this 'cinematic' technique, closely related to the disjointed multiple perspective approach, underlies the discontinuous structures of nearly all the major Cubist and Orphist poems, from 'Les fiançailles' to 'Zone' and the 'Ondes' texts. In later years (and notably in a letter to Madeleine of July 1915) he also speaks of "le style télégraphique", which offers "des ressources auxquelles l'ellipse donnera une force et une saveur merveilleusement lyriques"(OC4:478). Like montage, this 'telegraphic' style is based on juxtaposition, discontinuity and rapid semantic shifts (though it operates on smaller textual units), and hence also involves a simplification of the syntactic apparatus. Thus, whereas montage may be said to affect the poem's macro-structure, the telegraphic style directly affects its micro-structure; Apollinaire's partial revaluation of Futurism (by placing it in a larger simultaneist context - though he continues to attack the words-in-freedom technique) is obviously linked to this recognition of the possibilities of the 'wireless' style enunciated in Marinetti's manifestoes (cf. Pörtner 1961:35-41,47-56; Apollonio 1973:95-106). However, the references to 'cinematic' and 'telegraphic' styles only complement and reinforce a technique which is initiated in Apollinaire's own poetic writing (in the texts of 1908) and then firmly founded in and modified and expanded by his interpretation of the pictorial approaches of Cubist and Orphist painting - although there can be no doubt that his reliance on the patterns elaborated by the painters remains a significant factor in relation to the actual form of his mature poems<sup>(8)</sup>.

'Zone' (Alc.:7-14) marks the transition between Alcools and Calligrammes; thematically, as "ce poème de fin d'amour" (letter to Madeleine, July 1915; OC4:491), it refers back to earlier poems like

the 'Chanson du mal-aimé'; but in its formal elaboration it places itself in a properly Cubist context and anticipates the 'Ondes' poems of Calligrammes.

The most conspicuous formal characteristic of 'Zone' lies, clearly, in the fragmentation of the textual surface and the dislocation of the thematic structure. The central pattern of the poem, however, is still clearly discernible: the elegiac theme of lost love forms a recurrent motif throughout. The unity of the text is also established by the various references to the position of the poetic persona: the diverse spatial and temporal categories mentioned in the poem meet in a central 'here' (Paris: a public house, a walk through the streets) and a 'now' ("ce matin" in line two, regularly repeated). The space/time axes of the poem are then used as a constructive framework: at their intersection stands the poem itself as 'éncuciation' (Greimas 1972:20), constituting "une sorte de présent spatialisé" (Burgos 1971: 49), while a series of digressions introduces elements distant in time and space. These digressions themselves appear as a string of juxtaposed scenes, either as apparently random associations or as part of an associative process whose links and transitions remain implicit. Thus in the opening sections of the poem a contiguous and associative chain can fairly easily be reconstructed, linking the view of the street in the early morning ("J'ai vu ce matin une jolie rue") with the metaphorical "Voilà une jeune rue", and hence (on the strength of the metaphorical use of "jeune") to a series of childhood memories, which are in turn associated with childhood religiosity; in this context then comes the image of Christ's ascension to heaven, leading directly to the long series of (real and imaginary) birds and the aeroplane (Christ), at which point the narrative thread is resumed ("Maintenant tu marches dans Paris..."). Though the concatenation of these passages can be traced without difficulty, the distinctive mark appears to lie precisely in the suppression of all explicit transitions. This explains the dual character of the whole poem: the principle of juxtaposition, fragmentation, and shifts in location is counteracted by the formal 'levelling' of the assorted fragments through the suppression of punctuation and the consistent use of the present tense, in the same way as the various digressions are held together by the repeated references to the central narrative line and the associated elegiac theme.



The elliptical structure of 'Zone' also affects individual lines and images, as is clearly shown by the celebrated final image of the poem: "Soleil cou coupé". The image itself, of course, is by no means unusual or unique in Apollinaire's poetry. Associations between leaves and severed hands occur in 'Rhénane d'automne' and in 'Signe' (Alc.:105,111); an association of the sun with blood is also used in 'Merlin et la vieille femme' (Alc.:65). The image of the sun as a severed head first appears in a more elaborate simile in the early (undated) poem 'Les Doukhobors' (Décaudin 1965:89; OP:715-716), but there the view of the sun as "Le cou tranché d'une tête immense, intelligente" is entirely explicable in terms of the poem's subject (an historical event: the repression against the Doukhobors in Russia in 1895; OP:1159). In 'Zone' however the image has no such justification, and is reduced to a purely visual association. Yet in the draft versions of 'Zone' it is still presented in discursive form: "Le soleil est là avec sa tête coupée", subsequently corrected to read: "Le soleil est là c'est un cou tranché" (Décaudin 1965:81) - the same kind of presentation which also occurs in 'Les fiançailles' ("Il vit décapité sa tête est le soleil/ Et la lune son cou tranché"; Alc.:119). The image is then further abbreviated to an elliptical juxtaposition of noun phrases in the first publication of 'Zone' (Les Soirées de Paris, December 1912) to: "Soleil levant cou tranché" (Décaudin 1965: 77). And this version is finally altered into "Soleil cou coupé", where the visual similarity is left implicit (the preceding lines suggest that the sun must be about to rise) but where also, for grammatical reasons, the image itself rather than its referent has become predominant: the earlier balance between the two noun phrases (noun plus adjective) has been upset in favour of the second noun phrase, which has moreover gained phonological prominence (in the "cou/coupé" sound-repetition).

This final image, far from being accidental or gratuitous, is characteristic of the whole structure of 'Zone', which, from the original draft version to the final text in Alcools, clearly reveals the growing impact of direct juxtaposition, and the accompanying dislocation of the narrative substructure. Nevertheless, as was pointed out above, the basic pattern always remains visible: the walk through the town is paralleled by a mental journey (broken up into scattered recollections and reminiscences), while also the central 'I' figure (uniformly "je" in the original draft) is dramatized into

a "je/tu" alternation, implying continual shifts in the point of view of the narrator. These shifts in themselves appear to constitute a major concern, as is shown by the alterations in the lines which read originally:

Je n'ose plus regarder la croix et à tous moments je voudrais  
 Sur moi sur celle que j'aime et sur tout ce qui m'a épouvanté  
sangloter  
(Decaudin 1965:79)

and which were in the Soirées de Paris version changed into:

Tu n'oses plus regarder la croix et à tous moments tu voudrais  
 Sur moi sur celle que j'aime et sur tout ce qui m'a épouvanté  
sangloter  
(ibid.:75)

until they finally became in the Alcools text:

Tu n'oses plus regarder tes mains et à tous moments je voudrais  
 Sur toi sur celle que j'aime et sur tout ce qui t'a épouvanté  
sangloter  
(Alc.:12)

where the point of view shifts with every new clause and the two perspectives become virtually interchangeable.

These dualities, then, pervade the whole poem: the juxtaposition technique enhances the impression of dislocation by associating disparate elements while suppressing the conceptual links between them. At the same time a number of repetitions of various sorts holds the poem together: among these are the above-mentioned central narrative and thematic threads and the here/now intersection of the spatial and temporal categories, but a similar role is also performed by occasional parallel metaphors (such as "Bergère ô tour Eiffel le troupeau des ponts bêle ce matin" in line two, echoed towards the middle of the poem in the line: "Des troupeaux d'autobus mugissants près de toi roulent") and by the formal phrases introducing references to distant geographical locations ("Tu es...", "Te voici..."). Comparisons between the draft version and the final text suggest further that the selection of the place-names and the order in which they are mentioned is of little consequence: instead of being linked to some discursive or thematic logic, their appearance in the text is rather governed by a desire to provoke continual and seemingly random contrasts and shifts in orientation.

In this type of context the function of the poetic persona is clearly ambivalent: while providing a central motif, it also emerges itself as largely de-centred, in the sense that it can be dramatized (in the "je/tu" alternations) and that it is functional as a formal

element only, spanning the various dislocations at work in the text. In that sense 'Zone' stands at the opposite end of the 'Chanson du mal-aimé', and continues the line begun in 'Les fiançailles'. Its structural emphasis falls on synecdochic montage and the fragmentation of discursive and thematic coherence (without altogether eliminating it), so that, in the rapid shifts and the formal levelling of semantic disparities by means of juxtaposition, it finally becomes apparent that the internal (and implicit) relations established in the text only exist within the framework of the poem: the discontinuities within the poem also point to the discontinuity between itself and the external world. The very structure of 'Zone', in other words, its cracked and splintered surface, set the poem up as a 'contrived' product, as a construct. By breaking the anecdotal contiguity and dramatizing and de-centring the central persona the poem resists being regarded as the reflection of an objectively given state of affairs: instead it becomes an 'assemblage', a purely poetic totality in which unity in terms of a 'signified' is abandoned in favour of a view of the poem as an artefact which reconstructs and redistributes assembled elements according to its own particular laws (and establishing these laws in the process). It is in that sense in fact that Apollinaire speaks of Picasso as a "numérateur" who imposes his own (artistic) order on the universe:

Nouvel homme, le monde est sa nouvelle représentation. Il en dénombre les éléments, les détails avec une brutalité qui sait aussi être gracieuse. C'est un nouveau-né qui met de l'ordre dans l'univers pour son usage personnel, et aussi afin de faciliter ses relations avec ses semblables. Ce dénombrement, à la grandeur de l'épopée, et avec l'ordre, éclatera le drame. On peut contester un système, une idée, une date, une ressemblance, mais je ne vois pas comment on pourrait contester la simple action du numérateur. (OC4:31)

In the 'Ondes' section of Calligrammes the poem 'Le musicien de Saint-Merry' (Call.:48-52; first published in Les Soirées de Paris, February 1914) is structurally comparable to 'Zone'. Like 'Zone', 'Le musicien de St-Merry' contains a narrative structure which, though frequently interrupted, remains clearly discernible. The over-all pattern is relatively simple: the opening and closing sections (using the present tense) establish an 'I' figure who appears to recall a scene previously witnessed: the story (lines 8-90) of the musician walking through the St-Merry quarter of Paris, followed by a group of women. This story (mainly in the 'passé simple', the conventional narrative tense) makes up the body of the text, and

in it are embedded a number of digressions (lines 32-61, roughly). The persona at the beginning and end of the poem is thus little more than a vantage point for the central narrative: it is the 'space', as O. Paz calls it, in which the events (the story of the musician) take place: "...no vemos pasar a las cosas: vemos que las cosas pasan por el poeta - que también pasa. El yo del poeta () es el espacio en que suceden las cosas." (Paz 1972:36). The "je" mentioned in this context, then, occupies a somewhat different position from the "je/tu" persona in 'Zone': whereas in 'Zone' the persona still figures as a 'character' (as an 'actant', in Greimas' sense) in the poem, the "je" of 'Le musicien...' stands outside the central narrative, entering it only very briefly at the very end (lines 88-90; there is no reason to assume that the "moi" mentioned in the embedded middle part is identical with the narrator-"je"). Thus, where 'Zone' has a two-layered author/narrative structure (with "je/tu" as 'actant'), the 'Musicien de St-Merry' presupposes a three-layered structure: author/narrator/anecdote (with the musician as 'actant') - which leaves the status of the digressions in the embedded middle part in doubt (are they authorial intrusions, or attributable to the "je"-narrator?).

The 'digressions' themselves are, as in 'Zone', built on temporal and spatial axes which start in the 'here' and 'now' of the central narrative. Their intersection is precisely indicated: the place is the Saint-Merry district of Paris, the date May 21st, 1913 (line 8). The digressions, though mostly explicitly linked to this temporal and geographical location ("Puis ailleurs...", "Dans un autre quartier ...", "quand jadis...", etc.) are thematically unrelated to the central narrative, and as such they appear to have a primarily disruptive function, dislocating and fragmenting the anecdotal thread, and opening up additional perspectives. As a result, the realistic precision of the spatio-temporal data which firmly locate the narrative in the 'real' world are ironically counteracted by the apparent randomness of these various unrelated insertions. This ironic effect is enhanced by the mythical and contradictory overtones associated with the figure of the musician: being "un homme sans yeux sans nez et sans oreilles" (line 11) he may be likened to a robot (Paz 1972:40) (Paz however, and with him Schleifenbaum 1972:92, also identifies the musician with Apollinaire himself, which can only be questionable guesswork), while on the other hand the text contains

obvious allusions to Orpheus and to Theseus and Ariadne, making it possible to see the poem also as a rewriting and a reinterpretation of ancient myths (comparable to the Cubist remakings of works by the old masters: Picasso's reworkings of Velazquez are the outstanding example). These overtones, and the disruptive random digressions, then, reduce the precise spatio-temporal location of the anecdote to no more than pseudo-realism (comparable to the autobiographical references dispersed throughout 'Zone').

The irony of this pseudo-realism becomes further apparent when seen in connection with the emphasis on the imaginative power of the narrator: "Je chante toutes les possibilités de moi-même hors de ce monde et des astres" (line 6), and later the musician is described as "Jouant l'air que je chante et que j'ai inventé" (line 17). The overall picture is thus very similar to 'Zone': the dissociation between the world of the poem and the external world is clearly in evidence: the poem establishes itself as an artificial, 'invented' construct, an effect reinforced by the arbitrary insertions and the pseudo-realistic scene (the combination of these two illustrates precisely the narrator's claim to imaginative power). On the textual level too the poem appears as a montage of several layers, assembled or fragmented at will, and free to join the compatible as well as the incompatible.

It is not difficult to recognize in poems like 'Zone' and 'Le musicien de St-Merry' the two fundamental moments of the Cubist procedure (in its analytical phase at least): fragmentation and reconstruction<sup>(9)</sup>. In both cases the basic narrative structure, with 'actant' and thematic focus, remains visible, but its syntagms are broken up and redistributed, its spatio-temporal categories are extended beyond the limits of the narrative so as to obtain a kind of multi-dimensional and collage-like effect - with this difference that in 'Zone' these extensions are still presented in relation to the "je/tu" figure (in the form of recollections and associations), while in 'Le musicien...', they are introduced entirely from without. The poems are structurally similar to Cubist paintings in that they clearly retain a discursive factor but then fragment and reassemble the anecdotal elements in a new pattern. The emphasis, consequently, shifts from the level of description and representation (be it of an anecdote or of a lyrical state) to a concern with the poem as a polymorphous re-ordering of external data; without totally obliterating

the representational substructure, the poem emphasizes its distinctness as it reorganizes the world according to its own non-mimetic principles.

In the simultanist poems - 'Les fenêtres', 'Arbre', 'Lundi rue Christine', 'A travers l'Europe' - the narrative element will be further reduced and eventually abandoned altogether, while equally the figure of the poetic persona (as 'actant' or narrator) disappears. With the total break-up of the discursive thread the poem will consist entirely of juxtaposed and semantically disparate fragments.

About 'Les fenêtres' (Call.:25-26)<sup>(10)</sup> Apollinaire remarked in a letter of 30 July 1915 that "Ils ressortissent à une esthétique toute neuve dont je n'ai plus depuis retrouvé les ressorts"(OC4:493). It is this "esthétique toute neuve" in the poem that requires some further comment.

The general structure of 'Les fenêtres', as S.I. Lockerie (1966:11) points out, is based on "deux mouvements contradictoires, le premier tendant à la fragmentation de la cohérence poétique, le second à sa reconstitution". Whereas the Cubist-inspired poems (above) still contained a recognizable 'actant' and an anecdotal thread whose unwinding could be followed, no such focus or line is visible in 'Les fenêtres'. What formal coherence there is, is provided by the repetition of the opening line ("Du rouge au vert tout le jaune se meurt") towards the end (line 34), and by the recurrence of the central motif of the opening windows. On the whole, the lack of discursive cohesion and the semantic disparity are substantially greater than in the previous poems, as the syntagmatic units rarely continue over more than one line.

In a letter of 1 July 1915 Apollinaire writes: "J'ai fait mon possible pour simplifier la syntaxe poétique et j'ai réussi en certains cas, notamment un poème: Les Fenêtres."(OC4:478), a remark which may bear not only on the syntax of individual sentences (blurred anyway by the absence of punctuation) but also on the general structure of the poem. In syntactic terms, the poem tends to short, paratactic, self-contained sentences; conjunctions are few and mostly inconsequential, and several lines consist only of noun phrases. Most of the lines are juxtaposed without there being definable conceptual links between them (although, for example, a kind of geographical isotopy is developed in the second half of the text,

there is no indication as to how it relates to the rest of the poem). The poem as a whole shows no discursive or logical progression: even the order in which the lines occur gives the impression of being largely the result of an arbitrary arrangement - reading the text backwards makes little difference, as P. Renaud (1969:354) observes - and in that sense the poem fully complies with Apollinaire's emphatic rejection of the anecdotal and the 'successive' in his critical comments on Orphism.

The lines themselves refer to widely different contexts and carry diverse connotations: the opening line has obvious pictorial overtones (related to Delaunay's painting 'Fenêtres ouvertes simultanément' of 1912, it would seem). The "pihis" and the "oiseau qui n'a qu'une aile" in lines 3 and 4 allude back to 'Zone' ("...les pihis longs et souples/ Qui n'ont qu'une seule aile", Alc.:9). The following lines (possibly fragments from a genuine conversation, or written by different people, as the biographical evidence has it; cf. Adéma 1968:209ff) display a colloquial directness. A line like "Quand on a le temps on a la liberté" has the form of a proverb, while "...le train blanc de neige et de feux nocturnes fuit l'hiver" is worded as a poetic metaphor, and the juxtaposed nouns and noun phrases in "Bigorneaux Lotte multiples Soleils et l'Oursin du couchant" seem to be based on practically random association (Renaud 1969:352ff). In this way the syntactic and semantic coherence of the text is completely shattered: the poem is distinguished not by the systematic fragmentation of a narrative and thematic structure, but by the absence of any discernible over-all isotopy, by the impossibility to trace in it a complex of coherent and compatible signifieds.

A first result of this "démembrement de la structure poétique" (Lockerbie 1966:18) is that inevitably the reader's attention passes from the syntagmatic and discursive dimension to the lexical basis of language; the poem is no longer seen as a hierarchical structure of signifieds, and a certain flat and random diversity ensues in which the words and lines illumine one another with equal force, while only the repetitions stand out. The search for an ordering principle, then, must lead to a concentration on the polymorphous and artificial nature of the poem. On the one hand the text illustrates the pertinence of Delaunay's remark that in simultanist (Orphist) art "Le créateur tient compte de tout ce qui se trouve dans l'univers par entité, succession, imagination et simultanité" (OC4:278; cf. above).

On the other hand, the autonomy of the poem as construct, as 'poème-crée' (Lockerbie), is stressed and enhanced by its radical non-mimetic character. The progression of the text does not appear to be determined by descriptive or discursive consistency, semantic compatibility or compliance with any over-all theme, just as the selection of particular elements is unrelated to the semantic fields of preceding lines. The distinctive feature of the poem is rather that it strives towards continual semantic shifts, towards maximum unpredictability and contrast <sup>(11)</sup>; its dual aspect of all-encompassing totality and self-contained artificiality rests precisely on this aspect.

The 'poème-crée' obviously requires as a backcloth a conventional notion of poetic structure: it presents itself as a consistent deviation from the common norms of thematic cohesion and inner logic. The reading process of a 'poème-crée' consequently comprises two moments: the expectation that the poem's discontinuous surface structure will reveal a coherent structural pattern at some more general level (as in 'Zone' and the 'Musicien de St-Merry'), and the recognition that these expectations are continually thwarted and frustrated. This leads on the one hand to virtually unlimited generalization on the level of the 'signified', and on the other hand to the realization that the 'subject' of the poem does not at all lie in a signified that could somehow be conceptualized outside the poem, but that on the contrary the text exists exclusively as a 'signifier': its subject lies in the dynamic and kaleidoscopic effect resulting from continual semantic and connotative contrasts. Thus Delaunay's remark on poetry, that "Le simultanisme littéraire peut être donné par l'emploi des contrastes des mots" (quoted by M. Imdahl, in Iser 1966:477) is fully borne out, as with every line the poem continues its dislocation of sequential discourse, exploiting the possibilities of dissonance, counterpoint, transformation and surprise (aptly described by Renaud 1969:353 as a "perpetuum mobile"). The persistent inconsistency with which the poem develops further illustrates Apollinaire's comment (in an article of March 1913, i.e. shortly after the first publication of 'Les fenêtres') on Delaunay's painting when he praises the latter's "dramatisation des volumes colorés, ses ruptures brusques de perspective, ses irradiations de plan" (OC4:309).

Considered as 'énonciation', the poem leaves room for two



paradoxical though not necessarily incompatible approaches. In one sense it can be regarded as an attempt at a 'total' representation of a momentary state of mind, following S.I. Lockerbie's observation that "une seule volonté s'affirme () au sommet du poème, réunissant tout ce qui avait été fragmenté" (1966:16). This "volonté" however remains an extrapolation: the deliberately elusive structure (the strategy which prevents the emergence of an over-all semantic isotopy) is imposed on the text from without, and from that point of view the poet asserts himself as 'creator', assembling and constructing an arbitrary world of words - and the very arbitrariness of the structuration shows precisely that the poet selects at will. But an alternative view suggests itself simultaneously, in which the poet figures as a passive instrument, merely registering random impressions and associations. In that perspective the poet abdicates all responsibility as the structuring "volonté" and only lists various real or imagined fragments - and it is clearly this principle which is subsequently applied in the 'poème-conversation' (of which 'Lundi rue Christine' is the obvious example), where "le poète au centre de la vie enregistre en quelque sorte le lyrisme ambiant"(OC3:890). The poem itself offers no clue as to which approach is to be preferred: Delaunay's position in this respect is ambiguous (the artist as registering all aspects of reality simultaneously, and on the other hand the elaboration of colour contrasts as a purely pictorial matter), and so is Apollinaire's own position, between the "réalité-crée" of Orphist pure art and the 'poème-conversation'.

The poem itself, however, leaves no scope for the introduction of a poetic persona with whom the reader can in any way identify. On the contrary, the elements of mobility and of arbitrary disparity in the internal structure of the text constitute the radically separate, non-mimetic quality of the poem, as "un assemblage de fragments qui, dans une grande mesure, semble jouir de sa vie propre" (Lockerbie 1966:19). It is, finally, through its emphasis on these aspects that the poem appears to stand as a complex 'signifier' only, a space where meaning is produced, but resisting the establishment of a corresponding coherent set of signifieds. And from this situation then springs the further paradox of the poem's dual 'open' and 'closed' nature: it is 'open', receptive and expansive, in its overriding principles of heterogeneity and all-inclusiveness (not so much reconstruction of the world as appropriation of the world),

but at the same time it is 'closed' in its emphasis on its status as a heterocosm and in its self-reflexive aspect: its subject is its own structuration, its dialectic of cohesion and dismemberment.

5.

Apollinaire's poetic practice, as was suggested in section 2 above, appears occasionally to be ahead of his own critical statements, and it may be argued that this is also the case with the simultanist poems. Apart from his discussions of Delaunay's work and the parallel between Orphism in painting and in poetry, Apollinaire in fact offers relatively few theoretical comments on the simultanist technique in poetry. Some of these comments - especially in later years - contain a somewhat unexpected explanation of the use of simultanist juxtaposition in terms of "la vie" - ultimately, that is, in mimetic terms: the poem as reflection and representation. As early as February 1914 he writes:

Et pour renouveler l'inspiration, la rendre plus fraîche, plus vivante et plus orphique, je crois que le poete devra s'en rapporter à la nature, à la vie. S'il se bornait même, sans souci didactique, à noter le mystère qu'il voit ou qu'il entend, il s'habituerait à la vie même comme l'ont fait au dix-neuvième siècle les romanciers qui ont ainsi porté très haut leur art, et la décadence du roman est venue au moment même où les écrivains ont cessé d'observer la vérité extérieure qui est l'orphisme même de l'art. (OC3:884-885)

Two years later, in a letter to Breton, this "vérité extérieure" is related to the formal discontinuity of his poems:

Pour en venir à mes pièces qui vont des Fenêtres à mes poèmes actuels en passant par Lundi rue Christine et les poèmes idéographiques, j'y trouve pour ma part (mais je suis orfèvre) la suite naturelle de mes premiers vers ou du moins de ceux qui sont dans Alcools. La forme rompue des poèmes dont vous parlez rend à mon sens ce que je puis rendre de la vie infiniment variée. Je la sens ainsi. (OC4:875)

This point is resumed in the preface to 'Les mamelles de Tirésias' (1917), where again discontinuity and heterogeneity are seen to be 'life-like'; he speaks of

Le grand déploiement de notre art moderne  
 Mariant souvent sans lien apparent comme dans la vie  
 Les sons les gestes les couleurs les cris les bruits  
 La musique la danse l'acrobatie la poésie la peinture  
 Les chœurs les actions et les décors multiples (OC3:619)

These explanations are, in a sense, a step back - as if Apollinaire had not followed Delaunay's evolution from his Cubist-style 'Eiffel Tower' paintings to the non-figurative 'coloured disks'.

By invoking the complex diversity of 'reality' as the touchstone for his technique, he abandons the line of evolution which began with the emphasis on the 'inhumanity' of art in 'Les trois vertus plastiques'. In other words, he comes to see simultanism as an end in itself - as isomorphic expression - and fails to develop (in contrast with Delaunay) the obvious corollary to the simultanist technique, namely the notion of the 'poème-crée' as the equivalent to Delaunay's abstract colour harmonies. Thus, although he seems to beg the question of a poetic of the 'poème-crée' in the simultanist poems themselves, he eventually returns to what is in essence a justification in terms of the Cubist principle of multiple perspective. It is this point that distinguishes Apollinaire most sharply from the single-minded consistency of a Reverdy or a Jacob, who both posit a radical disjunction between the work of art (the poem) and 'reality' and who insist on the notion of the poem as an autonomous construct, as living organism (Jacob) or as 'poème-objet' (Reverdy). Apollinaire, however, takes a different route, in attempting to solve the paradox between the required instantaneous perception of a multiplicity of phenomena and the sequential nature of the reading process by introducing a further mimetic element, in the calligrammatic technique.

The simultanist poem is based entirely on juxtaposition: it not only exploits the principle of enumeration, it is also condemned to it. At the same time juxtaposition continually edges towards 'superposition' (Shattuck 1969:345): all the parts are in fact to be perceived simultaneously, conveying in their word-contrasts one total and instantaneous impression. In an article on the Futurists in February 1914 Apollinaire refers to various experiments which all attempt to introduce a certain duplicity on the level of the signifier, forecasting that

A la poésie horizontale, que l'on n'abandonnera point pour cela, s'ajoutera une poésie verticale, ou polyphonique, dont on peut attendre des oeuvres fortes et imprévues. (OC3:884)

He refers in this context to the simultaneous recitation of poems (12) and to the use of the phonograph for this purpose. Shortly afterwards he also cites approvingly Cendrars' example (probably with the 'Prose du Transsibérien' in mind, where Cendrars quotes Apollinaire), who made

...une première tentative de simultanéité écrite où des contrastes de couleurs habituaient l'oeil à lire d'un seul regard

l'ensemble du poème. (OC3:890)

Apollinaire's first 'calligram' ('Lettre-Océan') appeared in June 1914; he refers variously to the new genre as "idéogramme", "idéogramme lyrique", or "poème idéographique". The impetus behind the whole calligrammatic venture lies clearly in the desire to replace juxtaposition with genuine superposition; Apollinaire himself explains that in the poem 'Lettre-Océan'

...le lien n'est plus celui de la logique grammaticale, mais celui d'une logique idéographique aboutissant à un ordre de disposition spatiale tout contraire à celui de la juxtaposition discursive. (quoted in Durry 1964a:210)

The poem, in other words, attempts to overcome the temporal sequence which is reading by a 'spatial disposition' which is in itself an immediately recognizable signifier: the text itself forms an iconic sign ("the iconic message is in fact constituted by the text in its material reality"; Longree 1976:73): the poem, that is, contains two signifying levels, one 'plastic' and visually iconic, the other linguistic (- and because of this duality the genre will be regarded as hybrid by Reverdy, who repudiates these "dispositions typographiques dont les formes plastiques introduisent en littérature un élément étranger, apportant d'ailleurs une difficulté de lecture déplorable"; Reverdy 1975:122). The reading of a calligrammatic poem also consists of two moments: the instantaneous visual impression, the 'picture' which the poem presents, and the deciphering of the actual words of the poem.

In practically all cases, however, the iconic and the linguistic levels of the poem converge: the semantic disparity within the poem is usually substantially reduced, as the iconic element appears to provide a thematic focus around which the textual elements can be grouped. What is gained, with calligrammatic superposition, in immediate total perception, is lost in semantic diversity, so that the scope of the calligram is substantially more limited than that of the simultaneist poems proper whose avowed aim it is "d'habituer l'esprit à concevoir un poème simultanément comme une scène de la vie"(OC3:890). The calligram, then, is essentially a compound sign, with a structure similar to that of the pun; but whereas the pun, through the phonological coincidence of different signifiers, points to several signifieds, the calligram contains an obvious tautological element in that its two signifiers (the linguistic and the iconic message) denote or connote essentially the same set of signifieds.

The spatial disposition of the text and the use of different type-faces contain of course other complexities as well, apart from the iconic aspect: the conventional reading process is broken up and slowed down (so that a gap emerges between the perception of the poem as a picture and the reading of the text), and, more importantly, the displacement of the linearity of the text may deprive the poem of a proper starting point, occasionally allowing various readings, with corresponding semantic shifts (several alternative readings of the text of 'La mandoline l'oeillet et le bambou' for example are listed in Longree 1976:75). Yet on the whole it is difficult to see where the genuine advance in the calligrammatic experiment lies: in its limited semantic scope, its obvious tautologies and its crude mimeticism (the poem as picture is never more than a crude cliché), the technique ultimately appears to be a self-defeating oversimplification; or, as P. Renaud (1969:378) concludes his discussion of Apollinaire's calligrams: "Ce n'est pas les méconnaître que de dire que leur seule valeur est d'exister."

After the simultanist poems and the introduction of the first calligrams, and apart from the discovery of fresh subject-matter in the war experience, Apollinaire's poetic and critical output appears to more concerned with recapitulation than with innovation. From about 1914 onwards, Apollinaire, as always wary of any strict allegiance to a particular group or tendency, begins to develop towards the notion of 'L'esprit nouveau' as the common denominator of the various modernist trends in literature and the arts. In a note entitled 'Écoles' (Paris-Journal, June 1914) he points out that

Il y a tellement d'écoles artistiques aujourd'hui, qu'elles n'ont plus d'importance en tant qu'écoles particulières ().

Aussi ne faut-il plus prendre à la lettre les dénominations de cubistes, orphistes, futuristes, simultanéistes, etc. Il y a longtemps déjà qu'elles ne signifient plus rien. (OC4:419)

The move towards recapitulation and general assessment however is twofold; the term 'l'esprit nouveau' indicates not only the common ground of recent innovation in arts and letters, it also signals a return to the earlier emphasis on historical continuity and on the coexistence of tradition and innovation. As Apollinaire's position and prestige in avant-garde circles consolidates itself (as appears from the tribute paid to him in the editorial preface to the first issue of Nord-Sud in March 1917), his insistence on moderation grows more pronounced. In an interview with Albert-Birot in 1917 he advocates, in a general sense, 'simplicity' and 'humanism', arguing

further that

Le présent doit être le fruit de la connaissance du passé et de la vision de l'avenir. () De la connaissance du passé il naît la raison, de la vision de l'avenir surgissent l'audace et la prévoyance. (OC3:937)

And in another interview in the same year (where he also equates Orphism with "surnaturalisme") he specifies his case for 'humanism' by asserting that "Il faut réagir contre le pessimisme"(OC3:939) and declaring himself "antibaudelairien" on that account (the rejection of Baudelaire's "dilettantisme pessimiste" is repeated in his edition of Les fleurs du mal; OC2:286-289).

These arguments, then, also form the central theme of the poem 'La jolie rousse' (originally entitled: 'L'ordre et la raison'), with its references to

...cette longue querelle de la tradition et de l'invention  
De l'ordre et de l'aventure  
(Call.:183)

and they dominate the lecture 'L'esprit nouveau et les poètes', in which Apollinaire warns against the excesses of Italian and Russian Futurists, while affirming the need for "ordre", "devoir" and "discipline"(OC3:902-903).

The war years also witness the intrusion of extra-literary (political) criteria into Apollinaire's thinking about the arts. Thus his refusal to contribute to the periodical Dada ("parce que la situation de cette revue vis-à-vis de l'Allemagne ne me paraît pas assez nette"; OC4:885) and his sudden and complete denigration of the German achievement in art ("Cette impuissance artistique de l'Allemagne contemporaine"; ibid.:442) are both obviously inspired by political and patriotic considerations. One can only endorse Reverdy's view in this respect when he describes the pre-war Apollinaire as "choisissant plus nettement que plus tard, ce vers quoi il allait" (1975:138-139).

On the whole, and after the experiments of 1912-1914, 'L'esprit nouveau' can hardly be regarded as a significant contribution, reading as it does like "an enormous cliché of modernism shot through with conciliatory statements about traditional values" (Shattuck 1969:296). Yet like the fact that at the time of the publication of the first calligrams Apollinaire also published poems in regular alexandrines elsewhere (cf. Adéma 1968:244), and just as several of the calligrams themselves contain dissimulated lines in regular metres, so the return to the idea of linking tradition with

innovation is characteristic, and it epitomizes Apollinaire's position as essentially a figure of transition - as indeed Reverdy recognized when he observed in December 1918 that

...l'inconnu le tenta toujours autant que le passé certain et c'est de ces deux dilections que son oeuvre est faite diverse, contradictoire, et, par là, parfois déconcertante. (1975:141)

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NOTES

- (1) The following abbreviations will be used in this chapter:  
Alc.: G. Apollinaire, Alcools (1913). Paris, Gallimard, 1970.  
Call.: G. Apollinaire, Calligrammes (1918). Paris, Gallimard, 1970.  
OP: G. Apollinaire, OEuvres poetiques. Edited by M. Adema  
and M. Decaudin. Paris, Gallimard, 1959.  
OC: G. Apollinaire, OEuvres completes. Edited by M. Decaudin.  
Paris, A. Ballard and J. Lecat, 1966. (1-4)
- (2) Jarry's relation to the Symbolist poetic and his significance for the establishment of the Modernist poetic will be discussed in the chapter on Max Jacob.
- (3) Probably written before December 1905: several other lines from this poem ('Les villes sont pleines d'amour et de douleur...') were also used in 'L'emigrant de Landor Road' (first published in Vers et Prose, December 1905-February 1906), and in 'Le voyageur' (first published in September 1912). Cf. OP:563,1134.
- (4) A separate exposition of the Cubist aesthetic as such and of the history of the Cubist movement is obviously beyond the scope of the present study. These expositions may be found in Golding 1959, Gray 1953, Richardson and Stangos 1974:53-80. Some general observations will however be offered in so far as they seem relevant not only for Apollinaire's poetry but also (in view of later chapters) for Jacob and Reverdy.
- (5) Les peintres cubistes in fact contains several statements which are reminiscent of Worringer's concepts (for example, Apollinaire also compares Cubism to religious art, and remarks on the new art as a departure from the Hellenic tradition which "... prenait l'homme comme mesure de la perfection"; OC4:20,21), but these are all explicable within the French context: the further elaboration of Cezanne's principles and the influence of 'primitive' (tribal) art (both noted by Apollinaire as well as by other commentators at the time; cf. Brion-Guerry 1971:291); as early as 1910, moreover, Metzinger had pointed out the Cubist break with the norms of 'classical' art (cf. Golding 1959:23). Although it is not impossible that Apollinaire knew of Worringer's work, there is no evidence of this.
- (6) Delaunay repeatedly criticizes the Cubist interest in geometric shapes and their lack of interest in colour; in a letter to Kandinsky in 1912 he dismisses Cezanne, and continues: "The Cubist group of whom you speak experiments only in line, giving color a secondary place, and not a constructional one" (in Chipp 1968:318). Although he sees his own art as developing directly out of Impressionism ("Impressionism: it is the birth of Light in painting"; 'Light', 1912; ibid.:319), and in particular out of Seurat, he also, somewhat inconsistently, lists under the heading 'Impressionism' all the "manifestations reactionnaires: neo-impresionnisme, pre-cubisme, cubisme, neo-cubisme, tout ce qui est technique et procede scientifique" (quoted by Apollinaire; OC4:277).

- (7) The figures given here (all of which are derived from Chevalier 1962) represent absolute and not relative frequencies; if they were reduced to the same proportional scale the contrasts would be even more pronounced, since Calligrammes is more voluminous than Alcools.
- (8) Two additional remarks are due here. First, as in the case of Hulme and, to an extent, Heym, the predominant example for Apollinaire's poetic technique lies in the plastic arts and not in music, which, in its semantic disembodiment and intuitive appeal, was the major prototype for the Symbolist approach. Secondly, the complementary inspiration drawn from film techniques and wireless communication should also be seen in its literary-historical context: Apollinaire's recourse to the spoken language and to new methods of mass communication means as much a subversion of the highbrow Symbolist aesthetic as, say, Jacob's references to the popular novel and the adventure film ('Fantomas'), or the fairy-tale atmosphere in Arp's poems; they are no more than the other face of Hulme's implicit parodies of the images of the moon and the dancer, or Heym's 'demonic' reinterpretations of the Faun figure.
- (9) Octavio Paz develops a crucial contrast between Apollinaire's and Mallarmé's strategies in this respect. Starting from a given reality, Apollinaire fragments it and rearranges its elements into a new order; the confrontation between the two orders is the poem, the true reality. Mallarmé sets out to abolish the object in favour of language - abolished in turn in favour of the idea, which then resolves into an absolute (identical with nothingness); his poems present not things but words, or rather rhythmic signs. Apollinaire breaks down and reconstructs the object through language; instead of becoming ends in themselves or the emblematic double of the universe, words show things in their instantaneous vivacity: hence transfiguration, not transposition. Mallarmé's method leans towards music, Apollinaire's towards Cubist painting. In Paz's own words:

Apollinaire parte también de esta o aquella realidad pero, en lugar de borrarla, la separa en fragmentos que enfrenta y combina en un orden nuevo; el choque o confrontación es el poema: la realidad verdadera. Mallarmé se propone anular al objeto en beneficio del lenguaje - y a este en beneficio de la idea, que, a su vez, se resuelve en un absoluto idéntico al vacío. Su poema no nos presenta cosas sino palabras o, más exactamente, signos rítmicos. Apollinaire pretende desintegrar y reconstruir al objeto con el lenguaje; la palabra sigue siendo un medio, no un fin ni el doble emblemático del universo, que en lugar de abolirlas nos deja ver las cosas en su vivacidad instantánea. No hay transposición sino transfiguración. El método de Mallarmé colinda con la música; el de Apollinaire con la pintura, especialmente con la cubista. (Paz 1972:35)

- (10) It will be noted that the order in which the poems are discussed here is not strictly chronological: 'Les fenêtres' predates 'Le musicien de St-Merry' by several months. In terms of structure and conception however 'Les fenêtres' belongs to a

later phase, associated with Delaunay's simultanist painting, whereas 'Le musicien de St-Merry', like 'Zone', invites comparison with the Cubist aesthetic.

- (11) In the section 'Das Nebeneinander heterogener Elemente als Kompositionsprinzip' of his book Die Struktur literarischer Texte, J. Lotman observes:

Der Effekt dieses Nebeneinanders (nach der Terminologie Eizenstejns: der Montage-Effekt) hängt organisch zusammen mit dem Umschalten von einer Struktur in die andere. Folglich müssen im Augenblick des Uebergangs von einem Segment zum nächsten für den Autor (und für die Erwartungsstruktur des Publikums) mindestens zwei Möglichkeiten vorhanden sein: einmal die Fortsetzung der bereits bekannten strukturellen Organisation und zweitens, als Alternative dazu, das Auftreten einer neuen. Gerade auf der Wahl und auf der gegenseitigen Projektion von Text und Erwartung (Strukturtragheit) aufeinander beruht ja die dabei entstehende Künstlerische Information. ( )

Dabei veranlassen die nicht in einem System vereinbaren benachbarten Einheiten den Leser, eine ergänzende Struktur zu konstruieren, in der diese Unmöglichkeit aufgehoben wird. Der Text korreliert mit beiden Strukturen, und das hat eine Erweiterung seiner semantischen Möglichkeiten zur Folge.

(Lotman 1972b:398-399)

- (12) Apollinaire returns to this point concerning the simultaneous recitation of a text by several voices in an article a few months later ('Simultanisme-librettisme', June 1914; OC3:888-892), after his quarrel with Barzun (to whom he addresses an open letter in the same month; OC3:877-880); here he points out the limitations of the "transformation théatrale du lyrisme" (ibid.:890) in Barzun's and Jules Romains' polyphonic experiments.

Simultaneous recitation will also be practiced by Dada, but in their hands (or mouths) it turns into an instrument of satire, and has thus a radically different function.

## CHAPTER 5

Ezra Pound: Image, Vortex, Ideogram

Among the poets of Modernism, Pound is perhaps the first to formulate a full-fledged and consistent poetic theory, and the emphasis in this chapter will be on the theory rather than on the poetry. It will be useful to distinguish three successive stages in Pound's thinking about poetry. The pre-Imagist views and guidelines will be reconstructed in rough outline in section 1. Section 2 then attempts to show how they are modified and re-arranged to form the Imagist poetic, while the third section further discusses the concept of the Image itself and the relation between Pound's Imagist ideas and the Symbolist position. Section 4 examines the incorporation of Imagism into Vorticism, and Pound's adaptation of the ideogrammatic method. The final section considers the structure of a handful of poems, as well as the relation, in matters of poetic technique, between Pound and Apollinaire.

## 1.

Pound's early (i.e. pre-Imagist) poetic production appears to be largely shaped by derivative modes, steeped as it is in the forms and manners of the Provençal and Tuscan traditions, and falling in with a peculiarly nineteenth-century medievalism (cf. De Nagy 1968: 146-148). The Spirit of Romance (1910) offers a faithful record of these enthusiasms. At the same time however this book shows Pound's critically discerning faculties already fully at work, and the basic categories established here in the discussion of medieval Romance literature will prove to be of central importance in the elaboration of Pound's poetic in subsequent years. As such the book requires a closer look. The examination of Pound's early work and ideas thus starts from a paradox: whereas most of the early poems were soon to be discarded on account of their stilted archaism (Pound retained only a very few in later editions of his work, referring to the rest as "stale cream puffs"; cf. Harmer 1975:74), the criteria for 'good writing' developed in these years and extracted from the study of medieval and Latin poets (Dante, Cavalcanti, Daniel, Martial, Catullus)

reveal themselves as guidelines of lasting value. While the poems of the Imagist stage directly oppose the diction of the early pieces, the norms set down in the various Imagist programmes build in many respects on the criteria formulated in The Spirit of Romance and the essays written in the last months of 1911. Whereas in the case of Apollinaire it was noted that his poetic practice appears at times to be ahead of his critical statements, Pound, at this stage at least, exhibits the opposite tendency.

The most important qualities (in view of the later emphases) which Pound highlights in the course of his discussion of Romance poetry have to do with precision, vividness, definiteness, and clarity of expression - qualities, incidentally, that will determine his later opposition to the Symbolist technique. The Renaissance is summarily dismissed as the period that "brought in rhetoric, and all the attendant horrors" (SR:223)<sup>(1)</sup>. The business of literature, he argues, is to offer "an escape from dullness", and poetry should "relieve, refresh, revive the mind of the reader" by providing him with instances of ecstasy, beauty, or "splendor of thought" (ibid.:8) - terms which recall the preface to A Quinzaine for This Yule of 1908, where Pound had remarked that "Marvel and Wonder" open the way to the appreciation of the literary art (quoted in Stock 1974:71). More tellingly perhaps, Dante's language in particular is characterized in The Spirit of Romance as "beautifully definite" and as producing "a certain effect of clear light" (SR:158,156). In a chapter added to the book in 1916 these observations are restated in a more familiar Imagist idiom, when Pound speaks of "a sort of hyper-scientific precision [which] is the touchstone and assay of the artist's power, of his honor, his authenticity", and of the "exactness of presentation" in which Dante excels (ibid.:87).

At least two points in this line of thought are directly relevant for the later views on poetry. The reference to the 'definiteness' of Dante's language is in accordance with earlier remarks in a letter of 1908 to William Carlos Williams, where Pound anticipates T.E. Hulme's characterization of poetry as "a solid vision of realities" (in his Further Speculations; cf. chapter 2 above) by emphasizing that literature should convey "the bodily vision" of things instead of dwelling ad nauseam on cliché-ridden traditional sentimental, scenic or heroic subjects (Lett.:4-5). The rules which he establishes in

consequence for his own writing, namely "To paint the thing as I see it" and "Freedom from didacticism" (*ibid.*:6) already imply the second, related point: the concentration of the 'presentational' aspect in poetry, to the exclusion of whatever is felt to be merely rhetorical, didactic, moralizing, or otherwise dispensable. It is in this sense that in The Spirit of Romance he rejects as "blasphemy" Matthew Arnold's dictum that literature is a 'criticism of life', adding that "Poetry is as much a 'criticism of life' as red-hot iron is a criticism of fire" (SR:222). On a different level, the positive side of this aversion, the concentration on significant essentials and the presentation of these without further comment, is indicated in the brief digression on "the short so-called dramatic lyric" (in the letter of 1908 just mentioned), where all additional and circumstantial information is "left to the reader's imagination or implied or set in a short note" (Lett.:3-4). In the Imagist stage this approach will be termed the "presentative method" and regarded as the poetic equivalent to Flaubert's prose style; the essence of this method of unhampered "clear presentation", Pound argues, is that

It means constation of fact. It presents. It does not comment. ( ) It is as communicative as Nature. It is as uncommunicative as Nature... It does not attempt to justify anybody's ways to anybody or anything else... It is open to all facts and to all impressions. ('The Approach to Paris', October 1913; in Pondrom 1974:186-187)

Closely related to these requirements of 'presentation' and 'definiteness' of expression is the tendency to ellipsis, compression, and non-discursiveness. In The Spirit of Romance Pound refers approvingly to Aristotle's definition of the metaphor (the first of several such references in subsequent years) as the swift perception of relations and the hallmark of poetic genius, and he distinguishes between three forms of 'comparison', namely simile, metaphor proper, and "language beyond metaphor", i.e. the elliptical and compressed expression of a metaphorical relation by the use of 'interpretive' adjectives (SR:158). The essentially relational - as opposed to merely picturesque, decorative, non-informative - dimension of metaphor is also emphasized in a later remark (in 'D'Artagnan Twenty Years After', 1937) that "metaphor starts TOWARD ideogram" (SP:423). And a similar point is made in the essay 'Vorticism' of September 1914, where Pound notes that the image, which is inherently relational and interpretive, is "the word beyond formulated language" (GB:88).

In each case, image and metaphor are valued primarily as direct and unadorned statements incorporating meaningful relations, although the precise and complex sense of this relation remains implicit and is thus presented as objective and unassailable instead of being argued in purely subjective terms. This view accords also with the earlier observation in the preface to A Quinzaine for This Yule that 'Beauty', which "should never be presented explained", can be approached through 'Marvel' and 'Wonder' which in turn produce "a succession of lightning understandings and perceptions" (in Stock 1974:71).

It is not difficult to see, then, that several of Pound's early statements on poetry may be read as establishing the rough framework for the later theories, when such attributes as the references to 'Marvel' and 'Wonder' are dropped and the writing becomes more pragmatic and normative - a change which is accompanied by closer contacts with F.M. Ford (Hueffer) and T.E. Hulme <sup>(2)</sup>. Even before the formation of the Imagist group, however, the basic concepts evolved in the years 1908-1910 are further elaborated in two essays dating from December 1911: 'I Gather the Limbs of Osiris'(SP:21-43) and 'Prolegomena'(LE:8-12).

Both texts are concerned in the first place with questions of professional craftsmanship and skill, as is borne out by the unequivocal assertion that "technique is the only gauge and test of a man's lasting sincerity"(SP:34; LE:9). Mastery of technique manifests itself as full and conscious control over the means employed, as "the clinch of expression on the thing intended to be expressed" (SP:42). And it is the concentrated attention to detail and its exact and concise rendering which in Pound's opinion mark the superiority of an Arnaut Daniel or a Cavalcanti over the rhetoric of the Renaissance writers or the wordiness of the Victorians:

In the art of Daniel and Cavalcanti, I have seen that precision which I miss in the Victorians, that explicit rendering, be it of external nature, or of emotion. Their testimony is of the eyewitness, their symptoms are first hand. (LE:11)

The aim of offering a precise first-hand account is inseparable from the call for directness and simplicity of language. Pound makes it clear however that this simplicity, although it implies the use of a contemporary and straightforward kind of language freed of pseudo-archaic poeticisms (and in this respect his critical

pronouncements are obviously at variance with his own poetic practice at the time), does not mean a recourse to informal colloquial speech (and here his view still clearly differs from Ford's). What he has in mind is rather

...a simplicity and directness of utterance, which is different from the simplicity and directness of daily speech, which is more 'curial', more dignified. (SP:41)

What will ensure that the poem remains 'close to the thing' is then the exactly appropriate and unembroidered arrangement of the words, that is to say "the art of the verse structure"(ibid.). One singularly significant element in this connection is Pound's advocacy of "the method of Luminous Detail"(ibid.:21), first introduced as a critical strategy but then also applied to the writing of poetry itself and associated with 'presentation' ("The artist seeks out the luminous detail. He does not comment";ibid.:23). In the later theory, the notion of the Imagist image is in fact little more than this same 'Luminous Detail' presented in isolation, so that both its eidetic quality and the semantic complexity of its relation to the rest of the poem are highlighted and the poem acquires a non-discursive character by directing the reader's attention to this (semantically, syntactically and typographically) isolated Image.

Pound's standards of criticism in all this remain basically comparative and 'universal'. The guideline for his analyses of poetic technique is stated in the preface to The Spirit of Romance:

What we need is a literary scholarship, which will weigh Theocritus and Yeats with one balance, and which will judge dull dead men as inexorably as dull writers of today, and will, with equity, give praise to beauty before referring to an almanack. (SR:8)

This insistence on "a universal standard which pays no attention to time or country" is often repeated in subsequent years (Lett.:24-25; LE:225). Applied to literary history, it leads Pound to a view which roughly corresponds to Hulme's (3), in so far as it too rests upon a revaluation of the Middle Ages and a dissatisfaction with practically the whole period from the Renaissance up to the twentieth century. With the notable exception, from 1912 onwards, of the French achievement, Pound discards the nineteenth century as generally a "rather blurry, messy sort of period, a rather sentimentalistic, mannerish sort of period"(LE:11). The writing of the future, however, is expected to assume a different aspect, opposed to the characteristics of the previous era. The forecast itself again employs a vaguely



## Hulmean terminology:

As to Twentieth century poetry, and the poetry which I expect to see written during the next decade or so, it will, I think, move against poppy-cock, it will be harder and saner, it will be () 'nearer the bone'. It will be as much like granite as it can be, its force will lie in its truth, its interpretative power (of course, poetic force does always rest there); I mean it will not try to seem forcible by rhetorical din, and luxurious riot. We will have fewer painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke of it. At least for myself, I want it so, austere, direct, free from emotional slither. (LE:12)

This programme, clearly, carries some momentum. Like Hulme, Heym, and, to a lesser extent, Apollinaire, Pound appears to be fully aware of a necessary rupture between the old and the new mode of writing, and although the rupture is never quite complete in that it always and inevitably harks back to particular precedents and predecessors whose practice is felt to be sufficiently close to the new conception, the idea of a renewal of poetic writing, of a 'renaissance', becomes an integral part of Pound's critical and creative enterprise. Pound's comparative and 'universal' critical approach finds here its proper context: the study of particular Latin and medieval poets, and later of some nineteenth century French authors, furnishes general criteria for the evaluation of all literary writing, and provides the necessary paradigms to justify the guidelines for the new poetry as well. From 1912-13 onwards Pound indeed begins to speak in terms of a systematic programme of renovation. In a letter to Harriet Monroe in October 1912 (i.e. around the time of the publication of his Ripostes) he speaks of the need to "break the surface of convention"(LEtt.:11); in Patria Mia (1913) he expresses his hope for a "Risorgimento", which is to be accompanied by "a whole volley of liberations"(PM:27); and in a letter of March 1915 he again refers to "our renaissance"(LEtt.:51).

One aspect of the required "volley of liberations" is the study and importation of foreign verse forms as fresh models for poetic diction. If one function of Pound's translations and adaptations consists in providing the poet with a number of masks (as he later explains; cf. GB:85), they play an equally significant part in the search for new patterns of poetic structure and expression. Thus he notes in 1914 that as a rule "The first step of a renaissance, or awakening, is the importation of models for painting, sculpture or writing"(LE:214). Later retrospective comments reiterate this point. In 1922 the translations from Cavalcanti and Daniel are described as

being "all part of study of verse form" (Lett.:179), and in an interview in 1962 the policy of translation and adaptation is summed up in the remark that "Exotics were necessary as an attempt at foundation" (in Dick 1972:113). In this way the foreign injections are incorporated into the scheme for the revitalization of poetic writing: they offer examples as well as opportunities for apprenticeship outside the bounds of the discredited native tradition. The poet, Pound argues, "should master all known forms and systems of metric", and aspiring artists should "begin by copying master-work, and proceed to their own composition" (LE:9,10). In his series of articles discussing contemporary French poetry ('The Approach to Paris', September-October 1913), finally, he observes that "The great periods of English have been the periods when the poets showed greatest powers of assimilation" (in Pondrom 1974:175), a point which is later repeated in 'How To Read' (LE:34-35).

Pound's translations, in this sense, then, are primarily a critical enterprise and an exploration into ways and means to effectuate the break with the prevailing convention, the 'norms' and 'registers' established by late nineteenth century writing. In that respect translation serves the same end as the insistence on accuracy of description and objectivity of presentation, and the later references to the French prose Realists. This is important from a literary-historical point of view; as Mukařovsky noted in 1932:

Jedes dichterische Werk wird auf dem Hintergrund irgendwelcher Tradition wahrgenommen, das heisst auf dem Hintergrund eines automatisierten Kanons, im Verhältnis zu welchem es sich als Deformation offenbart. (quoted in L. Doležel, 'Zur statistischen Theorie der Dichtersprache', in Ihwe 1971, vol.1:47)

When Pound's activities as a translator, and the formal experiments resulting from them, are seen in the context of the mechanism of literary evolution, it becomes clear that his practice in this field represents an attempt to combat the canons of the inherited literary tradition. This established tradition, namely, he replaces by a new 'imaginary museum' of supposedly timeless paradigms which all share the characteristic - inherently or in the way Pound renders them in translation - that their diction is at the far end of that of the prevailing (Victorian-Edwardian as well as Symbolist) convention. Clearly, the interest in, say, haiku or troubadour poetry is of little significance in itself - indeed both are nineteenth century assets; the point lies entirely in the fact that the language of

Pound's translations becomes implicitly polemical in avoiding the well-trodden paths of conventional diction (as is shown in particular by the volume Cathay of 1915). The Poundian slogan 'Make It New' exemplifies this practice: Pound's translations avoid the use of 'integrative' and well-worn poeticisms, and aim instead at a distinctively unconventional (i.e. in fact anti-conventional, because de-automatized) diction. In this sense the diction employed in Pound's translations performs a role very like that observed in connection with the various subversive devices noted previously in Hulme, Heym and Apollinaire <sup>(4)</sup>. The insistence on simple, direct, definite statement, the introduction of free verse and of Provençal and Tuscan verse forms, and the references to that most 'un-poetic' of forms, Realist prose ('un-poetic' from the point of view of late nineteenth century norms, that is), are obviously all part of this same pattern. Pound's traditionalist and generally reactionary views are not at variance with this - only, for him 'tradition' appears to be a highly eclectic timeless gallery, whose values run counter to the decadence which in his (as in Hulme's) opinion has befallen the state of letters in recent decades and even centuries. Satire and parody, finally, also have their place in this strategy, and it is not surprising that, just as Hulme's poems contain a strong parodic streak, Pound should later associate 'Maunderley' with the 'Homage to Sextus Propertius', describing both as endeavours to communicate with "a block-headed epoch" (Lett.:239). As early as 1913 he speaks of satire in terms of a break with tradition: if Flaubert and the cult of ugliness are "diagnosis" of what has gone wrong, satire is "surgery, insertions and amputations" (LE:45). Considered in this light, Pound's translations and satires are complementary instruments of polemic and renewal (even if the 'renewal' is ultimately retrograde).

Pound's preoccupation with the revitalization of poetry and his opposition to the Victorian and Symbolist traditions alike has a further dimension to it as well. Pound differs from Hulme in matters of literature not only in his more thorough scholarship but also with respect to the significance he attributes, especially in later years, to the use of language in relation to the well-being of society as a whole. For Hulme, literary and artistic styles correspond to the fundamental philosophical attitudes of a given society, whereby the arts, being a marginal activity, are regarded as particularly sensitive

in registering symptoms of an approaching change in these attitudes. Pound's view on this point, though in all probability indebted to Hulme, is in a sense more extreme, and considers language the prime mover and the central concern. Thus he states in 1915 that "when words cease to cling close to things, kingdoms fall, empires wane and diminish"(GB:114). The process involved is set out in more detail in 'How To Read': literature, he says here, has to do with language and hence "with the health of the very matter of thought itself", and thus when the work of the 'Literati' goes rotten,

...when their very medium, the very essence of their work, the application of word to thing goes rotten, i.e. becomes slushy and inexact, or excessive or bloated, the whole machinery of social and of individual thought and order goes to pot. (LE:21)

Whereas Hulme maintains that the arts, including literature, may prefigure changes in the way societies view the world, and that literature, and poetry in particular, should act as the advance guard of language, Pound holds that language is also the key to the mental make-up of society, and that therefore "A people that grows accustomed to sloppy writing is a people in process of losing grip on its empire and on itself"(ABC:34). Language and literature thus occupy a vital position in the whole fabric of society. Pound's programme of revitalization and renewal, consequently, implies not only a literary but also in the last instance a social and didactic concern which remains an integral part of his enterprise. Yet Hulme and Pound go about their socio-literary task with a pragmatism that contrasts sharply with the overtones of anguish and oppressiveness found in many of the German Expressionists, although on the other hand they clearly pay more attention to the extra-literary motivations and implications of their poetic and critical production than most of the Cubist painters and poets in France. At the same time however the note of profound alienation is never absent, as Pound's (and Eliot's) self-imposed exile in Europe clearly shows - even though it drapes itself in the colours of an idiosyncratic traditionalism.

## 2.

The Imagists, as Pound recalls in 'A Retrospect'(LE:3), emerged as a group in 1912. The prefatory note to Hulme's poems, inserted at the end of Ripostes in the autumn of 1912, associates the new formation with Hulme's circle of 1909, "the 'School of Images' which may or may not have existed"(CSP:268). The letters refer to the 'Imagists' for

the first time in October 1912, in connection with work by H.D. (Lett.: 11). In Pound's own poems the beginning of the 'modern cadence' may be located between the Canzoni of 1911 and Ripostes (cf. Stock 1964: 39-40). In October 1912 he describes his 'Contemporania' poems as deliberately anti-conventional; in March 1913 he refers scathingly to his earlier predilection for poetic archaisms, and in October of the same year he again speaks of his "new work" as "absolutely the last obsequies of the Victorian period"(Lett.:11,15,23). Most of the important Imagist poems are then also published in periodicals in the course of 1913 or early 1914 (Ruthven 1969:26-27).

It would appear, on the whole, that the Image is only one element in the Imagist poetic, and its exact meaning is by no means always clear. The visual qualities of the Image are emphasized only in later texts, when the concept of 'phanopoeia' is developed. The over-all picture of the Imagist poetic - considered as "a philosophy of style", as N.Zach aptly calls it (in Bradbury & McFarlane 1976:239) - suggests that the notion of the Image is to be regarded mainly as a crystallization of the earlier emphasis on precision, compression and presentation.

Whereas the poems from Ripostes onwards evince a sharp break with the early work (even if Ripostes itself still has the character of a transitional volume, as J.B. Harmer 1975:72 argues), the critical prose by and large shows a remarkable continuity. The three principles upon which H.D., Aldington and Pound agree early in 1912 contain nothing that is new: direct treatment, verbal economy, and composition "in the sequence of the musical phrase"<sup>(5)</sup>. Pound's introduction of H.D.'s poems to Harriet Monroe in October 1912 speaks in similar terms of their being "in the laconic speech of the Imagistes", and Objective - no slither; direct - no excessive use of adjectives, no metaphors that won't permit examination. It's straight talk, straight as the Greek! (Lett.:11)

And towards the end of 1913 the essay 'The Serious Artist'(LE:41-57) again returns to these same points. The sphere of art is here also (as in The Spirit of Romance) deliberately restricted, to the exclusion of moralistic and didactic concerns: art "exists as the trees exist"(LE:46), and by good art Pound simply means "art that bears witness, I mean the art that is most precise"(ibid.:44). The achievement of the serious artist consists in that he "presents the image of his desire, of his hate, of his indifference as precisely

that, as precisely the image of his own desire, hate or indifference" (ibid.:46). The argument is summed up in what are by now familiar terms:

Roughly, then Good writing is writing that is perfectly controlled, the writer says just what he means. He says it with complete clarity and simplicity. He uses the smallest possible number of words. (ibid.:50)

In so far as 'The Serious Artist' does strike a new note, the novelty lies in a quotation from Stendhal in which the qualities of clarity and precision in prose are contrasted with the ornamental and cliché-ridden language of poetry; and by this standard Pound feels authorized to condemn the products of most recent poets as "pests and abominations"(ibid.:54). But the references to Stendhal (behind which Ford's presence may be assumed) also open a further perspective, in a double sense. First, the reliance on the French nineteenth century prose tradition (Pound mentions mainly Stendhal, Flaubert, de Maupassant) will provide valuable criteria of precision and objectivity in subsequent years, and secondly the distinction between prose and poetry allows Pound to bring the quality of compression in poetry into sharper focus. Poetry can now be described as "the more highly energized" form of expression (ibid.:49), and it is in this sense that for example 'Maunderley' is later seen as "an attempt to condense the James novel"(Lett.:180). This view of poetry as utmost condensation will further be reinforced by Fenollosa's essay (poetic thought, for Fenollosa, works by "crowding maximum meaning into the single phrase pregnant, charged, and luminous from within"; Fen.:28) and finds its way equally into the Vorticist aesthetic and its principle of 'primary intensity'. In 'How To Read' and ABC of Reading finally a definitive formulation will be reached: literature is "language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree"(LE:23) and poetry in turn is "the most concentrated form of verbal expression"(ABC:36). This refinement however, nowhere departs from Pound's Imagist and pre-Imagist thinking.

The insistence on skill, control and clarity continues unabated throughout the Imagist period. In Patria Mia technique is defined as "obtaining or achieving a precise relationship between the object and the expression"(PM:26). In the course of the quarrel with Amy Lowell Pound again pinpoints the basic requirements of the Imagist

poetic when he reminds Miss Lowell that Imagism "stands, or I should like it to stand for hard light, clear edges"; and a few days later he repeats: "I should, as I have said, like to keep the term associated with a certain clarity and intensity"(Lett.:38,39).

As the quotation from Stendhal in 'The Serious Artist' indicates, such earlier terms as 'Marvel' and 'Wonder' have now been replaced by more sober references to the French Realist prose tradition. Imagism, Pound recalls in September 1914, set out "to bring poetry up to the level of prose"(GB:83), and again, in January 1915: "Poetry must be as well written as prose"(Lett.:48). The shift, as was suggested above, also has a polemical character in the context of the reorientation of Pound's poetic after 1912. Apart from aligning poetry with a literary form - Realist prose - which seems at the furthest possible remove from conventional poetic expression, the new frame of reference also implies a pragmatic, de-mystified view of the poetic process as such. Whereas a critic like Arthur Symons speaks of poetry as "a kind of religion" and a "sacred ritual" behind which there looms "the doctrine of Mysticism"(Symons 1958:5,95), Pound's technical approach is in accordance with Hulme's, who begins his 'Lecture on Modern Poetry' of 1914 by flatly stating that he "want[s] to speak of verse in a plain way as I would of pigs"(Hulme 1955:67), arguing his case in terms of definite means and ends.

Pound's reliance on the prose tradition however is to be associated with F.M. Ford rather than with Hulme. Although The Spirit of Romance contains various references to the clarity and natural word order of the language of prose (cf. Stock 1964:37), Pound still writes in a letter of 1911 that he disagrees "diametrically" with Ford on nearly everything, including questions pertaining to the arts (cf. Schneidau 1969:12), and Ford's reaction to the antiquarianism of Pound's Canzoni is predictably negative (SP:432; Dick 1972:93). In an article of December 1912 however Pound suddenly notes that he "would rather talk poetry with Ford Madox Hueffer than with any man in London"(in Stock 1974:159), and shortly afterwards the references to the French Realist writers and to the need to use a contemporary, unaffected idiom begin to multiply.

Ford's views indeed continually emphasize directness, objectivity and naturalness of expression, as opposed to what he deprecatingly calls the 'poetic vernacular'. In the preface to his Collected Poems in 1914 he declares that his aim is "To register my own times

in terms of my own time", pointing out in passing that in France a poet can write in "a language that, roughly speaking, any hatter can use", just as in Germany "the poet writes exactly as he speaks" (Ford 1916:13,14). Pathos and emotion may be rendered implicitly by concentrating on an objective description of visible phenomena and factual scenes: "the business of poetry is not sentimentalism so much as the putting of certain realities in certain aspects" (ibid.: 17). This descriptive approach leads to the conclusion that "the main thing is the genuine love and the faithful rendering of the received impression" (ibid.:28). Comparing his own poems a few years later with those of some Imagists, he also notes how the tone of his own writing is markedly more conversational than that of the new school (Ford 1966:159).

This last point too has its relevance in relation to Pound. As was mentioned above, in 'I Gather the Limbs of Osiris' Pound still contrasts the directness of poetry with that of common speech in that the former is "more 'curial', more dignified" than the latter (SP:41). But in December 1914 William Carlos Williams finds himself criticized for straying occasionally from "the simple order of natural speech" (Lett.:28), and in Pound's preface to Lionel Johnson's collected verse (dated 1914; cf. Read 1947:122) the shift in emphasis is put more explicitly:

Now Lionel Johnson cannot be shown to be in accord with our present doctrines and ambitions. His language is a bookish dialect, it is a curial speech and our aim is natural speech, the language as spoken. We desire the words of poetry to follow the natural order. We would write nothing that we might not actually say in life - under emotion. (LE:362)

And in a letter of January 1915 Pound again stresses that the language of poetry should depart "in no way from speech save by a heightened intensity (i.e. simplicity)" (Lett.:48) - a statement which reveals both Pound's agreement with the spirit of Ford's argument and the point where he still differs from the conversationalism and the tendency to descriptiveness of Ford's verse.

Pound's insistence on objectivity and his respect for the Realist prose tradition both run parallel, to a certain extent at least, to Heym's adopted stance of the objective observer. The reorientation of Heym's poetic after 1909 means a change of position from the earlier exalted sentimentalism to the concern with objective registration in the city poems of 1910, whereby Heym initially takes



his bearings from the impassivity and assumed impartiality of presentation of the Realist and Naturalist schools. But whereas Pound never tires of stressing the need for a combination of direct statement and utmost condensation, embodying the communication of emotion in short juxtaposed scenes and images, Heym's work moves towards further descriptiveness and increasing metaphorical distortion, employing a cumulative technique which is likely to fall under what Pound calls the method of 'multitudinous detail' (as opposed to that of 'luminous detail'; cf. SP:21). It is worth noting however that in each case the transition to modernity is effectuated with the help of paradigms which stand virtually at the opposite end of the Symbolist aesthetic - that the recourse to those paradigms, in other words, implies a repudiation of the stylistic registers associated with the Symbolist aesthetic.

### 3.

The Imagist Image, then, is by no means an isolated concept, but needs to be firmly inserted in the context of formal condensation, precision and objectivity outlined and refined in previous years. It both continues and crystallizes the notion of an anti-sentimental and non-discursive writing suggested in the idea of poetic understanding as "a succession of lightning understandings and perceptions" (in the preface to A Quinzaine for This Yule) and in the notion of the 'Luminous Detail'.

Neither should the presence of Hulme and F.S. Flint be lost out of sight. Their closeness to Pound at this time may be gauged from a remark by an outsider, Edward Marsh, who in June 1913 even speaks of "the Pound-Flint-Hulme school" (cf. Stock 1974:175). If Ford was instrumental in drawing Pound's attention to the prose tradition, Flint introduced him to modern French poetry. In February 1912 Pound notes that Flint has put him "on some very good contemporary French stuff" (cf. Harmer 1975:36). Flint's long article on recent French verse in August 1912 (Pondrom 1974:86-145) confirmed his authority as middle-man between London and Paris, and Pound's references to Gautier, de Gourmont, Corbière and others begin to appear from about the autumn of 1913 onwards (Lett.:23; Pondrom 1974:174ff).

In Hulme's case, the agreement between him and Pound on matters concerning the crucial role of the image in poetic writing is hardly surprising (cf. Ruthven 1969:12-13). Pound, however, appears to be singularly uninterested in Hulme's philosophical speculations (as also Coffman 1951:155 observes), and never insists on the use of images as strictly visual analogies, with or without ironic overtones (as displacement of habitual perceptions). Also, whereas Hulme follows Bergson in contending that a large number of images in different lines may conduct the reader to the point where an intuition is to be grasped, Pound, initially at least (i.e. before the absorption of the Image into the ideogram and the Vortex), focuses on the single interpretive Image, which naturally enough leads him to practice the one-Image poem and to adopt eventually the notion of the poem as one complex Image (cf. Coffman 1951:149-150). Thus the possibility contained in the Quinzaine preface of a development in terms of the poem as a series of images (which would have accorded with Hulme's Bergsonian view) is not elaborated in subsequent years - a refusal explicable in the light of Pound's concern for compressed accuracy, which opposes the 'Luminous Detail' to the 'multitudinous detail'. Instead, the focus is deliberately narrowed and the poem's length reduced, whereby the Image appears both as an objective correlative and as a complex micro-structure, a condensed and impersonal statement, simile or metaphor, often in the form of a noun phrase, and entertaining a multivalent and usually indirect relationship with the semantic field of the poem as a whole.

The definition of the Image, as presented in 'A Few Don'ts' in March 1913, is well-known:

An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. I use the term 'complex' rather in the technical sense employed by the newer psychologists, such as Hart, though we might not agree absolutely in our application.

It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art. (LE:4)

The description of the Image as a micro-structure, in a poem which forms a macro-structure, follows from Pound's own terminology (his reference to the psychologist Hart is elucidated in Witemeyer 1969: 33). The aspect of 'presentation' is again underlined, and obviously links the definition of the Image with the comments on the

'presentative method' outlined a few months later (Pondrom 1974:187). The presentation of the Image, in other words, always contains an element of paradox and suppression, in that it conveys a sense of definiteness and objectivity as well as implicit emotive meaning. In this sense the Image is also closely related to the use of masks and personae, which allow the poet to remain at one remove from his subject. The Image in fact functions as an expressive equivalent for a particular emotion, and only its precision and the degree of complexity of its relation to the rest of the poem will convey the intensity and complexity of the emotion.

The characterization of the Image as an 'equation' for an emotion or state of mind to be expressed is put most succinctly in the essay on 'Vorticism'(GB:91), although it first occurs in The Spirit of Romance, where Pound holds that

Poetry is a sort of inspired mathematics, which gives us equations, not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres and the like, but equations for the human emotions. (SR:14)

In 'The Wisdom of Poetry' (April 1912) the parallel with the formulae of analytical geometry is introduced. The formula for the circle, Pound explains, leads from the consideration of particular circular forms to "the contemplation of the circle absolute, its law; the circle free in all space, unbounded; loosed from the accidents of time and place", and "What the analytical geometer does for space and form, the poet does for the states of consciousness" (SP:332). The 'Vorticism' essay repeats this parallel almost word for word (6). Its implications are indicated in the essay 'Arnold Dolmetsch'(1918), where Pound describes the origins of myth as the invention of 'impersonal' stories embodying emotions which are otherwise incommunicable:

...after bitter experience, perceiving that no one could understand what he meant when he said that he 'turned into a tree' he made a myth - a work of art that is - an impersonal or objective story woven out of his own emotion, as the nearest equation that he was capable of putting into words. (LE:431)

This comment echoes, on a different level, the earlier observation that the serious artist is "scientific" in that he presents an image of his desire, hate or indifference as precisely the image of these emotions (LE:46). The paradoxes that remain thus converge on the requirements for directness as well as objectivity, and on the double quality of particularity and universality of the Image.

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The 'mathematical' parallels help to explain the meaning of the "freedom from time limits and space limits" mentioned in the definition of the Image. The technique to achieve the presentation of the Image "in an instant of time" and the sense of "sudden liberation" to which it gives rise, hinges, in practice, on the juxtaposition of at least two semantically diverse phrases (one of them the Image), whereby the precise interrelation between them remains implicit or may be grasped on the basis of the poem as a whole. This technique in fact bears some resemblance to Reverdy's theory of the image (expounded in Nord-Sud, March 1918) as the bringing together of distant 'realities' between which the mind ('l'esprit') has perceived pertinent relations; the power conveyed by the image increases as the relation between its members are more unexpected and yet more justified at the same time (cf. Reverdy 1975:73ff). But in Reverdy's conception the image is instrumental primarily in shaping a new poetic reality, the separate universe which is the poem; Pound, in the Imagist stage at least, continues to see the image as a vehicle for the objective transference of a state of consciousness. (This point will be taken up again in the chapter on Reverdy.)

Juxtaposition is the central device in most of Pound's Imagist poems. It also accounts for their discontinuous nature, which is often emphasized by the typographical isolation of the Image. The archetypal Imagist poem, then, is the haiku-type poem, with 'In a Station of the Metro' as the obvious example. This type of poem is, in Pound's words, "bilateral" in that it depends on a principle of simple "super-position" (GB:89) or, as he puts it in a later comment, on the "swift contraposition of objects" (SP:422). The 'suddenness' of this operation is repeatedly stressed in the definition of the Image quoted above and in the comments on the Metro Station poem (GB:89), but goes back ultimately to the 'lightning' perceptions mentioned in the Quinzaine preface and the references to the Aristotelian notion of the metaphor; and it is further implied in the very concept of the 'presentative' method. The liberating effect of contraposition or superposition then has to do with this non-discursive immediacy of presentation, but also, in fact, with the dual qualities of fusion and contrast, of structural similarity and semantic divergence which invariably apply to the relation

between the Image and the body of the poem. The poem as a whole depends, namely, on the simultaneous perception of convergence and divergence between Image and poem. It is this complex relation which establishes the poem as 'equation' and as the poetic equivalent of the leap whereby "a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective"(GB:89). The 'intensity' of the poem is determined, clearly, by the degree of complexity of this relation.

In later years, the Image is absorbed into the ideogram and the Vortex. The concept and status of the Image itself, however, also undergoes closer scrutiny. One aspect of this further examination concerns the possible dual origin of the Image and the dual relation between the Image and 'reality'. As early as March 1912 Pound observes that "The concentration of poetry is a process more intense than the reception of an impression"(in Coffman 1951:140). In the 'Vorticism' essay of September 1914 this point is developed in relation to the Image in particular: the Image is "the poet's pigment", and "it is our affair to render the image as we have perceived or conceived it"(GB:86) - a formulation which sounds not unlike Hulme's view that poetic inspiration may come from unlooked-for resemblances and accidentally seen analogies, or from the deliberate choosing and working up of analogies (Hulme 1955:84,85). In the context of the Vorticist aesthetic however Pound places decisive emphasis on the artist's shaping and creative force, on the 'invention' of adequate images (and this, incidentally, brings him to a position much closer to Reverdy's above-mentioned conception of the poetic image than to Hulme's analogies). For the Vorticist, the artist who is a mere "plastic substance receiving impressions" (GB:89) is likely to lack intensity. What matters is rather "the 'organizing' or creative-inventive faculty"(SP:347), the act of "conceiving instead of merely reflecting and observing"(GB:89). The creation of an Image thus becomes the deliberate creation of relations, the active "organization of forms"(ibid.:92). In 'As For Imagisme'(January 1915) the Image is no longer seen as an 'image' in the ordinary sense but as a complex and intense statement, while also the earlier conception/reception duality is transformed into a subjective/objective duality, with this difference that now both terms are equally regarded as products of artistic creativity:

The Image can be of two sorts. It can arise within the mind. It is then 'subjective'. External causes play upon the mind, perhaps; if so, they are drawn into the mind, fused, transmitted, and emerge in an Image unlike themselves. Secondly, the Image can be objective. Emotion seizing up some external scene or action carries it intact to the mind; and that vortex purges it of all save the essential or dominant or dramatic qualities, and it emerges like the external original.

In either case the Image is more than an idea. It is a vortex or cluster of fused ideas and is endowed with energy. If it does not fulfil these specifications, it is not what I mean by an Image. (SP:344-345)<sup>(7)</sup>

This view is clearly in line with the Vorticist emphasis on the artist's autonomous shaping power, but it also shows to a much greater extent than in previous comments the transforming potential of the Image, in a conception which obviously approaches the Cubist sphere: whether objective or subjective the Image always implies a radical reorganization of external data when they enter the poem - either a transformation beyond recognition, or a reduction to 'primary qualities' in Kahnweiler's sense.

A second additional elaboration may be briefly sketched. In his Vorticist days Pound attempts to put the Imagist technique in a wider perspective by relating it to procedures in the plastic arts. In later years he undertakes to assign Imagism its place in the context of a more comprehensive typology of poetry. He thus introduces the concept of 'phanopeia', emphasizing the visual character of the Image. At first the typology comprises only two terms. In the 'Vorticism' essay he distinguishes between "lyric" poetry, where "music, sheer melody, seems as if it were just bursting into speech", and poetry where painting or sculpture seems as if it were 'just bursting into speech', and the latter is the type of poetry of Dante, Ibycus, Liu Ch'e and Imagism (GB:83-8 ;cf. also Stock 1964:76). In an essay of 1918 a three-layered division appears; melopoeia ("poetry which moves by its music"), Imagism ("wherein the feelings of painting and sculpture are predominant"), and logopoeia ("a dance of the intelligence among words and ideas and modification of ideas and characters")(SP:394). The third category, which remains the least well-defined of the three and encompasses among other things the use of irony, ambiguity and intertextuality, seems to have been introduced mainly to accommodate Eliot's poetry, and includes further Laforgue, Marianne Moore, and Propertius (*ibid.*; ABC:37ff)<sup>(8)</sup>. The term 'phanopoeia' replaces 'Imagism' in this

division a few years later (Ruthven 1969:11). In 'How To Read' and ABC of Reading the typology is finally standardized. Phanopoeia then implies "throw[ing] a visual image on to the reader's imagination" (ABC:37) and is further distinguished by its "utter precision of word" (LE:26). These two characteristics also provide the motivation for Pound's mistrust of melopoeia: this type tends "to lull, or to distract the reader from the exact sense of the language", and as a poetry "on the borders of music" it comes close to building a bridge "between consciousness and the unthinking sentient or even insentient universe" (LE:26).

These remarks have interesting and far-reaching implications: it is precisely in further analyzing the characteristics of Imagist principles and of the Image itself, and in expounding the distinctions between phanopoeia and melopoeia that Pound hits upon the point where Imagism and Symbolism stand perhaps most clearly in opposition to each other.

As far as his relation to Symbolism is concerned, Pound admits in his letter to Taupin to a lack of familiarity with the writings of the Symbolists themselves; the idea of the Image, he argues, may owe something to the Symbolists, but only in a very indirect and indeterminate way, and he has never read the Symbolists' own theories of the symbol (Lett.:216-218)<sup>(9)</sup>. The issues at stake in the rupture between Imagism and Symbolism are indicated in the contrast Pound establishes in December 1912 between Yeats and Ford: whereas Yeats is "subjective" and "believes in the glamour of associations which hang near words" (i.e. in connotation), Ford is "objective" in that he opts for "an exact rendering of things" and prefers "a precise meaning" instead of vague association; the Imagists, Pound concludes, side with Ford, since "their watchword is Precision" (in Stock 1974: 159). A similar argument is put forward in the 'Vorticism' essay:

Imagisme is not symbolism. The symbolists dealt in "association", that is, in a sort of allusion, almost of allegory. They degraded the symbol to the status of a word. ( ) The symbolist's symbols have a fixed value, like numbers in arithmetic, like 1, 2, and 7. The imagiste's images have a variable significance, like the signs a, b, and x in algebra.

Moreover, one does not want to be called a symbolist, because symbolism has usually been associated with mushy technique. (GE:84-85)

(The apparent contradiction between the assumed 'fixed value' of the Symbolist symbol and what he calls their 'mushy technique' does not



appear to have bothered Pound unduly.)

Hulme's opposition to Symbolism, it will be remembered, springs from his postulate of a radical and unbridgeable discontinuity between the various spheres of existence, which implies that poetry should restrict itself to the 'de facto' world. Images in poetry should in his view heighten one's awareness of the physical world, and are not to be used to intimate some metaphysical reality. Thus he criticises Yeats for believing that poetry can conjure up race-memory, the supernatural and such like, and this he dismisses as "an attempt to bring in an infinity again"(Hulme 1955:98). Pound on the other hand remains indifferent to these speculative aspects of the question. In 'The Wisdom of Poetry' (1912) he states that the poet is "consistently agnostic" and "grinds an axe for no dogma"(SP:331); as Dante catches particular pictorial effects of a scene, so later artists are

...on the alert for colour perceptions of a subtler sort, neither affirming them to be 'astral' or 'spiritual' nor denying the formulae of theosophy. (*ibid.*)

In the essay on Cavalcanti he also shows himself wary of a term like 'metaphysic' because it is associated with "unsupportable conjecture and devastated terms of abstraction"(LE:151).

As far as poetic technique and the notion of the Image itself are concerned, then, Pound, as was mentioned, recognizes some Symbolist impact, via Hulme and via Yeats and Symons (*Lett.*:218). Hulme's ideas on images and their juxtaposition were derived from Bergson, but as S. Coffman also observes, Hulme parts company with Bergson precisely at the point where the latter expounds the full potential of the intuitive faculty, i.e. at the point "where Bergson most strikingly paralleled the philosophy of Symbolism"(Coffman 1951: 81-82). Hulme's debt to Bergson, in other words, is limited to practical points concerning the writing of verse, and the same goes a priori for Pound. Similarly, where Flint describes Symbolism in 1912 as "an attempt to evoke the subconscious element of life, to set vibrating the infinity within us"(in Pondrom 1974:86), two years later he too registers his dissatisfaction with the "dreamy emptiness" of the Symbolists (*ibid.*:250). This 'dreamy emptiness' however is the core of the Mallarméan poetic, and obviously incompatible with Pound's preoccupation with the 'specific gravity of things'.

It may also be noted that where Pound expresses his respect for Gautier and the prose Realists on account of their concreteness,

hardness, and directness of style, these are precisely the writers Mallarmé singles out for criticism (cf. above, chapter 1, note 5), and on exactly those grounds for which Pound admires them. In the Huret interview and in 'Crise de vers' Mallarmé advocates indirectness of reference, allusion, suggestion, and the cultivation of 'mystery' and 'enigma', strategies which operate in the context of Transposition and Structure and thus of the transcendental orientation of his poetic. The resulting de-substantialization of the signified however runs counter to the "bodily vision" which Pound pursues as early as 1908 (Lett.:5). Pound also drops the use of archaisms in his poetry after about 1912 in favour of a simple and direct expression and in order to "bring Poetry back into some tune with the real life of the day", as Ford (1966:149) put it. When Mallarmé comments on the use of ordinary words in poems, it is only to point out their total and unrecognizable transformation and defamiliarization by means of the various devices of poetic structuration (cf. Mondor 1941:488). Where Mallarmé favours techniques of estrangement, the dilution of referentiality and the creation of polysemic connotative levels, and an 'autarchic' symbolism, Pound argues that if a symbol is to be used at all, its symbolic value should never obtrude (since "a hawk is a hawk" LE:9), and that "to use a symbol with an ascribed or intended meaning is, usually, to produce very bad art" (GB:86).

Pound's poetic, like Hulme's, thus strives towards a conscious restriction of the scope of poetry to signifieds with a precise denotative value. When he does voice some grudging respect for the Symbolists, it is by virtue of their anti-didactic and anti-rhetorical stance and their concern for form (which, for Pound, opposes them to the Impressionists) (GB:90). Similarly, where Arthur Symons finds poetry a 'sacred ritual' (cf. above), Pound repeatedly tries to show that its workings are "scientifically demonstrable" and owe nothing to "occult and inexplicable ways" (SP:332). Pound's quarrel with Symbolism, then, although it is based on imperfect or indirect knowledge, focuses on questions of technique and stylistics, but amounts in fact to a rejection of the metaphysical/transcendental dimension which for Mallarmé justifies and motivates the attempts to dissolve denotation in favour of connotation and polysemy and to make of the poem a paradoxically transparent and self-effacing intimation of the Idea. It is, clearly, along these

lines that Imagism asserts itself as an "anti-Symbolist, anti-Impressionist platform"(N. Zach, in Bradbury & McFarlane 1976:325) and as a "radical alternative" to the poetic theory and practice of the previous generation (Davie 1975:43)<sup>(10)</sup>.

4.

The transition from Imagism to Vorticism appears to mean in the first place a broadening of the scope of Pound's poetic theory, even if that broadening of the scope has momentous implications in some respects. The transition hinges on Pound's growing interest in the plastic arts and his discovery of Fenollosa's essay on Chinese. Both are mentioned together in a letter of December 1913, where he speaks of "all old Fenollosa's treasures in mss" and immediately afterwards of "the coming sculptor, Gaudier-Brzeska"(Lett.:27); the third name which needs to be added is that of Wyndham Lewis. Pound's first essay on the plastic arts appeared in February 1914 ('The New Sculpture'). The new interest also leads to the adoption of a 'Continental' perspective in this respect too, as his horizon now encompasses Kandinsky, Picasso and Marinetti as well.

The result of all this, it appears, is two-fold. On the one hand Imagism is absorbed by Vorticism (the key essay 'Vorticism' was originally intended simply as an essay on Imagism, as Pound himself points out in a letter of August 1914; cf. Harmer 1975:178). It is thus firmly placed in a European context - not however in the context of Cubist or Expressionist poetry. The reason for this is a matter of historical circumstance. As a group the Vorticists aligned themselves with the Continental revolution in the plastic arts only, and Pound seems to have made no determined effort to trace parallel developments in the form of Cubist or Expressionist poetry. It should be remembered that in this respect the material available in 1914 was still very limited, particularly in regard to France; as for Germany, Pound did not have a direct channel at his disposal to keep his information up to date. Moreover, the term Vorticism was used as a generic designation for principles applicable to all the arts, and although he repeatedly emphasizes in the course of 1914 the interrelations between the arts (cf. Lett.:41-42,47;GB:84), Pound clearly saw Cubism and Expressionism as schools of painting first and foremost (as did the other

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Vorticists, being painters and sculptors themselves), and the adaptation of pictorial procedures to poetry or vice versa was anathema to him: "Obviously, you cannot have 'cubist' poetry or 'imagist' painting"(GB:81).

On the other hand the properties of the Image will also be redefined in terms of an aesthetic which revolves around notions of dynamism, creativity, and intensity. In the not always very pragmatic language of the Vorticists, the Image is no longer seen as a "stationary" concept but should include the "moving image" (ABC:52), it is no longer a 'complex' in the sense of the original definition, but a highly energized 'node' or 'cluster', "a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing"(GB:91). Regarding the relation between Image and poem the simple 'contraposition of objects' is replaced by an approach - also indebted no doubt to ideas derived from Fenollosa - which emphasizes more complex interrelations and the interaction of forms and planes. The individual image thus comes to be seen as a "pattern-unit", a "single jet" in the wider pattern which is the poem (SP:344), and this view brings along the notion of the long Imagist poem as being "gathered about one image"(GB:94) or as having "Unity of Image" (Translations:237).

Pound's involvement with Gaudier-Brzeska and Wyndham Lewis appears to have been most intense in the years 1914-15; their writings on Vorticist principles of art often show a remarkable similarity in conception and terminology (cf. Wees 1972:154). Given Pound's extensive posthumous tribute to Gaudier (Gaudier-Brzeska. A Memoir, 1916), it may be useful to look briefly at the main lines in Gaudier's observations on art.

Gaudier's starting-points are not unfamiliar. On at least two occasions he professes an interest in Bergson, whose anti-rationalist stance he admires and shares (cf. Ede 1972:28,98). His letters and manifestoes further evince a knowledge of Wilhelm Worringer's writings (which he may have read even before Hulme did; cf. Weaver 1965:662). Aspects of Worringer's ideas thus reached Pound indirectly via Gaudier, Hulme and also Lewis (cf. Wagner 1954:1), and the presence of the German critic makes itself clearly felt in the pages of Blast. Gaudier's most obvious borrowing lies in the idea of there being two mutually exclusive artistic styles, which

he terms the 'primitive' and the 'classical'. Like Hulme, Gaudier voices strongly partisan views in this respect: he condemns the conventional "blind adoration of the Greeks and the Romans"(in Ede 1972:46) and the mimetic forms of classical art (referring to Phidias, Praxiteles, the Venus of Milo), finding them "without hardness, without angles" and "very polished, very sweet"(ibid.: 50-51). The mimetic principle of classical sculpture also means, in Gaudier's opinion, that this art is basically derivative and has only a 'secondary' feeling for form; the Greek "petrified his own semblance"(GB:21). And like Hulme and Worringer, Gaudier argues that the mimetic impulse of classical art is inextricably tied up with a rationalist outlook on the world (GB:36-37).

Two complementary moments may be distinguished in Gaudier's artistic development, the first one associated with a principle of formal distortion, the second with growing non-representational abstraction. Gaudier repeatedly underlines his sympathy for "primitive", "instinctive", "barbaric" art, and aligns the modern artist with this tendency (ibid.), though he is careful not to deny the role of intellect and sound craftsmanship (ibid.:105; Ede 1972:99). Since art does not aim at mimetic reproduction, the subject is of relatively little importance: in May 1911 (i.e. before Apollinaire makes similar statements in regard to Cubism) he notes that "Conceptions, subjects, are but the frames of pictures - secondary things on which one should not count"; what matters on the contrary is "the external surface, and this is the design"(Ede 1972:39). Yet art can achieve a 'true' (as opposed to a 'servile' or mimetic) copy of nature, but then 'exaggeration' (i.e. formal distortion) is inevitable; and so Gaudier speaks of "that necessary exaggeration of the facts which helps to secure greater truth"; and "to make reliefs tell you must exaggerate the form"(ibid.:57,53).

In contrast to the Cubists however, Gaudier's 'distortion' is not so much analytical as expressive, and here he appears to take sides with Fauvism and Expressionism, aiming ultimately at the type of expressive distortion which also informs Heym's technique of demonic metaphorization. This 'instinctual' and 'emotive' aesthetic conception (GB:37), with its emphasis on intensity and hardness, also explains Gaudier's interest in the artists of 'Die Brücke' and 'Der Sturm' rather than those of 'Der blaue Reiter'; like Lewis (who

equally admired the 'Brücke' group; cf. Weisstein 1973:172), Gaudier professes a dislike for what he calls Kandinsky's "twaddle 'of the spiritual in art'" and his "formless, vague assertions"(GB:33; cf. Lewis 1915:40,43).

In many cases Gaudier's 'expressive distortion' leads to the imposition of geometrical shapes, an aspect to which he refers as the "mathematical side of sculpture" or "drawing by system"(Ede 1972:55,34). This implies drastic formal schematization and the reduction of the model to its principal features - not in order to obtain a Cubist-style de-composition of the model, but so as to preserve the work's intensity by deleting all 'secondary' features (*ibid.*:56-57), a process which Lewis describes as "the weeding out of sentiment and the retention of what is hard, clean and plastic" (in Weisstein 1973:173). Concomitant with this practice, then, is the appreciation of form and design for their own sake (or, as Pound reports Epstein's words: "form, not the form of anything"; GB:98), what Gaudier calls the 'material' quality of a sculpture, irrespective of its representational value:

Take a cube - it is beautiful because it has light and shade - now here is a collection of cubes which delights me - I can inscribe the body of a woman. It is not beautiful because it's a woman of such and such a type, but because it catches the light in certain ways. () [The sculptor's] first wish is to make a beautiful statue, from a material point of view. () The statue has nothing to say - it should only have planes in the right place - no more. (Letter, June 1911; in Ede 1972:55)

And it is this view (as well as a statement by Kandinsky himself, cf. Selz 1957:129) which Pound echoes in his 'Vorticism' essay, even though he refers to Whistler's statement that a picture is interesting "not because it is Trotty Veg but because it is an arrangement in colour": in each case the (sculptural or pictorial) formal arrangement as such is seen as the determining factor, and, Pound observes, "the moment you have admitted that, you let in () cubism and Kandinsky, and the lot of us"(GB:85).

With the adoption of this position, the representational character of the work of art becomes largely irrelevant (as Pound of course immediately recognizes;*ibid.*:86), and Gaudier indeed arrives eventually at fully abstract, Brancusi-like sculptures (cf. Ede 1972:147). On the basis of this autonomy of form in itself, and of the view that "art is the interpretation of emotion" (*ibid.*:99), Gaudier can finally summarize his Vorticist aesthetic

around the twin claims that

Sculptural feeling is the appreciation of masses in relation.  
Sculptural ability is the defining of these masses by planes. (GB:20)

On the whole, the Vorticists are fully aware of the European context in which their movement takes its course. While vehemently rejecting Futurism, the group aligns itself loosely with Cubism and Expressionism ("Vorticism is not Futurism, most emphatically NOT. We like Cubism and some Expressionism, but the schools are not our school"; Lett.:57). In Pound's case, it appears, Vorticism reinforces the emphasis on form and dynamic formal interrelations (nearly fifty years later he recalled that "vorticism from my angle was a renewal of the sense of construction" and "an attempt to revive the sense of form"; Dick 1972:98). The poem, that is, will come to be seen as a construct establishing objective relations between 'planes' of meaning, and built upon the complex interaction of superposed scenes and images. Here however Pound's Vorticist approach virtually coincides in practice with the ideogrammatic principle derived from Fenollosa: Gaudier's sculptural masses in relation and the complexly constructed message of the ideogram both allow an application to verse writing in which the poem employs a principle of 'montage' in Eisenstein's sense - a totality made up of elements standing in a dialectical relationship to each other and thus incorporating formal and semantic contrast as well as similarity on several levels at once (cf. 'The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram', 1929; in Eisenstein 1951:28-44).

If stone masses are the primary element of the sculptor, the image is for Pound "the poet's primary pigment" (GB:86). Pound however is at odds with his fellow Vorticists in his view of Kandinsky: whereas Gaudier and Lewis dislike the intuitive appeal in Kandinsky's theories and object to the lack of formal hardness and angularity in his work, Pound, to whom already the Imagist technique appeared as the objective transference of emotion, obviously recognizes the possibility of translating Kandinsky's "language of form and colour" to the domain of poetry and the arrangement of images (GB:86). Perhaps the most important consequence of this new perspective is that the combined impact of Kandinsky, Gaudier and Fenollosa permits Pound fully to separate the image from the Hulmean concept of analogy, treating it instead as a "pattern-unit"; the focus, in other words, shifts from depiction



and 'bilateral' contraposition to construction as 'montage' (in the above sense).

The role in all this of Pound's interpretation of Fenollosa's essay on Chinese can hardly be overestimated. In the preface (dated 1918) to his edition of the essay, Pound refers to it as containing "the fundamentals of all aesthetics", claiming in addition (no doubt with reference to Vorticism) that "later movements in art have corroborated his theories"(Fen.:3). Pound's acceptance of Fenollosa's views appears to have been instant and total (in the summer of 1914 he already explains Imagism in terms of the ideogram; cf. Coffman 1951:157), and in later comments also he repeatedly stresses their crucial importance (Lett.:101,214; Sullivan 1970:195).

Fenollosa's main theses are sufficiently well known and need not be restated in full. Their closeness to Pound's own views on particular points is remarkable all the same. Fenollosa describes the Chinese written character as offering "vivid shorthand pictures of actions and processes in nature", and this pictorial quality guarantees their "closeness to things"(Fen.:21,13). Chinese, for Fenollosa, is metaphorical in its very notation, and "Metaphor, the revealer of nature, is the very substance of poetry"(ibid.:22-23). Poetry, in general, distinguishes itself in "the concrete colors of its diction"(ibid.:21), and thus Chinese forms a naturally poetic medium. Pound's further conclusion that the Chinese poets in turn "attained the known maximum of *phanouoia*, due perhaps to the nature of their written ideograph"(LE:27) is only the logical continuation of this argument on Poundian territory. Throughout his essay, Fenollosa places great emphasis on the dynamic aspects of language: the ideographic roots of Chinese express "a verbal idea of action" (Fen.:9), nouns are to be regarded as "the terminal points, or rather the meeting points, of actions, cross-sections cut through actions"(ibid.:10). This would seem to bring him within the Vorticist orbit, but where Fenollosa's discussion of parts of speech is at its most questionable in drawing the inference that writers should avoid the use of copulae and employ only active, transitive verbs, Pound quietly leaves the orientalist's exhortations for what they are.

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The main interest of Fenollosa's essay lies, clearly, in the applicability of the principles of ideogrammatic writing to the writing of poetry (the fact that Fenollosa's idea of the ideogram

is now generally believed to be erroneous is, clearly, irrelevant here). The structure of the ideogram shows, namely, how complex statements may be built up on the basis of the combination of a number of particular and 'concrete' images and simple statements, whereby the complex statement (the poem) loses nothing of the directness of the Image. Eisenstein's description of the ideogrammatic principle is instructive in this respect. The ideogram, as he explains it, consists of 'hieroglyphic' elements which each correspond to a particular object; these elements combine, or are resolved, into the ideogram proper, the 'concept'. The ideogram is thus 'depictive' in method and 'denotative' in purpose. The haiku, he also argues, is based on the same type of structural 'resolution' or 'fusion' (implying not just 'linkage' but also 'collision' and 'conflict') of two 'depictables' into something that is graphically undepictable (cf. Eisenstein 1951:29-32). Pound's Imagist poems, it will be seen, employ precisely this principle.

## 5.

Pound's properly Imagist poems are, not surprisingly, concise and visual. Their basic structure may be illustrated by means of a brief comparison between one of Herbert Giles' translations from the Chinese, and Pound's reworking of Giles' text. Giles' version dates from 1898:

The sound of rustling silk is stilled,  
 With dust the marble courtyard filled;  
 No footfalls echo on the floor,  
 Fallen leaves in heaps block up the door...  
 For she, my pride, my lovely one, is lost,  
 And I am left, in hopeless anguish tossed.  
 (quoted in Witemeyer 1969:142)

Pound's 'Liu Ch'e' first appeared in February 1914, but was written before he had access to Fenollosa's papers (Ruthven 1969:26,168):

The rustling of the silk is discontinued,  
 Dust drifts over the court-yard,  
 There is no sound of foot-fall, and the leaves  
 Scurry into heaps and lie still,  
 And she the rejoicer of the heart is beneath them:

A wet leaf that clings to the threshold.  
 (CSP:118)

Within the framework imposed by the data of the original version, the poem has clearly undergone two kinds of changes; one is a matter

of rephrasing, the other of restructuring <sup>(11)</sup>. Giles' rhymed iambic couplets, ending in two pentameters, have been replaced by a free verse arrangement and a more incisive punctuation. The textual changes all point to greater economy and the deletion of clichés and inversions. Thus in line 1 "The sound of rustling silk" becomes "The rustling of the silk", avoiding the pleonastic use of "sound" in relation to "rustling". "Marble" disappears from line 2 as irrelevant to the central theme, and so does the phrase "blocking up the door" in line 4, for the same reason. The conventional inversions in line 2 and 6 in Giles' text are both deleted as well. In Pound's version, lines 2 and 3-4 introduce active verbs, both used metaphorically; since they both present, in their active metaphorical sense, autonomous and impersonal actions, they also prepare the way for the suppression of subjective expression in the emotional statements in the final lines. In line 5 Pound's text not only avoids Giles' cliché repetition ("my pride, my lovely one"), but also creates a certain objectivity by deleting the implied 'I' by rendering the reference to the beloved as "she the rejoicer of the heart", thus tempering the melodramatic subjectivity of the phrase without diminishing its emotional impact. This is even more true of the final line, where an objective and detached image replaces Giles' lament. Again the 'I' is dropped, and the emotional force of the image is concentrated in the metaphorical use of the verb ("clings") (the same verb is used in a similar sense in the poem 'Ts'ai Chi'h', which appeared simultaneously with 'Liu Ch'e').

This final line is the only element in Pound's text without direct equivalent in Giles' version, and it radically alters the structure of the whole poem. The image in fact counterbalances the body of the poem, and in that sense its isolation - conceptually as well as syntactically and typographically - is significant. The formal and semantic discontinuity between image and poem is apparent from the fact that the "wet leaf" is clearly not to be read on the same level as the descriptive first part of the text (if dust is drifting over the court-yard, the "wet" leaf is anomalous); moreover, in spite of the colon at the end of line 5, the leaf is not used metaphorically for the (dead, presumably) beloved, as in that case the image would make no sense. The image in fact marks not just a change in perspective (a single, narrow focus), but also implies,

for the reasons just mentioned, a sudden conceptual change in the poem as a 'speech act', in the way, that is, the text addresses the reader: the image 'signifies' on a quite different level than the first part of the poem. It essentially sums up the emotional implications of the desolate scene in the five previous lines by providing an objective metaphor for the implied persona and his grief (the image stands, basically, for the persona's psychological state). In this way the whole poem is built towards the final image which, in its concentrated, visually direct and yet conceptually detached form, offers the clue to the implied significance of the scene outlined in the first five lines.

The same type of structure also appears in 'Gentildonna' (first published in November 1915), which is however syntactically somewhat more sophisticated:

She passed and left no quiver in the veins, who now  
 Moving among the trees, and clinging  
   in the air she severed,  
 Fanning the grass she walked on then, endures:  
 Grey olive leaves beneath a rain-cold sky.

(CSP: 101)

Again the poem is built syntactically towards the final image, and the contrast between the image and the rest of the poem is even more pronounced than in the previous case. The sentence construction emphasizes this contrast. The first four lines contain eight verbal forms and show a relatively complicated syntactic structure (two main verb phrases plus a relative clause incorporating three embedded clauses). The image in the final line, a noun phrase plus complement, and without verbal forms, is static, impersonal, and carefully defined. Although it remains (as in the previous poem) within the same spheres of perception as the scene in the first part, it denotes a quite different angle and focus of perception.

In the first part (lines 1-4) a contrast is established by means of past and present tenses; the final verb, "endures", is suspended as long as possible by the embedded clauses, and when it finally comes it contradicts the verbs of the main clause, a contrast which is reinforced by the adverbs "now" and "then" (mentioned however in inverse order in the poem: the temporal sequence is from 'then' to 'now'). The difficulty in accounting for the poem clearly lies in the fact that, despite the colon of line 4, the image seems to bear no immediately apparent relation to the semantic field of the first

part. The syntactic structure suddenly shifts from a curiously contrapuntal sentence with balanced oppositions, to a single sharply defined image. Within the contrapuntal sentence the focus is a receding one and a paradox is established between the lady's immediate physical presence and her presence 'in absentia', which is however a more enduring presence. But the image again, and unexpectedly, shifts the focus, and moves suddenly out of the field of vision of the first part. Having lured the reader into a finely balanced paradox, the poet intervenes to disrupt the syntactical and conceptual pattern and the tendency on the reader's part to naturalization, with a phrase of a totally different structure and impact, and which refers neither to the lady in question nor to the beholder. Yet in spite of this paradigmatic leap the image does seem to sum up the first four lines in a metaphorical and visual unity. If "rain-cold" is read as 'cold after rainfall', the image could be interpreted as re-enacting the transition from "She passed and left no quiver..." to "endures": the event, and the 'purged' impression which remains, a purer presence; in that case the image of the olive leaves after rainfall echoes, on a different level, from a different point of view, and with a different (impersonal) focus, the movement of the first part. Alternative readings are no doubt possible, but whatever reading is adopted, there is no escape from the necessity to come to terms with the discontinuity between the image and the preceding scene. The complex significance of the image obviously depends on this discontinuity, which is not just semantic (as in Apollinaire or in Heym's 'Reihungsstil') but, on the level of the poem as a speech act, ontological.

The image thus provides a counterweight to the body of the poem: it contains parallels (synecdochic elements: trees, air, grass, leaves, sky) as well as obvious antitheses. In spite of being direct in its visual particularity, its impact on the poem as a whole is indirect, due to the gap separating it formally and conceptually from the 'situational' first part. At the same time it is precisely through this 'gap' that the image is able suddenly to open up an entirely new perspective not warranted by the preceding scene: it is the unexpected new focus provided by the image which obliges the reader to a reconsideration of the first part, to determine what relation the two bear to each other and how the introduction of this new perspective affects the poem as a whole. The image, in other words, opens the poem up at the same time as it forces it back upon

itself. But in so doing it also informs the reader of the poet's power to intervene, to set up and relate discontinuous structures - not in order to convey a simultaneous diversity, but so as to provide an objective metaphor for a complex psychological experience.

Pound's most celebrated Imagist poem, the two-line 'In a Station of the Metro' (first published in April 1913) differs from the previous two pieces in that the parallel between the 'situational' part of the poem and the image is more striking and direct:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;  
Petals on a wet, black bough.  
(CSP:119) (12)

The two previous poems, with their juxtaposition of a vivid image alongside a syntagmatically developed passage, already showed a structure borrowed from the haiku tradition (cf. Miner, in Sullivan 1970:236). In the case of the Metro Station poem this structure is even more evident, as Pound indeed observes himself (Lett.:17;GB:88-89). He also points out in this respect that in poems of this type the image is not used as an 'ornament', but "is itself the speech" (GB:88); it thus contains an element of 'exploration' or 'advance', and provides an "interpretative metaphor" (ibid.;Fen.:23). Yet, as Pound equally explains in his comment, the poem also functions as an 'equation' (GB:87) - which may be taken in a double sense: the two lines form an equation in their juxtaposition of perception and image (and here the use of the colon in the original version is more explicit in indicating the overlapping between the two levels), but the poem may also be seen as enacting an equation for a particular experience. If this second reading is adopted, the significance of the visual parallel between the two lines recedes before the central significance of the word "apparition". In that case, and in line with the reading of the two previous poems, the image serves as an objective metaphor for the experience denoted by the term 'apparition', which means that again a conceptual rather than a merely semantic discontinuity is posited between image and statement in the poem, in the sense that the image of the petals on the bough is viewed not in relation to the faces in the crowd but on a conceptually different level, as a metaphor (as an objective correlative) commenting on the particular quality of the experience of the sudden apperception of these faces. However, the other possible reading, which considers the poem primarily in terms of an ideogrammatic 'contraposition

of objects', suggests itself equally strongly, given the foregrounding of parallelism in the poem's formal structure. This reading in fact has some interesting further implications as well.

The formal structure of the poem looks exceedingly simple: a collocation of two noun phrases with their complements. This gives the poem a distinctly static character; in so far as any movement is indicated at all, it is 'frozen' in a substantival form: "apparition" (implying, as was suggested, sudden appearance as well as sudden apperception). Strictly speaking the two lines are very nearly equivalent: only the title and the deictic references in line 1 (the definite articles and the demonstrative pronoun) indicate which of the two is the 'tenor' (the perception) and which the 'vehicle' (the image)<sup>(13)</sup>. Between the poem's two terms a number of similarities and oppositions can easily be detected. The main similarity is of a structural nature: the petals are to the bough as the faces are to the crowd. In this sense the image appears as a particularization of the "little splotches of colour" which, Pound says, originally suggested themselves as a parallel to the experience of the apparition of the faces (GB:87). The image in line 2 is thus one 'actualization' of such a parallel, though by no means the only possible one, as W. Iser rightly points out (in Iser 1966:370-371,496). At the same time the image contains elements of contrast with the statement of line 1 in referring to a quite different semantic field: the contrast is that between animate and inanimate, between city and natural setting.

Considering the over-all relation between the two lines, it is clear that line 2 acts in fact as a feedback to line 1: it focuses attention of the visual aspect of the scene, i.e. of the colour contrast between light and dark, between delicacy and roughness. Although the further overtones of this contrast are left implicit, it is the second line which tells the reader what to look for in the first line. The unexpected suddenness and vividness of the superposed image also closely parallels the experience of the sudden "apparition" itself which lies at the basis of the poem. In all these ways, then, the image leads both away from and back to the original statement. It refines the first experience, pinpoints its visual character and brings it into precise focus, while at the same time (in the association of "petals" with "faces") suggesting an experience of



freshness and delicacy. This additional information, however, is conveyed by means of the superposition of a precise, visual image upon the objective statement of the perception, not by further elaboration on the emotional (subjective) significance of the motif. The de-personalized form of the superposition deliberately suppresses the expression of this pathos, i.e. leaves it entirely implicit, and reduces it to the collocation of two distinct impressions and their interaction (14).

As in the previous poems, the association of image and statement also creates between lines 1 and 2 a 'blank space' (in W. Iser's sense of "Leerstelle"; cf. Warning 1975:235ff), a semantic gap which has to be bridged, and here, it appears, lies the sense of the "sudden liberation" and of the "freedom from time limits and space limits" (LE:4) which the image is supposed to bring about. The significance of this central gap lies not only in the fact that it invites the search for a common structural denominator between the two juxtaposed members, but also in the recognition of the contrived, artificial nature of the poem. The selection of one image out of a number of possible alternatives also means that the image is meant to open up a potential 'plurality of perspectives' (Iser, in Iser 1966:371), only one of which is realized in the poem. That is to say, the principle underlying the poem's structure is not simply the juxtaposition of two momentary impressions, but the modification of one impression by a dialectical counterpart, standing paradigmatically for a host of possible similar modifications and fixations. What is at stake in the poem therefore is not just a matter of finding an objective correlative to convey a particular experience: the poem also shows the poet's sovereign power to off-set an impression by introducing additional perspectives, thus creating and relating 'planes' of perception and meaning.

The technique of superposition enters here the Cubist as well as the Vorticist sphere. On the one hand, although the poem itself is 'bilateral', it suggests a 'multilateral' potential, the possibility of further images highlighting and redefining other aspects of the original experience and thus fragmenting it further by a series of synecdoches. On the other hand, as W. Iser equally points out, the image betrays the presence of the poet's "konstruierende Phantasie ( ), die sich völlig unvermittelt zur gegenständlichen Realität verhält"

(in Iser 1966:371). In this respect the Imagist procedure anticipates the Vorticist emphasis on autonomous construction and the creation of relations between forms. The semantic gap between statement and image only underlines the 'creative' quality of the operation, in the same way as the projection of a subjective experience into two superposed impersonal statements guarantees the autonomy of the final product (autonomous in relation to the poet). Yet here it must be borne in mind that this 'impersonality' remains ambiguous: although the poet refrains from directly expressing the emotional impact of the experience and has in that sense withdrawn from the poem as speaking subject, the poem's aspect (and form) of montage, the dual relationship of overlapping and dissimilarity between statement and image, and the simultaneously compelling and arbitrary nature of the choice of the image, all these factors inform the reader that if the poet's lyrical presence in the poem has been suppressed, he still figures as it were behind the poem, as the creator of a construct which stresses its own character of contrived 'construct' precisely in taking the form of a 'montage', a collocation of two apperceptions (real or imagined) from diverse spheres of meaning.

It will be clear that there is, at this point, reason to approach aspects of Pound's Imagist technique to Apollinaire's Cubist and simultanist procedures. Pound's ideogrammatic method, it would seem, likewise invites comparison with Apollinaire's calligrammatic practice. Before taking up this point, however, a word should be said about some of Pound's properly Vorticist poems.

In Pound's critical writings, Imagism is described as eventually blending into the aesthetic of Vortex and ideogram. As far as the poems are concerned, a clearer division suggests itself between the predominantly bilateral Imagist poems proper, the 'multilateral' ideogrammatic poems (of which 'Mauberley' is the most obvious illustration), and the Vorticist poems. In this third group the direct impact of the plastic arts can be traced. If it is correct to assume that the main line of Pound's poetic development runs from Imagism to 'Mauberley' to the Cantos (as indeed all the evidence suggests), then these Vorticist poems constitute rather a side track, an attempt to produce primarily pictorial effects in poetry.

'Heather' (first published in March 1914) may serve to mark the transition from Imagist to Vorticist poetry (in the restricted sense

just indicated):

The black panther treads at my side,  
And above my fingers  
There float the petal-like flames.

The milk-white girls  
Unbend from the holly-trees,  
And their snow-white leopard  
Watches to follow our trace.

(CSP:119)

In his own comment on the poem, Pound says that it "represents a state of consciousness, or 'implies', or 'implicates' it" (GB:85), and he places it in a series of poems meant to show a development from the use of masks and personae to more complete impersonality, adding that the poem is also in line with the new (Vorticist) art. 'Heather' still relies on bilateral contraposition, but the contrast is exclusively a question of colour: the black and orange of stanza 1, and the white and green of stanza 2. The factual configuration behind these colour contrasts, in so far as it is detectable at all, is largely immaterial, as Pound himself observes: the poem presents a new way of looking, it does not present particular things (ibid.). The poem thus becomes 'non-representational' in the sense indicated by Gaudier and by Pound's reference to Whistler. The most likely explanation would seem to be that the 'I' of stanza 1 is the heather itself, and that the "snow-white leopard" of stanza 2 refers metaphorically to the girls in the distance, but whether this is 'factually' correct or not matters little. Whatever 'state of consciousness' the poem communicates can only be inferred from the interrelation of the colours, their contrast and shading, and the additional qualities of sleekness and gentleness suggested in the various figures and movements (cf. Coffman 1951:205).

'The Game of Chess' (first published in March 1915) is commonly regarded as Pound's "one truly Vorticist poem" (Wees 1972:205; Witemeyer 1969:38):

Red knights, brown bishops, bright queens,  
Striking the board, falling in strong 'L's of colour.  
Reaching and striking in angles,  
    holding lines in one colour.  
This board is alive with light;  
    these pieces are living in form,  
Their moves break and reform the pattern:  
    luminous green from the rooks,  
Clashing with 'X's of queens,  
    looped with the knight-leaps.

'Y' pawns, cleaving, embanking!  
 Whirl! Centripetal! Mate! King down in the vortex,  
 Clash, leaping of bands, straight strips of hard colour,  
 Blocked lights working in. Escapes. Renewal of contest.  
 (CSP:131)<sup>(15)</sup>

The tone here is more in line with the virulence usually associated with the manifestations of Vorticism. Pound later also confirmed that "'The Game of Chess' poem shows the effect of modern abstract art"(in Dick 1972:98). Formally and conceptually too the poem remains close to the Vorticist principles of powerful but contained energy: the verbs mostly denote violent action, but held in suspense by the use of present participles; the rhythmical pace is jolting and abrupt, although the repetitions continually return to the same flowing pattern; the angular shapes of light and movement are at the same time a centrifugal 'whirl' of activity and strife. The game itself is only described, however, in terms of light, colour, and form (and the poem's subtitle is indeed: 'Dogmatic Statement Concerning the Game of Chess: Theme for a Series of Pictures'): the pieces and moves are only relevant to the extent that they give rise to the semi-abstract and changing design of angular shapes and sharp colour contrasts. In his essay on Gaudier Pound observes that the "combat of arrangement or 'harmony' is the common ground of the arts"(GB:121), and it is clearly this visual and compositional concern which informs the poem's pictorial quality. The explosive but regulated commotion described in the poem reflects not only the interrelation between dynamism and stasis in its formal structure (terms denoting action as opposed to static nominal constructions), but also the central Vorticist principle that "energy creates pattern"(SP:344). Although the poem is elaborated in terms of lines and patterns abstracted from their subject-matter (the individual chess pieces, Pound noted in a letter, are treated as "light potentialities";cf. Ruthven 1969:75), it is only by creating fixed forms, by controlling and channelling his creative dynamism (signified metaphorically by the rules of the chess game and by the chess board as such) that the Vorticist is able to safeguard the 'intensity' of his art.

'The Game of Chess' is thus indeed the Vorticist poem par excellence, both in the depiction of its subject, and in its principle of construction. Its appeal, however, is almost exclusively pictorial: it suggests the contrasting patterns of Gaudier's or Lewis' art, not the complex semantic interplay at work in the Imagist poems proper.

In that sense it is on a par with Apollinaire's calligrammatic experiments, in that both imply a unilateral adaptation of pictorial techniques. In Apollinaire's case the result is a hybrid and tautological form, in Pound's case the poem amounts to a descriptive equivalent of a semi-abstract painting. The poem, that is, runs the risk of falling under Pound's own dictum from several years earlier that "any given work of art is bad when its content could have found more explicit and more precise expression through some other medium, which the artist was, perhaps, too slothful to master"(SP:36). It is this risk which the ideogrammatic method avoids by restoring and expanding the semantic richness of the superpository technique.

'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' (1920) marks the end of Pound's London period. No detailed analysis is required here to indicate the main principles underlying the poem's composition. As K.L. Goodwin writes:

Pound's use of the ideogram can be seen very clearly in Hugh Selwyn Mauberley: instead of arguing about the position of the poet in contemporary society, Pound presents a number of short scenes of that society, and of its sources of inspiration in the past; all of these scenes are designed to display materialism and the use of substitutes for culture, and the effects these are likely to have on the poet: this is the idea that is being conveyed ideogramatically, that is, by a number of scenes having one feature in common. The same technique is applied not just at the level of the eighteen separate parts of Mauberley but also at various levels within each of the parts. (Goodwin 1966:111)

In spite of the oversimplifications in this statement (certainly not all the scenes display materialism, and it is by no means always clear exactly what they have in common), the basic insight into the poems's structure is probably correct. Yet 'Mauberley' is obviously not built as a mere concatenation of scenes, but generates a flexibility and a complexity of meaning well beyond juxtaposition or superposition. This is evident among other things in the handling of the two personae (E.P. and Mauberley) and in the exploitation of various forms of logopoeia. In its use of personae, 'Mauberley' in a way refers back to Pound's earlier translations and their role in providing a series of masks (in a letter of 1932 Pound indeed points out that 'Mauberley' is "merely a translation" of the 'Homage to Sextus Propertius'; Lett.:239), as well as, incidentally, to Eliot's 'Prufrock' (ibid.: 180). The method of relating and opposing the individual sections and the two main parts of the poem to each other can hardly be adequately described however in terms of the overlapping and contrasting 'planes' of the Imagist pieces, but is rather in accordance

with Eisenstein's notion of the ideogram as complex 'montage'. Quite apart from the intricate interrelations between the sections, the use of allusion and irony are indicative of the semantic complexity at work in the text. The stanzaic and metrical forms themselves appear highly informative, and range from parody (e.g. in the 'Envoi') to the exemplary reliance on metres and rhyme schemes borrowed from Gautier and Classical Greek, in a gesture of defiance aimed at the "slushiness and swishiness of the post-Swinburnian British line" (Lett.:181) - which also gives Pound's use of traditional verse forms a totally different function from Apollinaire's or Heym's practice in this respect. The multilingual rhymes and puns (as on "tin" in section 3 of part 1, or on "orchid" in section 2 of part 2), the numerous allusions, the synecdochic references to literary, historical or mythological figures and their relation to each other, to the personae E.P. and Mauberley and to the poem as a whole, all these devices suggest that Pound's application of the ideogrammatic method in 'Mauberley' is not just a matter of combining overlapping sequences, but encompasses the entire field of the activation of connoted meanings and intertextuality as well, the presence of an extensive and fragmented past which continually intersects with the present. The interrelations of these planes of meaning with the textual level are no less important than the duplicities created by the ironic voice of the poet as he considers E.P. and Mauberley and their relation to their own time and to the past. Whereas a poem like 'The Game of Chess' offers as its signified a pictorial design, in 'Mauberley' the ideogrammatic technique results in a complex montage on the level of the signifier, an interweaving of multiple levels of meaning and expression alike.

It is not difficult to see, then, that the 'ideographic' methods as they are found in Apollinaire's calligrams and in Pound's ideogrammatic writing have in reality little in common, apart from the fact that both derive their effect from a process of semantic interaction between the various components of the poem, considered as a bilateral or multilateral sign. Apollinaire attempts to bring about an instantaneous perception of the poem as a compound entity consisting of two signifying layers, one linguistic, the other iconic (and relying for its iconicity on the graphic character of language); here each layer fundamentally corroborates the other, wholly or in

part. A degree of semantic complexity is introduced when the linguistic component (the text) allows for several readings, or when the poem consists of a combination of several mutually related calligrams. In Pound's case the ideogram, although it is (erroneously) believed to spring from an iconic principle as well, employs in its simplest (bilateral) form the superposition of two impressions, and thus works by a kind of semantic collision: the final meaning is produced by the confrontation of 'primary' signifieds. In other words, a semantic complexity or a 'concept' (as Eisenstein calls it) is laid out in a number of vivid and concrete units (whereby images are used as 'pattern-units'). In practice, Pound's ideogrammatic writing soon becomes a multilateral compositional principle, allowing directness as well as complexity and condensation, and based on juxtaposition and on formal and semantic discontinuity and interaction.

Apollinaire's calligrammatic experiment, however, originates in his preoccupation with simultanism. The disruption of discursiveness and the resulting disjointed surface structure in his simultanist poems of 1912-13 are much closer to Pound's ideogrammatic principles than the actual calligrammatic venture. The fragmentation of the narrative structure in poems like 'Zone' or 'Le musicien de St-Merry' has a direct parallel in Pound's remark that 'Mauberley', for all its discontinuity, represents a condensation of the Jamesian novel (Lett.: 180; Dick 1972:100), in the same way as the spatio-temporal excursions in Apollinaire's poems find a counterpart in the continual intersection of past and present in 'Mauberley' (as Paz 1974:174 has observed). In both cases also the basic method of 'montage' implies the elimination of the lyrical subject (in Apollinaire's case by means of shifting perspective or in the view of the poet as registering the 'ambient lyricism' of a situation, in Pound's case via the manipulation of masks and the presentational method) and an ensuing emphasis on the poem as an 'artificial' construct, a separate language-world which reorganizes the data of time and place in its own terms, which maps out its own world. In each case the poet ironically retreats behind the network of meanings engendered by the disjointed textual surface of the poem.

Both Pound and Apollinaire, then, essentially explore the possibilities of a poetic language which, in contrast to the language of the Symbolist generation, no longer needs to be at odds with the

surrounding world; it is no coincidence that Apollinaire's simultanism consistently refers to an urban environment, and that Pound first uses the term 'Vortex' with reference to London (cf. Lett.:28). For both also an essential element of the new poetic consists in the conception of the poem as an autonomous and formally discontinuous language-world - whether it is viewed as a Cubist re-arrangement of data, as a Vorticist creation of 'planes in relation', or as the exploitation of an Imagist rupture in the conceptual speech-level of the poem. But Apollinaire's motivation lies in the power of language to grasp a dynamic multiplicity in one enumerative gesture of simultanism and expansive all-inclusiveness, which would associate him with a Futurist outlook were it not for his determination to see innovation as a factor of historical continuity. Pound on the other hand, in line with Imagist and Vorticist principles, focuses on particularity and the 'specific gravity' of individual things rather than on their diversity. His approach to literary history also leads him to an outspoken conservatism. Whereas Apollinaire draws on extra-literary media and on the revolution in technology and communications, Pound's world remains a highly eclectic book-world: his 'Risorgimento' does not seek to continue an existing tradition but, continually harking back, to lay the foundations of an alternative one by drawing on an imaginary museum of paradigms outside the Victorian and Symbolist spheres.



## NOTES

- (1) The following abbreviations will be used in this chapter:
- ABC: Ezra Pound, ABC of Reading. London, Faber & Faber, 1961 (1934).
- CSP: Ezra Pound, Collected Shorter Poems. London, Faber & Faber, 1953.
- GB: Ezra Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska. A Memoir. New York, New Directions, 1970 (1916).
- LE: Ezra Pound, Literary Essays. Ed. by T.S. Eliot. London, Faber & Faber, 1968.
- Lett.: Ezra Pound, Selected Letters 1907-1941. Ed. by D.D. Paige. New York, New Directions, 1971.
- PM: Ezra Pound, Patria Mia and the Treatise on Harmony. London, Peter Owen, 1962 (written in 1913).
- SP: Ezra Pound, Selected Prose 1909-1965. Ed. by W. Cookson. London, Faber & Faber, 1975.
- SR: Ezra Pound, The Spirit of Romance. New York, New Directions, 1953 (1910).
- Translations: Ezra Pound, The Translations of Ezra Pound. Ed. by H. Kenner. London, Faber & Faber, 1970.
- Fen.: Ernest Fenollosa, The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry. Ed. by E. Pound. San Francisco, City Lights, 1969 (1919).

- (2) Some of Ford's views which are relevant to the discussion of Pound's poetic are mentioned later in the chapter. As for the Pound-Hulme relationship, cf. chapter 2, note 9. As N. Stock (1974:133-243) shows, by 1912 Pound had absorbed some of Hulme's notions concerning the function of art and poetry, as may also be gauged from a passage in 'The Wisdom of Poetry' (1912):

...the function of an art is to strengthen the perceptive faculties and free them from encumbrance, such encumbrances, for instance, as set moods, set ideas, conventions (). () With Rembrandt we are brought to consider the exact nature of things seen, to consider the individual face, not the conventional or type face which we may have learned to expect on canvas. ()

Thought is perhaps important to the race, and language, the medium of thought's preservation, is constantly wearing out. It has been the function of poets to new-mint the speech, to supply vigorous terms for prose. (SP:330-331).

- (3) There is very little to warrant the assumption, however, that the similarity between Pound's and Hulme's views of literary history also follow from similar premises - which did not prevent Hulme from regarding Pound's findings as corroborating his own theses. This, it seems, is the significance of the anecdote which Pound relates in his essay on Cavalcanti:

When the late T.E. Hulme was trying to be a philosopher in that milieu, and fussing about Sorel and Bergson (), I spoke to him one day of the difference between Guido's precise interpretive metaphor, and the Petrarchan fustian and ornament, pointing out that Guido thought in accurate terms; that the phrases correspond to definite sensations undergone ().

Hulme took some time over it in silence, and then finally said; 'That is very interesting'; and after a pause: 'That is more interesting than anything I ever read in a book.'  
(LE:162)

- (4) Max Jacob, finding himself in a literary-historical situation similar to Pound's, and with an even more pronounced predilection for satire, puts forward similar suggestions in his letters. Thus, in 1924: "Si je pouvais vous donner un conseil, je vous dirais: Imiter quelqu'un, c'est la meilleure manière de ne pas imiter tout le monde"(Jacob 1955:320). In January 1917 he also refers to the example of the "composition rigoureuse" of the short Japanese poem (meaning, presumably, haiku and tanka) and the Spanish 'jota' (Jacob 1953:120).
- In several other respects too Jacob's emphases resemble Pound's and Hulme's. In line with what these two see as the scourge of generalization, Jacob urges: "Concrétisez! Pensez à ce mot. L'abstrait est mauvais et ennuyeux. Ayez un style concret où il soit question de choses, d'objets, de gens." (in Guiney 1966:36); "Ecrire en mots concrets. Un point c'est tout!!!"(Jacob 1955:328). Pound's and Hulme's insistence on objectivity also has a counterpart in Jacob's view that poetry is 'objectivation'(in Emié 1954:177; Jacob 1955:320). Pound's awareness of the past and his 'universal standards' finally find a parallel in Jacob's remark, in the above-mentioned letter of January 1917, that in the preface to Le Cornet à dés (1916) he wanted to draw attention to "la composition traditionnelle: je suis un réactionnaire. Les révolutions ne se font que par le rappel du passé."(Jacob 1953:120). See the chapter on Jacob, below.
- (5) This last point is fairly obviously related to Pound's study of foreign literatures and their metric systems. D.S. Carne-Ross (in Sullivan 1970:347-349) also refers in this connection to another source, the Notes sur la technique poétique (1910) by Duhamel and Vildrac, of which Pound knew. The first experiments of this kind appear in Rinostes (as Carne-Ross notes). In later years these experiments with new rhythms and metrical forms not based on the traditional metres of English poetry are associated with the concept of melopoeia and with Classical Greek verse (since "the maximum of melopoeia is reached in Greek";ABC:42).
- (6) There is a curious additional point to be made about this use of 'mathematical' parallels. Hulme refers to algebraic notation to illustrate the properties of a 'counter language' which works with abstract and general concepts. Pound makes the same point when he remarks in 'Vorticism' that algebra is like the language of philosophy: "It MAKES NO PICTURE"(GB:91). F.S. Flint however also reports on Tancredi de Visan's notion of the Symbolist symbol, which "is a sign used in place of a reality, as in algebra", with this difference that the symbol contains an additional dimension: it connotes "the forces, vague to us, behind [reality]", i.e. the infinite (cf. Pondrom 1974:87-88). Pound obviously knew of this view, as de Visan's book was reviewed by Hulme as well as Flint. His criticism of it focuses on the fact that in his opinion the Symbolist symbol has a "fixed value", as in arithmetic or in allegory (GB:84), in other words that it is a form of discourse in which the

connoted signified (for de Visan: infinity, the transcendental) predominates over the denotative quality of the word; this is anathema to Pound, since symbols should be used in such a way "that their symbolic function does not obtrude" (LE:9). Thus, whereas the Symbolist symbol brings about a duality between the particular and the transcendental, (with predominance of the latter over the former), Pound's idea of the symbol, and of the Image in fact, develops, through the parallel with the formulae of geometry, a duality between particularity and universality, preserving at the same time the notion of 'scientific' objectivity.

- (7) If the psychologist Bernard Hart is behind Pound's use of the term 'complex' in the definition of the Image, he may well be behind the distinction between the 'subjective' and the 'objective' Image too. For Hart, as quoted in Witemeyer 1969:33, a 'complex' (which is "a system of connected ideas, with a strong emotional tone, and a tendency to produce actions of a definite character") becomes active "in the presence of a 'stimulus', occurring whenever one or more of the ideas belonging to a complex is roused to activity, either by some external event, or by a process of association occurring within the mind itself."
- (8) The terms 'melopoeia' and 'logopoeia' may have been borrowed from Gautier, and were also used by Kahn (cf. Harmer 1975:125). K.K. Ruthven also points out that Pound's three categories resemble those used by Coleridge ('poetry of language', 'poetry of the ear', 'poetry of the eye') (Ruthven 1969:11).
- (9) In his introduction to Pound's Literary Essays Eliot also points out that Pound virtually ignores Mallarme and is not interested in Baudelaire (LE:xiv). Apart from Laforgue and Corbiere, who stand outside the mainstream of Symbolism, the only Symbolist poet whose name occurs with relative frequency in Pound's essays and letters is Rimbaud, but in his case Pound appears to be interested only in purely technical aspects, aspects of presentation and of phanopoeia (LE:33); in his letter to Taupin he writes, in his idiosyncratic French: "Et c'est certain que apart certains procedes d'expression - R. et moi n'avons point de rassamblance" (Lett.:217). Arthur Symons' description of Rimbaud's language is revealing in this respect, and undoubtedly drew Pound's attention:

He is a dreamer in whom dream is swift, hard in outline, coming suddenly and going suddenly, a real thing, but seen only in passing. ( ) He could render physical sensation, of the subtlest kind, without making any compromise with language, forcing language to speak straight, taming it as one would tame a dangerous animal. (Symons 1958:39,40)

- (10) A minor remark is due here. The technique of juxtaposition of several images, or of the accumulation of images, is associated by both Flint and Hulme with Symbolism (they both refer to Tancrede de Visan and Bergson; cf. Pondrom 1974:59-60 and 86-88). Pound however speaks in this case of Impressionism. His attitude in this respect contains a certain ambivalence: as a Vorticist he criticizes Impressionism for its 'superficiality', its 'passivity' and 'lack of intensity' (GB:89-90), but at the

same time he acknowledges its virtues of 'presentation' (*ibid.*: 85; *SP*:345).

- (11) Although the emphasis is here primarily on the structure of the poem and the function of the image, the significance, from a literary-historical point of view, of Pound's weeding-out operation should not be overlooked, since it implies a repudiation of the entire stock of conventional stylistic registers (cf. section 1 above), introducing instead an apparently more prosaic diction which dispenses with the traditional poetic apparatus of inversion, rhyme, metre, etc. In this respect L. Doležel's summary of an argument put forward in 1936 by the Czech structuralist B. Havránek is illuminating:

Starke Poetisierung der Dichtersprache, die zum Beispiel durch die Ausnützung von 'Poetismen' erreicht wird, ist eine Aktualisation vom Standpunkt des Mitteilungsstandards; vom Standpunkt der Entwicklung der Dichtersprache selbst kann sie aber Automatisierung bedeuten - Poetismen können als 'automatisierte traditionelle Zeichen der Dichtersprache' wahrgenommen werden. Dagegen kann die Prosaierung der Dichtersprache, welche durch ihre Annäherung an die Mitteilungssprache realisiert wird, in einer gewissen historischen Lage (eben im Widerspruch zur stark poetisierten Dichtersprache) eine aktualisierende Bedeutung haben  
(in Ihwe 1971, vol.1:46)

It is this type of de-automization ('Aktualisierung') which is clearly Pound's foremost aim in rephrasing Giles' version so as to bring it in line with Imagist principles.

- (12) In a letter of 30 March 1913 Pound points out: "In the 'Metro' hokku, I was careful, I think, to indicate spaces between the rhythmic units, and I want them observed" (*Lett.*:17). In the first two printings (April and August 1913), the lines were indeed spaced out as follows (cf. Ruthven 1969:152):

The apparition        of these faces        in the crowd        :  
Petals        on a wet, black        bough        .

In later printings however this form has not been preserved. The colon at the end of line 1 also appears to have been replaced by a semi-colon in later editions.

- (13) Some other Imagist poems, and many haikus, in fact allow two readings in this sense. Thus C.K. Stead takes H.D.'s 'Oread' as referring to an experience "in which the persona behind the poem lies in a forest while wind moves the pines overhead" (Stead 1969:103). P.N. Furbank on the other hand sees the poem as basically about the sea, described metaphorically in terms of pine-trees (Furbank 1970:42-43).
- (14) Pound, as is well known, also relates how 'In a Station of the Metro' is the third version of a poem which consisted originally of thirty lines, then of fifteen, and finally of two (*GB*:89). These versions have not been preserved, but Wai-Lim Yip (1969: 58-59) refers to and quotes an earlier poem with a similar motif: 'Picadilly' dates from 1909:

Beautiful, tragical faces,  
 Ye that were whole, and are so sunken;  
 And, O ye vile, ye that might have been loved,  
 That are so sodden and drunken,  
                   Who hath forgotten you?

O wistful, fragile faces, few out of many!

The gross, the coarse, the brazen,  
 God knows I cannot pity them, perhaps, as I should do,  
 But, oh, ye delicate, wistful faces  
                   Who hath forgotten you?

The difference with the later poem is obvious enough: the whole poem is a commentary on "the vicissitude of time"(Wai-Lim Yip) and how its manifestations strike the poet. The pathos, in other words, is elaborated upon, in explicit and overtly subjective terms. In so doing, the poem moves away from its particular subject, and into sentiment and moralism.

- (15) The poem may have its origin in a fifteenth century Latin poem by the Italian poet Marcus Hieronymus Vida. Pound quotes the opening of this poem ('On the Play of Chess') in The Spirit of Romance:

Let us make game in effigy of war,  
 Feigning of truth and strife.  
 Sham battle lines of wood...  
 Let us between two kings, the black and white,  
 For praise and prizes opposite strive with twi-colored arms.  
   (SR:236)

The war imagery and the colour contrasts both recur in Pound's poem, but intensified in true Vorticist fashion.

## CHAPTER 6

Max Jacob: style, situation.

This chapter consists of three sections. Section 1 attempts to reconstruct Jacob's poetic theory on the basis of the preface to the Cornet à Dés (1917) and a number of assorted remarks and statements in letters and collections of aphorisms. In section 2 a relatively large number of poems from the Cornet will be discussed, in an endeavour to abstract the main principles of construction underlying Jacob's poetic practice. The third section offers further general observations on Jacob's literary Cubism and some comment on the relation between Jacob's writing and that of some contemporaries and predecessors.

## 1.

One of Jacob's earliest theoretical statements on poetry and poetic technique is contained in a letter dated September 1907 (Corresp.I:30-31)<sup>(1)</sup>. This date itself is remarkable: Picasso conceived his 'Demoiselles d'Avignon', the first Cubist painting, towards the end of 1906 (leaving it unfinished in the course of 1907); Reverdy, who came to Paris only in 1910, had not yet written anything; Apollinaire, after several difficult years during which he published very little poetry, gradually began to develop a new poetic form about 1907-1908 onwards (cf. above, chapter 4, section 2). Yet Jacob's letter of 1907 already sets out some of the basic ideas in his literary theory, which is subsequently developed in the two major theoretical texts, the preface to the Cornet (dated September 1916) and his Art poétique of 1922.

For Jacob at this stage, the two central notions around which the poetic process - as well as the artistic process in general - revolves, are 'création' and 'émotion esthétique':

Un artiste doit considérer deux objets: la création ou reunion de forces constituant un noyau nouveau dans l'univers, et l'émotion esthétique qui doit résulter de la création. (Corresp.I:30)

These two notions, the use of particular means and their particular artistic effect, appear again, fully elaborated, in the preface to the Cornet, as the crucial pair 'style' and 'situation'. The term 'création'

refers to the construction of a work of art which is neither a simple 'reflection' or 'expression' of the author's individual sensibility, nor completely separated from it:

Pour moi, une oeuvre doit être étrangère à son auteur. Je n'entends pas par le mot 'étrangère' un synonyme du mot 'extériorisée', cela va sans se dire, ni un synonyme du mot 'impersonnelle'; une oeuvre étrangère à son auteur est une oeuvre qui n'étant pas son reflet ne fait pas double emploi avec lui, si j'ose dire, en tant que noyau de force, mais qui ajoute réellement au patrimoine cosmique. (ibid.:30-31)

The emphasis, here and in subsequent statements, is definitely on the work of art as a novel object in its own right. The work (the poem) is not to be regarded as a vehicle for the communication of the poet's innermost feelings, but as a construct which is only ontologically reducible to the poet and which, as a "noyau de force", possesses its own centre of activity, its own dynamism and life. Later in fact Jacob also describes the prose-poem as "un objet construit" (Cornet: 23), or in terms of a living organism (Corresp.II:219). Aesthetic emotion, on the other hand, is seen in function of the provocation of 'doubt' and 'shock': it is the result of a number of tensions and clashes, of various kinds of discrepancies both internal and external to the poem:

...le plaisir est dans le mouvement, il faut balloter le spectateur: l'émotion esthétique, c'est le doute. Le doute s'obtiendra par l'accouplement de ce qui est incompatible (et ceci sans amener l'étonnement stable), par l'accord des langages différents, par la complexité des caractères: montrer l'homme dans le héros, la vertu dans le vice, comme dans Racine et Molière. En poésie, l'intérêt naîtra du doute entre la réalité et l'imagination, la perturbation dans les siècles et les habitudes positives. La musique et la peinture n'ont pas d'autres lois. Le doute voilà l'art! (ibid.:31)

The internal tensions of the poem, it appears, spring from the paradoxical and incongruous use of language: the conjunction of logical incompatibilities, the mixture of diverse registers, and a general thematic mobility. The result - the aesthetic emotion - is the creation of uncertainty in the reader's mind as to the coherence and ultimate meaning of the text, and precisely in this uncertainty lies its fascination. These characteristics, which may show some superficial resemblance to Baudelaire's and Apollinaire's notion of 'surprise', are in fact more directly reminiscent of Rimbaud and Jarry. In spite of Jacob's later denigration of Rimbaud as a practitioner of the prose-poem, he seems in this period at least to

have welcomed the stylistic and semantic disparities in Rimbaud (cf. Kamber 1971:xvi). Jacob's contacts with Jarry, which are also biographically substantiated, focus on the incessant exploitation of irony, ambiguity and paradox. This point, however, will be elaborated in section 3 below.

The reference to the "complexité des caractères" is not developed in the later theory of the prose-poem, which is basically non-discursive, thus precluding any significant character development. In this respect the later shift towards an emphasis on concision, on rules and rigour as guiding principles is indicative of the increasing formalism of Jacob's theorizing about art and poetry. Though he already rejects the distinction between a 'traditional' and a 'modernist' aesthetic in a letter of 1906 (quoted in Palacio 1973: 179)<sup>(2)</sup>, the references to 'rigour' and 'classicism' become more frequent and more insistent in later years. In a letter of February 1916, to Tristan Tzara, Jacob urges Tzara "qu'il faut revenir aux constructions rigoureuses et à l'ordre"(Corresp.I:115), and this view will determine his sceptical attitude towards Dada (an attitude which, in contrast with Apollinaire's, is based on aesthetic rather than political arguments). In the same year, he points out in the preface to the Cornet that it is only "la théorie classique que je rappelle modestement"(Cornet:20). A few months later, in a letter of January 1917, he mentions his own poems - the manuscript of the Cornet - as illustrations of the application of "la composition rigoureuse des poèmes japonais et des jotas espagnols"<sup>(3)</sup>, adding somewhat provocatively that they exemplify a return to "la composition traditionnelle: je suis un réactionnaire"(Corresp.I:120). And again in a letter of 1923 he states that "toutes les grandes oeuvres sont composées, balancées, créées"(Corresp.II:219).

The tensions which surround the poem, then, are related to its objective existence as a work of art. The relations between poem and reality, like those between poem and poet, are characterized by a sense of distance, a certain alienation. The conventional laws of reality are flouted in the work of art and replaced by those of fantasy and the imagination. It is the continual uncertainty as to how these new laws work and to what extent they comply with or deviate from conventionally accepted laws, which lends the work of art its relative autonomy, its 'otherness'. At the same time this uncertainty



also creates the desired 'doubt' and 'shock': artistic emotion, for Jacob, is a function of the poem's otherness, as a result of which the work remains both elusive and attractive and thus retains the reader's interest.

Apart from the aphorisms that make up his Art poétique (1922), the preface to the Cornet à Dés constitutes Jacob's most extensive statement on poetry, and on prose-poetry in particular. The whole theory revolves around the two central concepts of 'style' and 'situation'; the relation between them seems to be, roughly, that 'situation' is the impact of 'style', or, more precisely, the artistic effect of the perception of 'style'.

Jacob begins his discussion of the notion of style by contradicting Buffon's dictum that "le style, c'est l'homme même" (Cornet:19)<sup>(4)</sup>. Instead, he puts forward a fundamental distinction between the artist's subjective and his artistic personality, followed by a correlative distinction between language and style. An author's language thus refers to the direct and un-artistic expression of an individual personality, the uninhibited effusion of subjective sensibility; in other words, "ce qui est l'homme même, c'est son langage, sa sensibilité", and 'language' reflects "l'humanité dans l'expression" (Cornet:19). Style, on the other hand, is the consciously artistic use of language, implying a subordination of subjective sensibility to the demands of 'artisticity'. Style thus becomes "la volonté de s'extérioriser par des moyens choisis" (ibid.), and is focused primarily on the selection and application of particular artistic means, on "la mise en oeuvre des matériaux" and "la composition de l'ensemble" (Cornet:21).

Style appears to bear mainly on the writing, the creation of the work of art, and is considered in the first place from the point of view of the author, for whom it is primarily a disposition and an activity. As a disposition, it implies the author's 'will to form' ("la volonté"); as an activity, it denotes the actual shaping, the formal constitution of the work, and since the prose-poem in particular is not bound by conventional rules of versification, this "constitution formelle" (Cornet:21) is of crucial importance.

As far as the work itself is concerned, 'style' also refers to its internal harmony, in the sense that the formal consistency of a work guarantees its artistic quality. This induces Jacob to draw a

peculiarly formalistic conclusion: style is ultimately no more than the skilful selection and arrangement of artistic means, and 'art' consists in these means being purposefully and consistently organized. Hence 'style' equals 'art', and vice-versa:

La volonté ne peut s'exercer que sur le choix des moyens, car l'oeuvre d'art n'est qu'un ensemble de moyens, et nous arrivons pour l'art à la définition que je donnais du style: l'art est la volonté de s'extérioriser par des moyens choisis: les deux définitions coïncident et l'art n'est que le style. (Cornet:21)

The 'formal consonance' (Collier 1956:534) of the artistic product, as the major symptom of style, is also instrumental in establishing the self-sufficiency of the work, in that it creates "la sensation du fermé" (Cornet:22). In the case of the Cornet the poems become largely self-sufficient with regard to the outside world, in the same way as the subordination of sensibility to artisticity makes them self-sufficient with regard to the poet. In practice this formal closure appears to imply a considerable degree of verbal interaction within the poem itself, and this irrespective of any direct correspondence between the structure of the poem and the poet's conception of the structure of reality. The poem's extreme self-reflexiveness, in other words, is concurrent with its self-sufficiency. The writing as well as the subsequent existence of the poem as "objet construit" (Cornet:23) is to be seen, according to Jacob, in terms of harmony, solidity, purity, and so its status as a separate entity is a function of its internal organization, its formal compactness. Hence the conclusion that "une oeuvre d'art vaut par elle-même et non par les confrontations qu'on en peut faire avec la réalité" (Cornet:23): the poem is to be evaluated exclusively in terms of its own formal and structural properties.

In this respect a certain shift in emphasis seems to have taken place between 1907 and 1916. In the above-mentioned letter of 1907 Jacob suggests the exploitation of stylistic and semantic disparities to create uncertainty concerning the relation between reality and imagination in the poem. In the preface to the Cornet these discontinuities are not rejected - and in the poems themselves they will indeed be fully exploited - but the focus of attention appears to have shifted towards an insistence on over-all structuration and compositional rigour. It is also in this context that Jacob speaks of the prose-poem as "un objet construit et non la devanture d'un

bijoutier"(Cornet:23) or as "un ensemble orchestré"(Esthétique:31).

As was indicated above, the subordination of the poet's sensibility to the demands of artisticity is an aspect of the relative autonomy of the poem, in that it puts the emphasis squarely on the predominance of objective artistic composition as such. This objectivity manifests itself on various levels. Jacob in fact requires the poet to select and arrange his material teleologically rather than impulsively, i.e. not in terms of 'expression' but in view of the aesthetic effect the poem as a whole is to produce. This is essentially the distinction between "art arlequin" and "art pierrot":

Par Art Arlequin j'entendais la connaissance des effets  
à produire et leur moyens, par Art Pierrot l'humble con- (5)  
fession des états d'âme. (quoted in Palacio 1973:187)

The artist who opts for "l'art arlequin" has to be 'cold-blooded', he has to be able to resist the lyrical impulse in favour of a keen awareness of formal design:

Etre froid. Etre de sang-froid. Ce n'est pas la même  
chose. Un lyrique qui est de sang-froid et domine ses  
forces, peut faire une oeuvre équilibrée, mais chaude.  
(Art poétique:15)

At the same time, and even in his definition of style, Jacob also speaks of 'exteriorization', but always with the crucial restriction that distance and objectivity remain necessary. In his Art poétique (:23) he suggests: "Reconstruisons loin de nous ce qui est près de nous", and in a letter of 1924 he seems to come close to the notion of some 'objective correlative' as a vehicle for subjectivity: "Mettre les déchirures de son coeur dans une oeuvre objective, c'est avoir plus de chances d'éternité"(Corresp.II:320). In this sense (as was suggested in the previous chapter, note 4) the artistic personality becomes in fact the projection of a poetic 'persona', the wearing of a continually changing mask. The incessant irony which (as will be seen) pervades Jacob's poetry, and the extreme thematic diversity of his work, result directly from this use of personae which change with every poem, since in each case a different poetic constellation calls for a different treatment, i.e. for a different mask. The poet is a function of the poem, and not vice-versa, and consequently each poem presupposes an adequate persona. Thus the notion of 'depersonalization' appears to have two distinct (though related) meanings in Jacob's theory: first, in the sense that the poem is "une force qui attire et absorbe les forces disponibles du

poète", and so the poet is expected to "sacrifier ses ambitions d'auteur à la constitution formelle du poème en prose"(Cornet:21) - that is, the suspension of sensibility for the sake of artisticity; and secondly, in the sense that the need to objectify, to create a certain distance between the writer and his product, implies the need to establish a different 'centre' for each poem - which means the projection of about as many personae as there are poems<sup>(6)</sup>.

The projection of personae is of course in each case a perfectly conscious decision, and Jacob indeed repeatedly insists on the necessity of full conscious control over the poetic material: "Une oeuvre doit être pensée", he writes in a letter of 1917, and "la pensée donne la matière du style"(Corresp.I:134); and again in 1924: "Penser fort son livre (). Penser fort son paragraphe () et surtout, penser fort ses mots. () Ecrire, c'est penser et surtout rien d'autre" (Corresp.II:328). In his Art poétique(:50) he also emphasizes that the will to form should be "puissante et raisonnée". This insistence, then, leads further to a preoccupation with elliptical forms as an aspect of style, since ellipsis, in his view, enhances both the 'concreteness' and the concision of the work, and thus adds to its individuality. The carefully constructed poem resists the intrusion of all non-functional elements, and thus reductive concision ("Tout ce qui est constatation, description, est antipoétique"; Esthétique: 22) leads to the assertion that "La poésie moderne saute toutes les explications"(Art poétique:17). This allows Jacob to increase the concreteness of his work by presenting only the bare essentials ("Ecrire en mots concrets. Un point c'est tout!!!"; Corresp.II:328), while at the same time the artistic emotion is intensified since the reader is obliged to fill in the gaps for himself. Jacob at one point defines the artistic emotion as "l'effet d'une activité pensante vers une activité pensée"(Cornet:21), which would imply that style is itself an 'activité pensante', but also that the elliptical concision and concreteness of the work - which in practice often takes the form of juxtapositions and curious imaginative leaps - requires a similar effort of conceptualization on the part of the reader who has to provide the missing links.

Artistic emotion, for Jacob, is the major component of 'situation', in roughly the same way as the will to form is the major factor for style. In general, the notion of 'situation' seems to refer to the

awareness of the distinct and individual nature of the work as well as to the conceptual effort needed to penetrate the verbal and imaginative world of the poem. The most crucial aspect of situation however is contained in the idea of distance, alienation, otherness:

Le style ou volonté crée, c'est-à-dire sépare. La situation éloigne, c'est-à-dire excite à l'émotion artistique; on reconnaît qu'une oeuvre a du style à ceci qu'elle donne la sensation du fermé; on reconnaît qu'elle est située au petit choc qu'on en reçoit ou encore à la marge qui l'entoure, à l'atmosphère spéciale où elle se meut. (Cornet:22)

Thus style concerns mainly the production, situation the reception of the work of art. Style, as the deployment of artistic means, is structuration: it establishes the separation of the poem from all that surrounds it. Situation denotes the status of the finished product, the awareness and perception of separation; in a letter of 1917 Jacob also describes 'situation' as follows:

...j'entends par situation de l'oeuvre cette espèce de magie qui sépare une oeuvre (même picturale ou musicale) de l'amateur, cette espèce de transplantation qui fait que l'oeuvre vous met les pieds dans un autre univers. (Corresp.I:132)

The notion of situation, then, appears to be relevant on three levels: it affects the relation between poem and poet ("l'amateur"), between poem and reader, and between the poem and the world outside its textual universe.

The relation between poem and poet was discussed above and can be summarized in the statement that "une oeuvre doit être étrangère à son auteur". The balance between objectivity and exteriorization comes here to the surface again: as a finished product, the poem has no more than an ontological link with the poet; or, as Jacob puts it in a letter of 1939:

...l'homme de lettres est le cordon ombilical qu'il faut couper pour isoler l'oeuvre; or la première qualité est l'isolement de l'oeuvre. Même dans la confiance poétique. Il faut y être et en être loin à la fois. (quoted in Palacio 1973:159).

In fact, when Jacob writes that "La beauté, c'est l'éloignement de l'oeuvre - éloignée de l'artiste, éloignée du public" (quoted in Thau 1972:809), the implication seems to be that the author has no more 'rights' to the finished work (poem) than the spectator (reader), while the statement yet again makes it clear that as far as the relation between poem and reader is concerned, the aesthetic

emotion is a function of 'situation', i.e. of the distance to be overcome in conceptualizing the poem, in grasping its otherness. And the greater this distance, the more intense the artistic satisfaction: "plus l'activité du sujet sera grande, plus l'émotion donnée par l'objet augmentera"(Cornet:22; by "sujet" Jacob here means the reader).

In this context also Jacob speaks of the need to "dérouter l'auditeur" (quoted in Billy 1945:81). The poem appears as a 'distraction' in the serious sense of the word: in the preface to the Cornet(:22) he states that "Baudelaire comprenait le mot 'distraction' dans son sens le plus ordinaire. Surprendre est peu de chose, il faut transplanter". The reader has to be completely 'transplanted' in the sense that the formal opacity of the poem, its elliptical and paradoxical construction, its anti-realist and elusive logic, bring about a profound 'displacement' (S. Bernard (1959:636) speaks of 'dépaysement') in the reader's mind - just as a similar act of displacement in the opposite direction is required initially to penetrate the world of the poem.

This displacement itself also bears on the relation between the poem and reality, since naturally the reader is expected to rely on his conventional understanding of the laws of reality as his criterion in judging the artistic laws of the poem. Indeed Jacob writes:

L'oeuvre doit être éloignée du lecteur, Elle doit être située dans un espace lointain, entourée d'un monde, vivant dans un au-delà tout en reflétant la terre, portée sur une nuée tout en étant claire.

Oui, il faut transplanter. (Esthétique:31)

This "au-delà" will in many cases be tied up with the ambiguous, the illusory, the fantastic. The essential quality, however, of this kind of fantasy is the relativity of its distance from ordinary reality:

La base de la fantaisie est le bon sens. Là où il n'y a pas de raison, il n'y a pas fantaisie, il y a folie et stupidité. La fantaisie est une distance entre elle-même et la grosse vérité; c'est cette distance ressentie par le lecteur qui en fait le prix. Enlève la base et il n'y a plus rien. (Esthétique:37-38)

And so in this sense again the reader's 'displacement' is a correlative of 'situation': the poem is both disturbing and fascinating in that it presupposes and yet violates the ordinarily accepted laws to which reality is believed to conform. On the other

hand, even in those cases where the poem goes beyond the ambiguity and hesitation characteristic of the fantastic, it still retains its credibility on account of its formal completeness and self-sufficiency: as an 'objet construit' in an otherwise contingent world, it builds an organic unity with a life of its own, it is "un insecte qui a des pattes, des ailes, une tête, une couleur à lui et des couleurs en harmonie avec la principale" (Corresp.I:219).

Yet the separation from ordinary reality remains imperative:

Dans le genre 'poème en prose', être vrai c'est être inutile. Une description même admirable ramène ce genre à une page de roman réaliste. Inventez donc, c'est le seul moyen d'être séparé du vrai. Le vrai est un instrument. La vraie vérité artistique est dans la force qu'on donne au faux. (Dialogues:27)

The last sentence in this quotation returns to the basic insight that "une oeuvre d'art vaut par elle-même et non par les confrontations qu'on en peut faire avec la réalité" (Cornet:23) - a position which Jacob takes up again in a letter of 1917: "j'ai horreur du naturalisme, du réalisme et de toute oeuvre qui ne vaut que par la comparaison qu'on peut faire avec le réel." (Corresp.I:133). This would seem to imply, first, that the conventional laws of reality are invariably presupposed, so that the reader can, structurally, gauge the discrepancy<sup>(7)</sup>, and, secondly, that the work must be approached in terms of its own hermetic 'situation'. The actual subject (subject-matter) of the poem is of little or no importance (Art poétique:66), since it is entirely enveloped in the strategies of style and situation: what matters is the way the subject is handled, and indeed the more trivial the subject, the more impressive will be the effect of its being alienated, situated. In this respect also the notion of irony appears again, as an element of situation: "L'ironie qui se laisse ou ne se laisse pas voir donne à l'oeuvre cet éloignement sans lequel il n'y a pas de création" (Art poétique:74). Jacob's irony thus seems to work on two different levels. The 'visible' use of irony manifests itself in the treatment of a particular theme, the second level of discourse which is usually developed through the use of disparate registers of language; and then the more pervasive 'invisible' irony which underlies the artful elusiveness of the text and which leads to the reader's ultimate inability to define the position of the poetic persona, since often two different articulations appear to run through the same text. In both cases, however, the reader experiences the poem as eminently

deceptive - and therefore as hermetic and alienated, i.e. situated.

Jacob's idea (and use) of irony, finally, is also symptomatic of the fundamental ambivalences that are inherent in his notions of style and situation. The poem is seen as separated from its author, who nonetheless has complete conscious control over his material in writing the poem. The poem is removed from the reader, and the further it moves away from him, the more intense his aesthetic emotion will be; at the same time the reader feels both the presence and the absence of the poet in the poem. And the poem is separated from the surrounding world, though it remains, in some indirect and deceptive way, anchored in it. On the whole, clearly, it is the sum and interaction of these ambivalences which together constitute the precondition for Jacob's peculiar irony.

The development, then, which seems to have taken place in the period between the letter of 1907 and the preface to the Cornet is that from the tentative formulation of some basic insights to the elaboration of a coherent aesthetic theory which shows a preoccupation with structuration, formal consistency and the self-centred elusive autonomy of the work of art. Significantly, in Jacob's mature theory, a term like "balloter le spectateur"(1907), which seems to imply a series of 'surprises', has been modified into the more wholesome "transplanter", which appears to have overtones of systematic integration and formal convergence.

Jacob's judgments on his predecessors in the genre of the prose-poem are equally informative in this context, since they reveal his criteria of evaluation. Thus Aloysius Bertrand and Marcel Schwob are both credited with some style and situation, but Bertrand is too romantic and unstable, and Schwob is too much of a precious storyteller (Cornet:23-24). Baudelaire, who went in Bertrand's footsteps, is dismissed as "ce littérateur descriptif", though there is "un effort d'invention" (quoted in Palacio 1973:161)<sup>(8)</sup>. Mallarmé is regarded as "guindé et obscur", but otherwise his work is "le type de l'oeuvre située"(Cornet:22), while in a letter of 1917 Jacob again voices his admiration for Mallarmé because of the "situation divinement géographique de son oeuvre"(Corresp.I:132). Finally, in the later writings Jacob's opinion on Rimbaud is entirely negative: "Rimbaud () c'est le triomphe du désordre romantique"(Cornet:22), and in several letters he is again written off as a practitioner of an



"impressionnisme désordonné" and "le désordre dont j'ai horreur" (Corresp.I:120,134). Jacob's rejection of Rimbaud, which today looks unconvincing and based on a deficient understanding, may well have been inspired by tactical reasons, as Reverdy suggests in his defence of Rimbaud in Nord-Sud (3,1917)<sup>(9)</sup>; on the other hand, given the prevailing view of Rimbaud at the time as the 'voyant' for whom the 'dérèglement de tous les sens' becomes an artistic imperative (cf. e.g. Durry 1964a:68ff. on Apollinaire's opinion of Rimbaud), and given the orientation of Jacob's poetic, his judgment is not at all surprising - in spite of the fact, ironically, that in practice some of Jacob's poems show curious structural affinities with Rimbaud's Illuminations.

## 2.

The extreme diversity of the poems in Le Cornet à Dés raises the question of categorization. The order in which the texts are discussed in the following pages moves gradually from poems based on visual analogies to poems in which the interplay between visualization and verbal association results in more complex textures.

The simplest examples of poems based on a duality between object and image work by comparison, identification or juxtaposition:

Les jambes des palétuviers ressemblent à celles des chevaux arabes en bataillons. (Cornet:241)

Mes vêtements sur la chaise étaient un pantin, un pantin mort. (Cornet:243)

Un buisson d'épines bleu pâle, c'est un clocher dans le clair de lune. (Cornet:58)

Brouillard, étoile d'araignée. (Cornet:61)<sup>(10)</sup>

Whereas the first example is a simple visual simile, with only a slight off-setting effect (in the metaphor "les jambes des palétuviers"), the second and third examples contain metaphorical identifications. In the third example however the object/image identification can be read either way, and it is not at all clear whether the "clocher" is in fact the 'object' with which a visually similar 'image' is associated, or vice-versa; the distribution of alliterative consonants reinforces this poise. The fourth case presents an already fairly complex juxtaposition, not because the object/image relation is ambiguous, but because the pun complicates the picture. The juxtaposition in

fact contains three elements which are in different ways metaphorically related - or better: fused in the pun -, namely 'brouillard/toile d'araignée/étoile', while furthermore the line allows the reading 'Brouillard et toile d'araignée'.

In the following example the object/image relation is again problematic:

La fumée dont les courbes se poursuivent sur la tenture  
de soie bleue frappée de roses en velours grenat, c'est  
le chat qui passe, cette fumée. (Cornet:67)

A first reading would probably select "le chat" as the actual object, but the word "fumée" is highlighted by conspicuous repetition, so that again two readings impose themselves, both visually associated with a third element, namely the moving curls on the tapestry. The descriptive elaboration of "les courbes" in a string of complementary clauses is itself however ambivalent: there is a marked syntactic contrast between the word "courbes" plus its syntactic complement and the phrase "c'est le chat qui passe", which implies the ironic breaking off of a developing stylistic pattern and a contrast illusion/reality (though this reality is then questioned again in the final "cette fumée"), while at the same time the overtones of preciousness in the descriptive clauses allow one to assume a mild literary irony as well.

In 'La mendicante de Naples' a similar ironic disruption of illusion, stylistic pattern and budding empathy is established in a more narrative context:

Quand j'habitais Naples, il y avait à la porte de mon  
palais une mendicante à laquelle je jetais des pièces de  
monnaie avant de monter en voiture. Un jour, surpris de  
n'avoir jamais de remerciements, je regardai la mendicante.  
Or, comme je regardais, je vis que ce que j'avais pris  
pour une mendicante, c'était une caisse de bois peinte en  
vert qui contenait de la terre rouge et quelques bananes  
à demi pourries... (Cornet:144)

In the first part a certain anecdotal illusion is created by the use of the first-person narrative, but this illusion is destroyed in the second part; the purely visual character of the mistaken identity is very much in evidence. The irony, however, lies not so much in the destruction of the visual illusion as in the sudden stylistic and rhythmical shift; this shift brings about a disruption of the reader's expectations, since his empathic reading of the first part reminds him in the second part that no story or anecdote is intended at all, and that he is thus at the mercy of the author's whims (hence also the irony of the use of "je" in the first part: a first-person

narrative invites empathy because of the point of view implied, but here it is manipulated at the reader's expense).

Compared with the previous poem, 'Mystère du ciel' is rather more straightforward:

En revenant du bal, je m'assis à la fenêtre et je contemplai le ciel: il me sembla que les nuages étaient d'immenses têtes de vieillards assis à une table et qu'on leur apportait un oiseau blanc paré de ses plumes. Un grand fleuve traversait le ciel. L'un des vieillards baissait les yeux vers moi, il allait même me parler quand l'enchantement se dissipa, laissant les pures étoiles scintillantes. (Cornet:203)

Here an empathic reading can proceed undisturbed - indeed it is required, since the reader has to follow the imaginative association "nuages/têtes" if he is to fill in the visual counterparts in the ensuing metaphorical scene ("oiseau blanc" = moon?; "grand fleuve" = Milky Way?). And a similar empathy is needed to relate the illusion and its disappearance to the emotional context of the poem as a whole (ball/enchantment; return from the ball/fading of the illusion). It is obviously this association that determines the thematic coherence of the poem.

'Mystère du ciel' has a structural characteristic in common with the previously quoted 'fumée/chat'-poem, in that in both cases the poem at the end returns to its starting-point, be it literally or thematically ('fumée/courbes/chat/fumée', or contemplation/enchantment/contemplation). This pattern, which as it were encloses the poem and formally enhances its unity, also appears in 'Les rongeurs d'arbres'. In this poem however the duality object/image or illusion/reality of the previous poems is transformed into a more paradoxical duality of fiction and reality:

Isolé, ou emprisonné, ou travaillant, Alexandre Dumas père se consolait avec l'odeur d'un vêtement de femme. Trois hommes pareils, même chapeau rond, même petite taille, se rencontrèrent étonnés d'être si pareils et se devinèrent une pareille idée: voler la consolation de l'isolé. (Cornet:53)(11)

The poem obviously differs from previous examples in that the duality is here based on a logical anomaly (fictional characters interfering in their author's life). The puzzlement engendered by this incongruity (cf. "la perturbation dans les siècles et les habitudes positives", in the letter of 1907) is then reinforced by irony and ambiguity: the title itself appears to have a clearly metaphorical bearing on the poem, and this allows the reader to pinpoint the ambiguity of the

final phrase ("voler la consolation de l'isolé"): the word "consolation" refers directly to the "vêtement de femme" which the musketeers set out to steal, but - taking the title into account - it also seems to suggest simply that the musketeers, being the products of Dumas' imagination, oblige their creator to occupy himself with them, instead of the "vêtement", by writing about them. In that sense, and as a result of metaphorical and semantic duplicity, the reader's initial disbelieving perplexity has to shift to a state of inquisitive doubt.

Thematically the poem contains a kind of circular self-centredness, and again the prominence of various repetitions and phonemic patterns appears to be highly functional in that respect. The most obvious of these is the repetition of the pattern "isolé/emprisonné/se consolait" and "voler/consolation/isolé" at the beginning and end of the poem. At the same time other patterns of inner rhymes (such as "isolé/emprisonné/étonnés/voler/l'isolé") and consonant clusters (e.g. the cluster dental or bilabial plosive plus R, which occurs seven times in all) run through the text, counterpointing what at first appears to be a simple logical incongruity. The peculiar effect of the poem is thus the result of the combined impact of at least three levels of articulation (semantic, thematic, phonemic), operating simultaneously and in close interaction. It is this type of structuration that seems to underlie also many of Jacob's more complex texts.

The poem 'Traduit de l'allemand ou du bosniaque' is again based on a visual analogy, but has further implications similar to those in the previous poem:

Mon cheval s'arrête! Arrête aussi le tien, compagnon,  
j'ai peur! entre les pentes de la colline et nous, les  
pentes gazonnées de la colline, c'est une femme, si ce  
n'est pas un grand nuage. Arrête! elle m'appelle! elle  
m'appelle et je vois son sein qui bat! son bras me fait  
signe de la suivre, son bras... si son bras n'est pas  
un nuage.

- Arrête, compagnon, j'ai peur, arrête! entre les arbres  
de la colline, les arbres inclinés de la colline, j'ai  
vu un oeil, si cet oeil n'est pas un nuage. Il me fixe,  
il m'inquiète, arrête! Il suit nos pas sur la route, si cet  
oeil n'est pas un nuage.

- Ecoute, compagnon! fantômes, vies de cette terre ou  
d'une autre, ne parlons pas de ces êtres à la ville  
pour ne pas être traités d'importuns. (Cornet:82)

The general structure is obvious enough: two parallel paragraphs and a conclusion, the whole held together by insistent repetitions of

words ("arrête" occurs six times, "colline" four times, in two different syntagms) and clauses ("si...n'est pas un (grand) nuage" is repeated four times). The visual analogies all go back to the image of "nuage". The various repetitions which underline the associations with "nuage" reinforce the persistence of the visual analogy as well as, thematically, the feeling of increasing fright on the part of the two characters; this atmosphere of fright is most conspicuous in the gradation in the exclamations and in the final inversion of "son bras me fait signe de la suivre" into "il suit nos pas sur la route".

As was the case in the previous poem, the text is shot through with assonances and sound-clusters. The final paragraph is entirely built around assonances and consonant clusters (t/r): "terre/autre/êtres/être/traités", a series that may be extended to include "parlons/importuns", and the variously repeated "arrête" in the first two parts. An equally foregrounded assonant pattern appears at the end of the first paragraph, in "vois/bat/bras" and "sein/signé/suivre", distributed as "je vois son sein qui bat! son bras me fait signe de la suivre, son bras...", and partly echoed in the second paragraph, in "il suit nos pas...".

The poem as a whole, then, again relies on a close interplay of visual analogies, syntagmatic parallels and repetitions, and a network of assonances and phonemic clusters. The initial visual analogy "nuage/femme", though it remains basic throughout, diminishes in structural importance as the poem proceeds: it is only repeated in the form of synecdoches ("sein/bras/oeil"), and, as the pattern of repetitions and echoes becomes more prominent, the visual focus also shifts from identity in appearance to apparition. In that way the shifts in visual emphasis remain concurrent with the formal framework of repetition and variation, so that the general impact is one of an insistent multiplicity of related but changing shapes and forms. This degree of mystery and doubt, finally, is also reflected in the title ('Traduit de l'allemand ou du bosniaque'), which suggests both temporal distance and obscurity (ironically hinting that the poem goes back to some obscure manuscript).

The poem 'Inconvénient des boutures' reveals a similar system of visual duplicities, of repetitions and variations, but in a more explicitly ironic context:

La tête n'était qu'une vieille petite boule dans le grand lit blanc. L'édredon de soie puce orné d'une passementerie correctement assise sur la couture faisait face à la lampe. La mère dans cette vallée blanche était au creux de grandes choses, sa denture enlevée; et le fils, près de la table de nuit avec ses dix-sept ans et les poils que des boutons empêchaient de raser s'étonnait que, de ce vieux grand lit, de cette creuse vallée de lit, de cette petite boule sans dents ait pu sortir une merveilleuse personnalité conquérante et aussi évidemment géniale que la sienne. Toutefois, la vieille petite boule ne voulait pas qu'il quittât la lampe près de la vallée blanche. Il aurait mieux valu qu'il ne la quittât pas, car cette lampe l'a toujours empêché de vivre ailleurs quand il ne vivait plus près d'elle.  
(Cornet:80)

The text shows an obvious predominance of metaphor, combined however with a crude and pervasive irony in which also a number of semantic ambiguities are integrated. The two basic metaphorical patterns refer to the figures of mother and son. The mother's head is variously described as "vieille petite boule/cette petite boule sans dents/la vieille petite boule", and the bed in which she lies as "cette vallée blanche/cette creuse vallée de lit/la vallée blanche"; these two sets themselves also show several correlations and oppositions (e.g. the parallel structures of the metaphorical syntagms, the common element "vieux", the opposition "grand/petit"). The figure of the son, then, is less clear at first, for he appears to be presented first (in the second sentence) in metaphorical terms only, so that some feedback (re-reading) is required in order to realize that "l'édredon de soie puce orné..." refers to the figure of the son. The clues needed for this identification are provided in the course of the text: the "édredon" stands for the adolescent's soft beard (which he cannot shave because of his pimpled face), while his position next to the bedside table with the lamp (which subsequently acquires so much emotional significance for him) is also recalled towards the end of the poem. In other words, the reader is obliged, in hindsight, to make a conceptual effort (the "activité pensante vers une activité pensée" characteristic of 'situation') if he is to reconstruct the metaphor relating to the son, and its place in the poem.

The final sentence appears to be set apart from the body of the text, in the sense that the actual body of the poem consists in the evocation of a scene (the son waking by his mother's sick-bed - or more likely her death-bed), but the final sentence clearly refers to a moment much later in time, and it implies a quite different

point of view (presenting itself as an afterthought, a comment, a moral). Thus a sudden reorientation is also expected on the part of the reader, who has to come to terms with the authorial intrusion by absorbing the temporal gap and the shift in perspective. This shift however is ironically obscured by the repetition - with variations - straddling the last two sentences ("... ne voulait pas qu'il quittât la lampe..." and "il aurait mieux valu qu'il ne la quittât pas, car cette lampe...").

Irony in fact pervades the whole poem, and to a much greater extent than in any of the previous examples. On one level it bears on the crude description of mother and son, and on the antithetical relation between them. The mother is said to be "au creux de grandes choses" (but with "sa denture enlevée"), where she is in fact very ill or dying; and although Jacob describes her as "cette petite boule sans dents", the son reflects on her "personnalité conquérante". The son also wonders how her personality could be so "évidemment géniale que la sienne", thus absurdly overestimating himself, while he is, moreover, sitting "correctement" by his mother's bed (though he does appear to rebel eventually). This antithesis between mother and son also explains the ironic ambiguity of the title ('Inconvénient des boutures'): not only is "boutures" positively cynical with regard to the scene presented in the poem (if read empathically), but "Inconvénient" can be read differently according to whether it is applied to the son's or to the mother's point of view (the son leaves her but is afterwards tormented by remorse, haunted by the image of the lamp; the mother's obviously domineering personality is reproduced in the son, whose pride impels him to turn against her). At the same time the words of the title are echoed throughout the poem, and several patterns can be detected: "Inconvénient" recurs in "correctement" and "conquérante", and "boutures" is echoed in "couture/denture/boutons/boule".

These echoes, together with other repetitions, variations and assonances (e.g. in phrases like "...passementerie correctement assise..." and "...personnalité conquérante et aussi..."), are spread out over the poem - and over its antitheses and ironies, so that they enhance the prominence of the basic metaphors and tend at the same time to obscure the semantic disparities. As a result, the reader is led strongly to suspect irony, without at first being able to

locate the duplicities or disentangle the various levels of structuration.

Whereas the previous poems all rely on fairly explicit visual analogies or metaphorical identifications (with a visual bias), suggestion and enigma play a major role in 'Métempsychose':

Ici ténèbres et silence! les mares de sang ont la forme des nuages. Les sept femmes de Barbe-Bleue ne sont plus dans le placard. D'elles il ne reste que cette cornette en organdi! Mais la-bas! la-bas! sur l'Océan, voilà sept galères, sept galères dont les cordages pendent des huniers dans la mer comme des nattes aux épaules des femmes. Elles approchent! elles approchent! elles sont là! (Cornet:179)

The poem obviously refers to the context of the Bluebeard legend. Its double movement includes regression (disappearance) and approach (reappearance); its two poles are the seven wives and the seven galleys. Only two parallels, though, are established explicitly, namely "mares de sang/nuages" and "cordages/nattes aux épaules des femmes" (though the "épaules des femmes" are not necessarily those of "les sept femmes"). The basic parallel to which the whole poem tends (seven wives/seven galleys) is strongly suggested, but not stated unequivocally, and hence a residue of doubt remains. The identification is suggested not only by the title and by the two comparisons just noted (human/natural elements), but also by the visual analogies and assonances: "cornette en organdi" visually overlaps with the image of "huniers", while also the words "cornette" and "organdi" find assonant counterparts in "cordages", "galères" and "nattes", in the same way as "mares (de sang)" is associated with "mer".

The poem also contains strong overtones of death (the Bluebeard legend; darkness and silence; blood; abandoned ships). In this context the capital letter for "Océan" may impose an additional dimension on the poem, in the sense that - given the legendary context - the Ocean might be seen as the (metaphorical) Ocean of Death, the likely point of view of the poetic voice then being the other side of life (hence "elles approchent"). In general, then, the pattern of visual analogies has here a much more indirect and suggestive impact than in previous examples, and the point of the poem seems to consist precisely in the interplay of statement and suggestion (as opposed to 'visible' irony or blatant paradox), exploiting the legendary context and leaving the reader to draw the inferences.

The poems discussed so far were all based on one basic duality,



in most cases a visual analogy. The following three poems substitute for this duality a multiplicity of appearances and shapes which, at least in the two more complex cases, are buttressed by an intensification of the verbal patterns of repetition, assonance, and the like.

'Kaléidoscope' appears to be a somewhat puzzling exercise in point of view:

Tout avait l'air en mosaïque; les animaux marchaient  
les pattes vers le ciel sauf l'âne dont le ventre blanc  
portait des mots écrits et qui changeaient. La tour  
était une jumelle de théâtre; il y avait des tapisseries  
dorées avec des vaches noires; et la petite princesse  
en robe noire, on ne savait pas si sa robe avait des  
soleils verts ou si on la voyait par des trous de haillons.  
(Cornet:163)

The poem seems to concentrate entirely on a series of paradoxical images, and virtually no other structural elements are in evidence. The syntactic structure amounts to a zero degree of inconspicuousness, leaving the monotony of an enumeration, though combined with a certain speed which makes the images the more paradoxical. On the other hand, the motifs of 'kaleidoscope' and 'mosaic' are elaborated in the colours ("ventre blanc/tapisseries dorées/vaches noires/robe noire/soleils verts") and in the fact that most of the images contain mosaic-like features ("animaux/âne; tapisseries/vaches; robe noire/soleils verts").

A first difficulty consists in locating the (apparently unstable) point of view and identifying the images. In the case of the animals/donkey image, all the animals with their legs up appear to float in the air (painted on a ceiling, possibly) and are seen from underneath; similarly, the dress worn by the little princess would either be a black dress with green spots or a green dress worn underneath a kind of ragged black tunic full of holes<sup>(12)</sup>. The images themselves fall into two groups: the animals and the "jumelle/tapisserie/princesse" group, which may well be linked with a theatre experience (and this would explain the image of the princess in rags). Some visual association between them is indicated, but a consistent integration in one pattern is clearly impossible - the most likely explanation being the reduction to a theatre context, with coloured patterns (ceiling, tapestry) described in metaphorical terms - a not uncommon procedure in the Cornet. Such an interpretation, though, remains speculative, but in so far as the poem is formally focused on the images - the way they relate to each other and the way they correspond

to some visual reality -, the text seems precisely (as in the case of 'Métempsychose') to invite such speculation. Clearly, the poem's irony also lies in this field, in that some clues (decipherable points of view and metaphors) are suggested, though pockets of doubt remain. And this observation then further applies to the changing words on the donkey's belly, which may well refer ironically to the text of the poem itself - the words, like the images, acquiring different meanings according to the point of view.

In 'Omnia vanitas', mobility and speed have been considerably increased:

Ce ne sont pas les roses d'un champ, ce sont les visages de ses admirateurs. La selle de son cheval est une peau de tigre, les Japonaises habillées d'un seul trait de plume, portent des godets bien propres et le soleil est change en arbre, mais voilà que la selle du cheval s'allonge et griffe toutes les roses et le cheval et les Japonaises et tout disparaît, et cette hydre même n'est plus qu'une peau de tigre pour le dénudé cavalier qui n'est plus qu'un vieillard en prières et en sanglots. Le trait de plume des Japonaises s'est fondu dans l'arbre; il ne reste plus que les godets sur la peau de tigre. (Cornet:217)

Visualization is here problematic because the successive images are constantly negated or destroyed. Symptomatic of this process are the 'roses' which are negated in the first sentence, though they later appear to be there anyway. The over-all structure of the poem is easily discernible, with three sentences dividing the text into three parts, and each sentence containing two roughly parallel clauses. The transfigurations and changes all take place in the middle section, whose two antithetical parts hinge on "mais voilà que"; the second half of this section brings the destruction, negation or degradation of the elements mentioned in the first half.

On the whole, little or no additional information is provided to help the analysis - the title only points up the poem's thematic instability. The adjectival and adverbial data are sparse, and the turmoil of the middle section seems to be enhanced by the general use of paratactic constructions (except for just one relative clause) and alliterative consonant patterns (such as "peau/Japonaises/plume/portent/propres", or the S/L pattern in "voilà que la selle de son cheval s'allonge..."), which all facilitate the quick progression of the text.

The continual transformations seem to come about entirely gratuitously - no external instance is indicated which would necessitate or accomplish them; this is also apparent in the use of

verbs like "être" and several impersonal or reflexive verb forms. Yet the poem only contains a limited number of elements (figures, images) which continually assume different shapes, vanish, melt into one another; this characteristic, together with the inactivity/dynamism/inactivity counterpoint, lends the poem much of its puzzling unity.

The starting-point for an approach to the text may be the phrase "trait de plume" (mentioned twice), which seems to point to a context of painting or drawing. In that sense the text may be read as an attempt to render various interpretations of related visual impressions provoked by a particular drawing or design. It soon appears that the recurring visual pattern is consistently linked with "godets" and "peau de tigre" - both mentioned at the beginning and end of the poem -, as the common ground from which the poem springs and to which it returns. The images in "roses d'un champ/visages de ses admirateurs/godets sur la peau de tigre", and even "soleil" and "arbre" perhaps, all share the visual pattern of spots on a uniform background (reminiscent of the 'mosaic' of the previous poem). Highly significant is the fact that the word "godets" appears in "les Japonaises () portent des godets ~~bein~~ propres" and "il ne reste plus que les godets sur la peau de tigre": the term is clearly used with two different - though visually related - meanings, namely as 'mug, cup, drinking-horn' and as referring to the spots or stripes on the tiger skin. This is significant when the poem is considered as a whole: the text reads, namely, as an interpretation, from various points of view, of a basic visual pattern. The interpretations shift with the point of view (i.e. with the way the pattern is looked at, without necessarily implying spatial shifts), and hence the constellation is in a state of continual transformation. The semantic ambivalence of the key-word "godets" is only a function of these shifts in perspective, transposed on another (a linguistic, semantic) level. The other key-word, "peau de tigre", undergoes a similar semantic shift, on a different level, from lifeless skin to living creature.

A reference to Cubist painting becomes here, finally, unavoidable. The poem indeed applies the familiar fragmentation-and-reconstruction technique of Cubism, but with at least two extremely important modifications: one, that the objects are not just decomposed and reduced to their various geometric essentials, but that they appear

as different objects, as composite figures (often in an active, semi-narrative context) which may be dismantled or transfigured the next instant; the other, that Jacob fully exploits the semantic dimension of language, in the sense that, according to the changing context (point of view), one 'signifier' may have various 'signifieds', and the semantic duplicities of language become an integral part of the procedure. These modifications amount to no more than a conscious adaptation of the properties of painting to those of writing, but Jacob's consistent exploitation of them seems to determine the shape and structure of many poems that rely on visual and changing patterns. In hindsight one could read practically all the poems discussed so far as such exercises in shifting point of view, since in each case a different though visually similar semantic construct is juxtaposed with or superimposed upon a basic visual pattern or impression. It is only with the poems involving continual transformations, however, that Jacob's Cubist writing attains a distinct and fully literary complexity<sup>(13)</sup>.

In 'Omnia Vanitas', then, Jacob's adaptation of Cubism seems to find one of its most perfect applications. Two further remarks on this linguistic and pictorial context may be added. One of the key-words in the poem is "hydre", the main instrument of transformation and also itself a transformation (of the saddle/tiger skin); the word in fact appears to contain assonant links with "tigre" (especially in the phrase "cette hydre", in assonance with the - hypothetical - 'ce tigre'), so that here again the shift to a semantically different but visually related image (tiger/hydra) goes together with a phonological shift which retains overtones of the previous word-picture (i.e. one 'signifier' evokes the other, while projecting a different 'signified'). Also, the contrapuntal structure of the text (static/dynamic/static) serves to 'enframe' the poem as well: the only context suggested is that of a drawing, and structurally the poem enacts a circular movement (similar to that in 'Mystère du ciel' or 'Les rongeurs d'arbres') as well as suggesting the actual frame of a painting or drawing.

In fact, the section 'Le coq et la perle' of the Cornet contains an item which reads almost like a programme for this technique:

Quand on fait un tableau, à chaque touche, il change tout entier, il tourne comme un cylindre et c'est presque interminable. Quand il cesse de tourner, c'est qu'il est fini. Mon dernier représentait une tour de Babel en chandelles allumées. (Cornet:56)

The point made here applies to the poems of the Cornet in general (and in one instance Jacob indeed refers to the poem as a "petit tableau"; cf. 'Poème', Cornet:43), in that each new phrase presents a new scene or image, although ultimately the text makes use of only a limited number of basic elements which are continually transformed. It also suggests the principle of contiguity that underlies this technique, in that a continual process of semantic and phonological association appears to determine the progression of the text.

The poem 'Equatoriales solitaires', then, presents a further stage of this technique, and here the elements of verbal play and semantic duplicity are more in evidence:

Quatre doigts de pied nouveaux servent de figures au  
taureau haut qui n'est qu'un homme et qui combat, bas!  
Les fourneaux sont des maisons qui ne paient pas d'impôts  
des portes et fenêtres, naïtre! langues ou trompes en  
sortent. Sur les marches qui marchent car ce sont toutes  
les bêtes errantes de la création, le Bouddha, qui  
ennoblit une feuille bordée d'or, tient une bourse  
avec l'intention d'en faire des colliers pour plus tard.  
Ne vous en effrayez pas! ce n'est qu'une bordure, dure!  
Mais à double entente. Il a tant plu sur tout cela qu'  
une épine a poussé là qui leur passe au travers avec une  
sollicitude insolente ou insolite. Un million de souris  
... de sourires. (Cornet:154)

The text again presents a series of unexpected and apparently gratuitous transformations, negations and identifications ("taureau/homme; fourneaux/maisons; marches/bêtes errantes;" etc.). Yet here the possibility of a reduction to a general visual pattern is not at all evident. The display of verbal acrobatics and associations, though, is very prominent. Most conspicuous in this respect is the series of sound-repetitions, ranging from homophones ("marches/marchent") to assonances and inner rhymes: the clearly marked group "taureau/haut, combat/bas, fenêtre/naître, bordure/dure" in which the inner rhyme contrasts with an obvious semantic disparity (with for the first two items the opposition animal/human and high/low), and then the various other combinations: "impôts/portes/trompes/sortent; bordée d'or/bordure dure; le Bouddha/ennoblit/double; sollicitude/insolente/insolite; souris/sourires". Most of these patterns are in fact embedded in longer strings, held together by assonances and mutations in the distribution of consonants: thus "ne vous en effrayez pas/il a tant plu sur tout cela/qu'une épine a poussé là/qui leur passe..." (with marked rhythmical repetitions), or "les bêtes errantes (), le Bouddha qui ennoblit une feuille bordée

d'or, tient une bourse...", etc.<sup>(14)</sup>. The function of this proliferation of verbal patterns appears to be twofold. It creates an impression of speed, impenetrability and fluidity in the text, so that the transformations are as it were concealed in the momentum of assonance, echo and variation. At the same time, paradoxically, the formal sameness, with its immediately striking impression of coherence, also makes the reader more aware of the semantic incongruities and the over-all thematic instability of the text. This is shown in the fact that many of the assonances straddle the transformations and negations, highlighting the ensuing semantic discrepancy as much as concealing it, or in the simple observation that most of the assonances link words from widely different semantic, grammatical and connotative fields.

Looking at the poem as a whole, one part cannot fail to attract attention. The exclamation "Ne vous en effrayez pas! ce n'est qu'une bordure, dure! Mais à double entente." implies a change of tone and is presumably addressed directly to the reader (thus implying a change in the point of view of the poetic voice). But it also seems to offer two complementary ways to account for the proceedings in the poem. The term "bordure", as in the previous poem, suggests the frame of a painting or drawing, as does the phrase "une feuille bordée d'or" with which it is linked by assonance. The "double entente" then refers to the double quality of the text as poem and painting (the poem as 'tableau'); in other words the text itself invites a double reading, a twofold understanding. This also explains in a way the 'double identities' of some elements in the text (bull/man; ovens/houses on fire?): in Jacob's Cubist writing, a shift in perspective implies a change of identity. The phrase "double entente" itself, however, also points to the presence of word-play, of puns and ambiguities - and it is indeed ambiguous itself. It may first of all refer to "bordure, dure" (read with or without comma), where "dure" has the double meaning of 'hard' (the hard frame of the painting) or 'difficult' (the poem as hard to understand because ambivalent); the same applies to "bordure", which has both meanings of frame or margin surrounding the poem. The whole phrase "Mais à double entente" furthermore may be read as a pun on 'mots à double entente', and indeed one suspects a further pun on 'entendre dur'. In a broader sense, similar ambiguities and duplicities pervade the whole poem. The poem/painting duality finds a correlative in the

contrast between the poem's thematic and semantic instability and the formal elaboration. The title itself allows two readings, according to which word is taken to be the noun or the adjective (cf. Kamber 1971:37-38). The "langues ou trompes" appear to be associated with the various animal images in the text, but may be read metaphorically as flames, in accord with "fourneaux". The final "sourires" is also obviously out of key with the rest of the text, and, given the authorial intrusion in "Ne vous en effrayez pas!" may stand for a final ironic intervention of the poetic persona<sup>(15)</sup>.

The dual and parallel interpretation of the text as poem and painting, then, seems to be able to cope with the over-all structuration of the text. In contrast with 'Omnia vanitas', however the underlying visual pattern on which the poem builds its imaginative world is difficult to establish (the only plausible solution which suggests itself being an identification of the "taureau/homme" with "le Bouddha"), while on the other hand the dimension of formal elaboration, verbal patterns and semantic multiplicity is markedly more in evidence. It would appear, in fact, that in the construction of the text this element - the formal opacity and semantic multiplicity of the level of the 'signifier' - plays a role at least as prominent as the visual impulse. This is a dimension of Jacob's poetry which will be examined in the next group of poems.

In many cases puns and assonances appear to be the primary elements on which the construction of the text is based. Several pieces in the sections 'Le coq et la perle' and 'Exposition coloniale' read like finger exercises in this respect<sup>(16)</sup>. In all but the simplest cases however, the apparent nonsense or innocence of such puns and word-plays conceal more than meets the eye, due to their functional integration in a context susceptible to semantic ambiguity, paradox and multiplicity. This process can be seen at work in 'Autour de la Bible':

Les poissons du torrent de Cédron ayant fait désinfecter le lit du torrent, malgré la défense de l'Eternel, sont morts. La courtisane qui se tient auprès du torrent désaffecté a fait de ce lit le sien, mais elle a mangé du poisson, malgré la défense de l'Eternel et, comme ce poisson était désinfecté, elle est morte. (Cornet:139)

The poem is couched in paradox: the 'disinfection' of the stream causes the death of the fish, but then the 'courtisane' dies anyway, and the inference appears to be that the deaths are in fact not due

to the disinfection of the water but to the violation of God's will - which explains the title of the poem. The paradoxes are encapsulated in fairly complex syntactic parallels, while also several patterns of repetition and assonance are in evidence, in particular the central series "fait désinfecter/défense/désaffecté/a fait", a series which is supported mainly by inner rhymes ("poissons/Cédron, se tient/le sien", etc.) and by the pun on "lit". Yet behind the whole text, another - crucial - pun seems to be active, which is not expressed though strongly hinted at in "poisson" and "désinfecter": the word 'poison' namely suggests itself through phonetic association with "poisson" and through semantic association with "désinfecter" (in the semantic field 'contagion, disease'). The irony of the poem, then, lies not only in the paradoxical situation and the need to rely on the 'biblical' context to account for it (and this of course does not exclude the previously noted paradox between a deceptive formal consonance which simultaneously conceals and reveals the semantic incongruity), but also in the suggestion of a highly significant pun-word which directly bears on the text while remaining unexpressed.

A biblical context is also referred to in 'Le sacrifice d'Abraham', though here humour and irony are more immediately visible and wide-ranging:

En temps de famine en Irlande, un amoureux disait avec ardeur à une veuve: "Une escalope de vô, ma divine! - Non! dit la veuve, je ne voudrais pas abîmer ce corps que vous me faites la grâce d'admirer!" Mais elle fit venir son enfant et lui coupa un beau morceau saignant à l'endroit de l'escalope. Est-ce que l'enfant garda la cicatrice? je ne sais pas; il hurlait bibliquement quand on le coupa dans l'escalope. (Cornet:143)

The absurd logic of the poem revolves around the pun on "vô", which is interpreted as 'veau' and 'vous'; in other words, one signifier carries two different signifieds, and the context is subsequently constructed in terms of this duplicity. This initial 'doubling' is further supported and elaborated by various assonances and a particularly pervasive irony. This irony is implicit in the very absurdity of the scene, and manifests itself directly on the stylistic level, in the clash of registers (e.g. the elevated "... que vous me faites la grâce d'admirer" and the commonplace "un beau morceau saignant"). The assonances (e.g. "pas abîmer/grâce d'admirer; le coupa/l'escalope; sacrifice/cicatrice") integrate themselves in the ironic context, in that their double aspect of formal similarity and semantic difference is inevitably - and functionally - projected



on the duplicity manifested in the irony and the pun. The title of the poem is, clearly, equally ironic, not only in its general relation to the proceedings in the text, but also directly in the impact of "bibliquement", which extends the ironic use of the two registers in the poem (being both descriptive and allusive), while also ridiculing the biblical event itself by associating it with the absurd scene in the poem. (In this respect A. Thau (1973:141-142) also points out the implicit allusion to Swift's Modest Proposal, which adds yet another dimension.)

The pun which constitutes the core of the poem, then, is indicative of the poem's over-all ironic duplicity, of which the pun is only the most visible element. The elaboration of the ironic structures of the poem further determines its 'situation': a literal reading would reduce the text to a pointless grotesque, but the various layers of meaning running through it demand a more complex response, and it soon becomes apparent that the text aims precisely at a proliferation of ironic duplicities.

One final example may be quoted: the poem 'Sir Elizabeth (prononcez soeur)' again relies on a curious duplicity, though this one is more elusive in character:

La cité de Happney est détruite, hélas! Il ne reste plus qu'un mur entre deux tours carrées, deux tours qui ont l'air de fermes ou de citernes. Ce furent des facultés d'enseignement: elles sont vides! il ne reste plus... il ne reste plus qu'une porte d'écurie et des crevasses, hélas! avec des pavés couverts de ronces. Le chef de gare est encore là pourtant, c'est lui qui m'a conté l'histoire de Sir Elizabeth. Sir Elizabeth était du sexe féminin mais elle dut se faire homme de peine. Sir Elizabeth prit part à un concours de poésie. A cette époque, en Amérique, le sexe féminin n'avait pas l'idée d'être poète. Sir Elizabeth fut couronnée et eut droit au double buste de chaque côté d'une porte d'écurie. La porte existe encore; les deux bustes sont abîmés par le temps, hélas! Sir Elizabeth fut troublée par le sculpteur qui avait fait son buste et elle lui révéla son sexe, mais le sculpteur la repoussa, parce qu'elle avait trompé la cité. Alors, Sir Elizabeth s'engagea dans la milice et se fit tuer. (Cornet:124)

The elusiveness of the poem lies in the easily discernible fact that a number of thematic and formal parallels are offered, and hence their functional elaboration would seem to follow naturally; but a consistent reading along these lines soon proves frustrating.

The text falls apart into two sections - the description of the

town and the story of Elizabeth. This story is summed up in the bilingual pun "sir/soeur", homophones containing a semantic contrast. The male/female opposition is carried through in the duality of "sexe féminin" and "homme de peine"<sup>(17)</sup>, and ironically extended in the sexual overtones of the relation between Elizabeth and the sculptor (cf. terms like "fut troublée/révéla son sexe/repoussa/trompé" and their sexual connotations). The ambiguity of the verb in "elle dut se faire homme de peine" also finds a paradoxical echo in the laconic report of Elizabeth's death ("se fit tuer"). In the context of Elizabeth's ambivalent male/female existence, the intriguing detail that the "deux bustes" erected in her honour are now "abîmés" also seems to point to a blurring of physical distinctions. The parallels between Elizabeth and Happney, then, follow mainly from this thematic analogy: the two damaged busts evoke the two towers of equally indefinite shape (they look like farmhouses or cisterns but were in fact educational establishments); the walls of the stables, formerly adorned with busts, are now full of cracks (and here the repetition of "hélas" becomes functional too); and finally Elizabeth's death may or may not be connected with the destruction of the town. On the whole, however, the parallel remains tentative and inconclusive, in that the extent of the overlapping between the two parts of the poem remains in doubt. Clearly, the irony surrounding the poem lies precisely in the fact that again an amount of information is provided sufficient to make the reader perceive various parallels, yet without allowing their conclusive elaboration.

## 3.

Looking at Jacob's Cornet à Des as a whole, a distinction - already implicit in the order in which the poems were discussed - seems to suggest itself between two poles, two principles of construction. In practice the application of these principles leads to poems which establish a certain duplicity (or a number of duplicities) primarily on the basis of visual analogies, and poems constructed primarily around series of various types of verbal association - the most prominent type being assonance. This second group of poems appears to derive its effect from a skilful play on the correlation between signifier and signified, in puns, strings of assonances, and other forms of paronomasia. A certain semantic displacement is here given

from the start, in the very mode of writing, in that several loose or fantastic or paradoxical semantic constructs are embedded in formally very dense constructions. The irony - and hence an additional semantic dimension - lies in the discrepancy thus created between the level of the signifier and that of the signified. A somewhat different kind of displacement results from poems built on the duality of object and image: here a certain imaginative leap is required in the effort to grasp the superposition of elements from widely different semantic fields, with only a particular visual aspect in common. An ironic note is here sometimes introduced when the apparent equivalence of object and image prevents the reader from deciding unequivocally which is which.

A significant parallel may be observed between Jacob's use of puns and visual superposition. In the pun one signifier (one phonetic sequence) inserts itself into two different semantic fields, and subsequently the paradigmatic and syntagmatic 'matrix' of the poem is construed in such a way as to allow the activation of both meanings of the pun-word. The superposition of equivalent images shows an analogous process: an object is 'read' imaginatively, but the impossibility to distinguish between object and image suggests that what matters is not the actual identity of the original object, but the creation of visual duplicity itself, the fact, that is, that two interpretations of one visual impression exist side by side. In both cases a semantic (thematic, metaphorical) compounding and 'doubling' takes place, and two levels of discourse manifest themselves simultaneously.

A similar form of duplicity can in fact be discerned at another level also. A substantial number of Jacob's poems contain a peculiar imbalance, which has repeatedly been pointed out above: on the one hand there is the sparsity of discursive, descriptive, anecdotal elements, the incongruity and the inconclusive parallels, the apparent lack of direction of many texts; on the other hand most poems show an obvious proliferation, exploitation and foregrounding of verbal uniformity and formal coherence. In other words, there appears to be a marked discrepancy between the high degree of grammatical and thematic organization, and the persistent semantic discontinuity and elusiveness. This discrepancy seems to point to a clear order of priorities in the construction of many poems, in that often the

ambivalent formal organization is to be seen as the poem's significant substructure: it is the level of formal organization - of which paronomasia is the major component - which acts as the 'space' where the opacity of the poem comes into being, in the sense that the semantic dimension of the text is shaped around a particular verbal pattern. In other words, it is the formal substructure which outlines the main semantic focus, and the actual elaboration of the poem emerges as a function of the formal contiguity and semantic discontinuity of the substructure.

Nearly always, then, Jacob's extraordinary and peculiar preoccupation with his material aims at the creation of semantic duplicities: the coherence of the verbal pattern is inevitably deceptive on the semantic level, and, conversely, those poems which appear straightforward in thematic or discursive terms, inevitably incorporate paradoxes, inconclusive open endings, or secondary (allusive, ironic) dimensions of meaning. This duplicity becomes fundamentally polyvalent (polysemic) when one considers the role of irony in Jacob's poems. Irony not only appears in or through the text of virtually each poem, where formal elaboration becomes a precondition for the ironic exploitation of semantic discontinuities and discrepancies, but it also envelops and permeates Jacob's whole mode of writing: through the continual exploitation of these discrepancies, the reader is constantly made aware of secondary levels of discourse which run parallel to but never coincide with the various semantic layers of the text. It is also the systematic use of irony which circumscribes the position from where Jacob's poetic voice addresses the reader - though the exact location of that position, based as it is on ironic distance, usually eludes definition.

At this point a remark may be inserted on the relation between Jacob's, Jarry's and Mallarmé's writing.

The notions of distance and polysemy are fundamental to both Mallarmé and Jacob; in each case semantic polyvalence is active in a context of sophisticated formal elaboration; in each case also this technique goes hand in hand with the withdrawal of the poet's lyrical presence from the poem - a concurrence which, as was indicated in section 1 above, is the main reason for Jacob's admiration for the "situation divinement géographique" of Mallarmé's work.

It will be remembered, however, that in Mallarmé's poetic polysemy and depersonalization are a part of a context which tends fundamentally to rarification and negation as poetic principles (as he explains in a letter of May 1867: "...je n'ai créé mon oeuvre que par élimination(). La Destruction fut ma Béatrice."; Mallarmé 1959:246). The ambivalent role of syntax is instructive in this respect: though syntax is the guarantee of intelligibility (cf. 'Quant au Livre'), it does not aim at greater communicability but at a structure in which the denotative value of words is broken down in favour of a proliferation of connotative meanings, of secondary and ever receding signifieds: syntax helps to establish "une relation entre les images exacte," so that "un tiers aspect" will detach itself which is only suggestion and virtuality ('Crise de vers'; Mallarmé 1945:365). In that sense the poetic structure has in a sense an iconic quality: its impenetrability and opacity act as a model, an intimation of the (transcendental, immaterial, negative) Idea which is itself inseparable from 'le Néant'. As J. Kristeva (1974:537) observes:

En absorbant la fuite hasardeuse de la folie, mais sans la subordonner à une unité fixe, moïque ou autre, l'Idée mallarméenne est polymorphe: rythme, danse, pluralité numérique. Pour Mallarmé, le mot semble désigner une infinité différenciée et polymorphe, mais il ne suppose aucune plénitude sémantique, aucune 'conception', aucune intelligibilité donnée une fois pour toutes.

Kristeva aptly characterizes Mallarmé's notion of "l'Idée" as "le mouvement de l'objectivation du sujet à travers sa négativisation" (*ibid.*:536), and depersonalization logically imposes itself in a context of formalized polyvalence.

Jacob however stands at the opposite end of Mallarmé's high seriousness, and would be situated more appropriately in the lineage of Jarry. Many aspects of Jarry's literary theory and practice are issued directly from a Symbolist poetic, but the pursuit of mystification and polyvalence in Jarry's texts strongly suggests a context of parody and irony. This goes from the definition of 'pataphysics as "la science des solutions imaginaires, qui accorde symboliquement aux linéaments les propriétés des objets décrits par leur virtualité" (Jarry 1972:669) to the entire programme outlined in the preface ('Linteau', dated 1894) to *Les minutes de sable mémorial* (Jarry 1972: 171-173). Jarry here describes words as "polyèdres d'idées", sincerity as "anti-esthétique et méprisable", and true simplicity as

condensed and synthesized complexity. Polyvalence is an essential attribute in a programme that relies on a paragrammatic technique of "Suggérer au lieu de dire, faire dans la route des phrases un carrefour de tous les mots". Although Jarry here adds that "le rapport de la phrase verbale à tout sens qu'on y puisse trouver est constant", this certainty is soon undermined by the observation that

Tous les sens qu'y trouvera le lecteur sont prévus, et jamais il ne les trouvera tous; et l'auteur lui en peut indiquer, colin-maillard cérébral, d'inattendus, postérieurs et contradictoires. (Jarry 1972:172)

It is difficult to see in this context the iconic value which the pursuit of polysemy has in Mallarmé's conception because - as the constant use of irony in Jarry's texts suggests - the whole orientation of Jarry's practice appears to go towards the ironic generation of polyvalence for the sake of subversion of the established poetic.

Jacob's approach seems to inscribe itself in this line. In contrast with Mallarmé, Jacob's polyvalence works essentially within the bounds of the poem, in the context of a poetic which strongly leans towards the notion of the poem as 'objet construit'. In that sense Jacob's preoccupation with semantic duplicity and multiplicity works entirely within the context of 'style' and 'situation': the discrepancy between semantic incongruity and formal elaboration draws the attention precisely to the poetic material itself and to the way it produces meaning(s). Hence the self-reflexiveness of Jacob's poetry is also fundamentally different from Mallarmé's. Mallarmé's poetry constitutes a reflection on the relation between words and things and on the process of signification in a context of negation, immateriality and the mutual cancellation of signifieds. With Jacob the poem turns back on itself, i.e. on its material, linguistic aspect, asserting its autonomy as a novel object in its own right. At the same time this self-reflexiveness is again charged with irony: as the poem explores the power of linguistic (paradigmatic) contiguity and the ensuing semantic constructs, the resulting paradoxes continually refer the poem back to its own structuration.

In his Art poétique, Jacob at one point summarizes the aesthetic of the prose-poem as follows:

Le poème en prose, tel que je l'ai conçu dans le Cornet à Dés et tel qu'on l'a imité depuis, diffère des fantaisies d'Aloysius Bertrand en ceci que le sujet n'y a pas d'importance et le pittoresque non plus. On n'y est préoccupé que

du poème lui-même, c'est-à-dire de l'accord des mots, des images et de leur appel mutuel et constant: 1<sup>o</sup> Le ton n'y change pas d'une ligne à l'autre comme chez Bertrand; 2<sup>o</sup> si un mot ou une phrase convient à l'ensemble on ne se préoccupe pas si la phrase ou ce mot sont pittoresques, conviennent ou non à l'historiette du poème. (Art poétique:66)

This is perfectly in line with the ideas expounded in the preface to the Cornet: the subject-matter treated in the poem is of no importance <sup>(18)</sup>, and neither is the adequate depiction of reality. What matters, rather, is the formal totality of the poem: the interaction of words and images, and their consonance with the over-all composition - that is to say, the focus of the poem is its own structuration, and in that respect the 'verbal sub-structure' (cf. above) is the major component. This point is also elaborated in Jacob's Conseils:

Aimer les mots. Aimer un mot. Le répéter, s'en gargariser. Comme un peintre aime une ligne, une forme, une couleur. (TRÈS IMPORTANT.) Autour d'un mot se coagule une phrase, un vers, une strophe, une idée. (Conseils:35)

What appears to be the fantastic quality of many of Jacob's poems is not the result of an imaginative distortion of reality; rather, an altogether different shaping process is at work, in that formally consistent constructions are built on and around the associative properties of words, on the level of the signifier. 'Meaning' and 'reality' are thus secondary: "Sacrifiez le sens! placez-vous au-dessus des réalités, et n'y touchez que du bout du pied," Jacob urges in a letter of 1924 (Dialogues:40). And it is mainly this aspect of Jacob's poetic that places him firmly in a Cubist context.

In fact the correlation between Jacob's writing and Cubist painting can be viewed in at least two ways. One obvious parallel appears in those poems which rely on visual duplicity and shifts in (spatial, temporal) perspective. In that respect the procedure is analogous to the de-construction and dismantling of objects practised mainly in Analytical Cubism: with each shift, the object changes, and the resulting picture is a visually hybrid, highly dynamic compound. In Jacob's poems this leads to the superposition of images around basic visual impressions; adapting this technique to writing, however, Jacob further complicates the issue through the creation of semantic multiplicities and various secondary levels of discourse. In this sense the conclusions reached by W. Judkins's perceptive analyses (Judkins 1948) of a number of Cubist paintings (by Picasso,

Braque and Gris) are singularly applicable to Jacob's technique as well. Judkins summarizes the formal characteristics of Cubism as

A Deliberate Oscillation of Appearances  
 A Studied Multiplicity of Readings  
 A Conscious Compounding of Identities  
An Iridescence of Form (Judkins 1948:276)

And describing the internal organization of the Cubist picture, Judkins speaks of

...its expanding multiplicity of countenances, with subordinate motifs suddenly becoming dominant themes, with familiar continuities unexpectedly shifting to emerge as new forms, with substantial solids opening up into unexplored depths of transparency. (*ibid.*)

The description would seem to apply especially to those of Jacob's poems that involve continual transformations ('Omnia Vanitas', 'Equatoriales solitaires'), where a similar "multiplicity of countenances" leads to an extremely mobile, unstable, and yet perfectly controlled kind of writing.

Ultimately, though, a parallel between Cubist painting and Jacob's poetry on the basis of such general and formal considerations runs the risk of superficiality. A somewhat more detailed look at some of the properties and principles of construction of Synthetic Cubism may yield more conclusive results.

The shift from Analytical to Synthetic Cubism in painting is usually located in the years 1912-1914 (Gray 1953:114-135; Golding 1959:113ff, 122; Richardson & Stangos 1974:62). Its characteristics may be summarized as an emphasis on the picture as an aesthetic object in itself, and on artistic activity as the creation of new objects (Gray 1953:125). The technique of painting becomes that of adding together or combining compositional forms; hence "Painted objects and eventually the whole painting, even, one might say, pictorial reality itself, was 'built up to' rather than dissected or taken apart." (Golding 1959:116). This emphasis on the predominance of 'pictorial reality' itself seems to come very close indeed to Jacob's ideas. When, in a letter of 1927, he comments on the relation between the Cornet and Cubism, he obviously has Synthetic Cubism in mind:

Le cubisme en peinture est l'art de travailler le tableau par lui-même en dehors de ce qu'il représente, et de donner à la construction géométrique la première place, ne procédant que par allusions à la vie réelle. Le cubisme littéraire fait de même en littérature se



servant seulement de la réalité comme d'un moyen et non d'un fin. Exemple: mon Cornet à Des. (quoted - and first published - in J.M. Schneider 1974:291)

Taking this explicit parallel into account, then, it will be useful to consider briefly the aesthetic reflections underlying the Synthetic Cubism of Juan Gris<sup>(19)</sup>.

Gris describes his own method of painting as 'deductive', in that it moves from the general to the particular, i.e. from geometric, purely 'pictorial' patterns, harmonies and contrasts, to the representation of an 'imaginative' reality:

Ma méthode de travail () est déductive. Ce n'est pas le tableau x qui arrive à coïncider avec mon sujet, mais le sujet x qui arrive à coïncider avec mon tableau.

Je dis qu'elle est déductive parce que les rapports picturaux entre les formes colorées me suggèrent certains rapports particuliers entre éléments d'une réalité imaginative. La mathématique picturale me mène à la physique représentative. (1923; Gris 1974:20)(20)

In the same way Gris speaks of colours, lines and shapes as forming "une architecture picturale" which becomes "la mathématique du peintre"; and he observes that

...ce n'est que cette mathématique qui peut servir à établir la composition du tableau. Or ce n'est que de cette architecture que peut naître le sujet, c'est-à-dire un arrangement des éléments de la réalité provoqué par cette composition.()

Nous avons des possibilités techniques assez formelles et un monde esthétique assez informe. Il s'agit de couler dans ces nécessités formelles ce monde un peu amorphe.()

Ce n'est pas une matière qui doit devenir couleur, mais une couleur qui doit devenir matière. (1924; Gris 1974:40,41)

This elaboration of the picture primarily in terms of its pictorial material leaves little room for emotive expression or lyricism, and Gris's approach is indeed characterized occasionally as 'intellectual' (Gray 1953:128). More importantly, it reverses the conventional process of representation, in that the arrangement of pictorial elements does not follow from the painter's image of a model, but precedes it: the pictorial pattern suggests an image of a reality - not a particular but an imaginative reality. This procedure closely resembles Jacob's points (quoted above) about "travailler le tableau par lui-même en dehors de ce qu'il représente", and the predominance of "un mot" over "une idée"; in much the same vein also Jacob speaks of words as "la palette de l'écrivain", and having the same suggestive properties as colours (Esthétique:30); and, not

surprisingly, he draws a further parallel between this deductive approach and E.A. Poe's essay on the composition of 'The Raven' ("la camelote cubiste transposée en poésie, c'est-à-dire une composition à la Edgar Poe (voir le Corbeau, composition d'un poème).")(Esthétique: 56).

Gris' use of a term like "architecture picturale" also points to the emphasis he places on the formal coherence of the work. He distinguishes in fact between 'architecture' and 'construction'. 'Construction' is essentially a "mélange" where the constituent elements exist independently of the whole. 'Architecture' on the other hand is compared to a chemical reaction, and the sum total is more than the sum of the elements employed; 'architecture' requires unity, homogeneity and individuality, and naturally it is "l'architecture colorée et plate qui est la technique de la peinture et non la construction"(1924;Gris 1974:34ff). A similar idea of architecture is clearly implied in Jacob's notions of 'style' and 'situation', and in the preface to the Cornet his attack on Rimbaud follows a warning against "les pierres précieuses trop brillantes qui tirent l'oeil au dépens de l'ensemble"(Cornet:23). Homogeneity is mainly an aspect of style, and Jacob repeatedly insists on the need to create "une oeuvre équilibrée" in which the "souci d'ensemble"(Art poétique:15,50) is the artist's predominant concern ("En tout cas: choisir les détails en vue de l'ensemble pour ne pas distraire"; Esthétique:46-47). The individuality of the work is, in Jacob's terms, a function of situation, in that the tightly structured whole always keeps its distance, its surrounding margin, by virtue of its formal unity, so that "tout art se suffit à lui-même"(Art poétique:17). Interesting in this respect is the fact that Jacob's notion of aesthetic emotion, the result of the perception of style and situation, also finds a counterpart in Gris, who speaks of 'pictorial emotion', provoked solely by "un ensemble d'éléments picturaux"(1924;Gris 1974:30). Consequently, in the same way as Jacob observes that "Une oeuvre d'art vaut par elle-même et non par les confrontations qu'on en peut faire avec la réalité"(Cornet:23), Gris sums up the difference between Analytical and Synthetic Cubism precisely in terms of the irreducibility of the work to extraneous reality:

I begin by organizing my picture; then I qualify the objects. My aim is to create new objects which cannot be compared with any object in reality. The distinction

between synthetic and analytical Cubism lies precisely in this. These new objects, therefore, avoid distortion. My violin, being a creation, need fear no comparison. (Gris in conversation with Kahnweiler, 1920; quoted in Golding 1959:115)

At this point, however, an important restriction has to be made concerning the self-sufficiency and irreducibility of the work of art. Gris's deductive method never results in a completely non-figurative art (in Kandinsky's or Arp's sense), and ultimately the picture always presents some recognizable constellation of objects: the initial arrangement of colours and lines becomes in a subsequent stage the groundwork for shapes of (imagined) objects. The process is summarized in Golding 1959:115:

To describe it crudely: the composition of a painting was established in purely abstract, ( ) often mathematical terms. The subject then emerged from or was superimposed over this framework or substructure of flat coloured forms. As the subject-matter materialized in these paintings, as the flat, coloured shapes were converted into objects or figures, the rigidity of the underlying geometric framework was naturally softened, and by the time that the paintings reached completion, it was usually entirely disguised.

In Gris' own terminology, the pictorial relations are not essentially changed, but only modified by the subject (1923;Gris 1974:20). Ultimately, though, this representational aspect is a necessary complement to the initial abstract ('architectural') design:

La peinture est pour moi un tissu homogène et continu dont les fils dans un sens seraient le côté représentatif ou esthétique, les fils le traversant pour former ce tissu le côté technique, architectural ou abstrait. Ces fils se soutiennent mutuellement, et lorsque les fils dans un sens manquent, le tissu est impossible.

Un tableau sans intention représentative serait, à mon avis, une étude technique toujours inachevée, car sa seule limite est son aboutissement représentatif. (1924;Gris 1974:42)

In Jacob's poetic, a largely similar view seems to prevail. As was indicated above, in many poems the 'verbal substructure' - a constant factor in varying contexts and in spite of considerable thematic diversity - appears to constitute the groundwork, which is then projected on a syntagmatic axis where the semantic incongruities and discontinuities are elaborated and, usually, ironically exploited. Already in the letter of 1907 Jacob singles out "le doute entre la réalité et l'imagination" as a means to hold the reader's attention, and in the theory of 'situation' the same tension acts as a catalyst to provoke aesthetic emotion. On other occasions also, it will be recalled, Jacob urges: "placez-vous au-dessus des réalités, et n'y

touchez que du bout du pied"(Dialogues:40); the work of art has to be made "vivante dans un au-delà tout en reflétant la terre" (Esthétique:31); and ultimately, "la vraie vérité artistique est dans la force qu'on donne au faux"(Dialogues:27). In all these cases, then, Jacob seems anxious to preserve a certain referential basis which is to act as the representational norm, as a background or foil against which the 'deviation' constituted by the text, the transition from the acceptable to the unacceptable, can be measured - and appreciated in aesthetic terms. This back-cloth of the 'vraisemblable' is present even in the most fantastic poems, be it as part of the ironic context, or in function of the poet's conscious control over his material (the "sensualité verbale" which is "débridé et bridé à la fois";Corresp.II:328), or in the structural context of the totality of the Cornet of which even the most fantastic texts still form an integral part.

Gris' position is essentially different from Kandinsky's in that for Gris the painting remains incomplete without the inclusion of a representational aspect. A distinction between Jacob and Hans Arp would run along similar lines. Arp's poems appear to construct solely a 'textual reality': although on one level they allow an interpretation as a consistent parody of metaphorical writing, their general appearance is that of a series of systematic elaborations and permutations of an arbitrary selection of language-material (cf. the chapter on Dada, below). Both Arp and Jacob share a pronounced interest in depersonalization: in both cases the actual relationship between author and text is difficult to grasp, and in both cases irony plays a significant role in this respect. Yet here again the difference in approach is obvious: the 'impersonality' of Arp's writing springs from a practice whereby poems are as it were gratuitously selected from among a potentially infinite series of words, lines and stanzas; hence poems and parts of poems can be expanded, reduced or shifted around at will, without apparent motivation, and hence the text does not attempt to establish a definite lyrical centre or a definable position for the poetic voice. In Jacob's view, on the other hand, the poet disappears behind the concepts of 'style' and 'situation' - that is, behind the need to impose the poem as an autonomous and self-sufficient organic entity; the poet's presence makes itself felt only in the use of masks or irony. In that sense depersonalization is a formal prerequisite on a par with the refusal

to allow description or anecdote, or with the need to determine the choice of particular items in function of the homogeneity and individuality of the poem.

Jacob's kind of depersonalization is also to be distinguished from, say, Georg Heym's. Heym's early poetry starts from a fairly conventional descriptive basis, but the familiar world of the description undergoes considerable distortion and alienation through the use of juxtaposition of metaphors and images with apocalyptic or destructive ('demonic') connotations. In Heym's later poetry these metaphors gain more and more autonomy, as they gradually come to dominate the descriptive element. The elimination of the lyrical 'I' contains a strong 'existential' factor and reflects the growing predominance of the apocalyptic metaphors: the 'I', as it were, loses control of his images to the extent that the overwhelming power of anonymous elements crush the individual. The diminished role of the 'I', then, has thematic as well as existential aspects, and is part of an evolution which can be traced statistically.

Pound's notion of Vorticist 'objectivity' seems to come closer to Jacob's elimination of the lyrical 'I' in favour of formal construction. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, in his essay on Gaudier-Brzeska (1916), Pound repeatedly stresses the point that "The organization of forms is a much more energetic and creative action than the copying of light on a haystack"(Pound 1970a:92); in fact, "This is the common ground of the arts, this combat of arrangement or harmony"(ibid.:121); and in the postscript to the essay in 1934 he again recalls that "the key word of vorticist art was Objectivity in the sense that we insisted that the value of a piece of sculpture was dependent on its shape"(ibid.:142). In this approach the predominance of formal arrangement is affirmed irrespective of representation and in function of the poem's objective existence. In Pound's definition of the Imagist Image also, the emphasis falls on 'presentation' - the aim being not so much to reflect a mood as to offer a precise and suggestive arrangement of ideas; later the Vortex is described as "a radiant node or cluster ( ) from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing"(ibid.:92) - a definition remarkably similar, incidentally, to Jacob's early view of the poem as a "noyau de force" (in the letter of 1907). In both the Vorticist and the Imagist Image, a considerable objective distance is implied

between the poet and his product, and the subordination of lyrical sensibility to formal arrangement implies a type of depersonalization largely similar to Jacob's view.

The Vorticist aesthetic stipulates that the poem should be charged with 'primary intensity', that is to say, Vorticism is art "before it has spread itself into flaccidity"(ibid.:88). Hence the main instrument advocated is the Image, which is the poet's 'primary pigment' and thus guarantees concentration, concision, precision. These priorities lead in practice to substantial similarities between Pound's and Jacob's poetry. The use of single superpositions of images - which is in both cases explicitly linked with the haiku model - results in intense, direct, non-discursive poems involving significant semantic displacements. The more complex elaborations of this basic technique however show the divergent concerns of both poets: although in each case a peculiar dialectic is established between internal dynamism and formal restraint, Jacob's writing, while maintaining close links with Cubism in painting, explores the space of interaction between verbal and visual series, whereas Pound's Vorticist poems (like the 'Game of Chess') focus on the relations between thematic mobility and hard, clear patterns of colour and light.

Pound's notion of the Image is a corollary of his insistence on concision and precision: the Image, properly selected and presented, replaces lyrical comment by a non-discursive, exact and definite, though infinitely suggestive analogy; being "at the furthest possible remove from rhetoric"(Pound 1970a:83), the Image provides a kind of elliptical shorthand, and here again Jacob's assertion that "la poésie moderne saute toutes les explications"(Art poétique:17) offers a significant point of contact.

Pound's view of the Image also determines his position with regard to abstraction and non-representational art. The Image may be either perceived or conceived, and hence the question of its imitative or representational value is in fact irrelevant. And since the Image is the poet's pigment in the same way as colour is the painter's pigment, "you can go ahead and apply Kandinsky, you can transpose his chapter on the language of form and colour and apply it to the writing of verse"(ibid.:86). In practice it appears that images are indeed handled in much the same way as colour and form are used by Kandinsky;

Pound's idea of the 'non-representational' in writing however differs fundamentally from Arp's, in the sense that Arp's whole mode of writing does not allow a logically coherent visualization in terms of a recognizable constellation of objects, whereas Pound's does, although neither Arp nor Pound care for the 'imitation' or 'reproduction' of 'real' states of affairs. Pound's material consists of images, whereas Arp appears to make use of words as 'signifiers' only, as sonorous forms whose semantic dimension is largely left out of account in the process of writing. Jacob's position in this respect would seem to situate itself somewhere between Pound and Arp, in the sense that the process of visualization is constantly thwarted by the foregrounding of verbal associations or various kinds of logical incongruity. Jacob's texts create and exploit discrepancies between the semantic aspect and the materiality of the word as signifier. Yet association as a principle of construction appears to compromise with the semantic coherence of the text in crucial instances. This compromise allows multiplicity and irony to pervade the whole texture of his Cornet; it also determines his position in regard to his contemporaries in the avant-garde.

## NOTES

- (1) The following abbreviations will be used in this chapter:  
Cornet: Le Cornet à Dés. Paris, Gallimard, 1945 (first published in 1917; the preface is dated "septembre 1916").  
Corresp.I: Correspondance. Vol.I (1876-1921).  
Corresp.II: Correspondance. Vol.II (1921-1924).  
 edited by François Garnier. Paris, Eds. de Paris, 1953 (vol.I), 1955 (vol.II).  
Art poétique. Paris, Emile-Paul, 1922.  
Conseils: Conseils à un jeune poète. Paris, Gallimard, 1945.  
Dialogues: Louis Emie: Dialogues avec Max Jacob. Paris, Eds. Corréa, Buchet & Chastel, 1954.  
Esthétique: René Guy Cadou: Esthétique de Max Jacob. Paris, Seghers, 1956.
- (2) The interest of Palacio's article (Palacio 1973) lies, in the present context, primarily in the fact that it contains extracts from manuscripts (letters, poems) which are part of Palacio's personal collection and remained unpublished until 1973.
- (3) The Spanish 'jota' is a short poem, formally reminiscent of the 'copla', and consisting of four octocyllabic lines. By the "poèmes japonais" Jacob almost certainly means the haiku - which he mentions for its formal rigour, not for its exoticism. S. Collier (1956: 528) also points out that several of the short pieces in the sections 'Le coq et la perle' and 'Exposition coloniale' in the Cornet can be read as straightforward haikus (which in their Western version usually contain 17 syllables), while also several other short poems of the Cornet seem to be based on the haiku type. Cf. below, section 2.
- (4) G. Antoine (1967:16-17) points out that Jacob is here misquoting Buffon, arguing further that in practice Jacob's own view of 'style' often coincides with Buffon's. This point, however, appears to be of little relevance since Jacob only uses the (mis)quote to reject the conventional idea that an author's style reflects and expresses his subjective personality. Jacob's own view of 'style' is based on a deliberate suspension of this lyrical subjectivity.
- (5) Though the distinction 'art arlequin/art pierrot' is clear enough, the terms themselves are somewhat puzzling. Possibly 'art arlequin' is an echo of Jarry's writings on the puppet theatre; 'art pierrot' may refer to Laforgue's Pierrot poems - bearing in mind Jacob's dislike (and underestimation) of Laforgue (cf. Kamber 1971:xvi; and Corresp.II:182).
- (6) It may be useful to point out that the concept and use of personae in Jacob is an integral part of - and is indeed necessitated by - the whole structure of his poetic theory and practice. Little or nothing is gained by claiming, as does H. Fabureau (1935:62, 76) that Jacob is in fact an elegiac poet who dissimulates and kills his "sentiments sincères" by a display of gratuitous ironic stances. Both the use of the mask and the recourse to irony are fundamental features of the style/situation poetic.



- (7) This 'discrepancy' experienced by the reader is of course itself a complex matter, in that the reader will compare Jacob's poem not only with reality as he conceives it, but also with other (older or contemporary) texts which are accepted as 'realistic' - which introduces the concept of intertextuality (Kristeva). Jacob's text is thus set off against the reader's conventional image of the world but also against a number of texts (lyrical, historical, narrative) which construct a certain 'vraisemblance' between themselves and reality and with which any reader may be expected to be familiar. A theoretical discussion of these questions is offered in Culler 1975:138ff.
- (8) Jacob's opinion seems not altogether unjustified if one compares his criteria with Baudelaire's preface to his Petits Poèmes en prose:

C'est en feuilletant, pour la vingtième fois au moins, le fameux Gaspard de la Nuit d'Aloysius Bertrand () que l'idée m'est venue de tenter quelque chose d'analogue, et d'appliquer à la description de la vie moderne () le procédé qu'il avait appliqué à la peinture de la vie ancienne, si étrangement pittoresque.

Quel est celui de nous qui n'a pas, dans ses jours d'ambition, rêvé le miracle d'une prose poétique, musicale sans rythme et sans rime, assez souple et assez heurtée pour s'adapter aux mouvements lyriques de l'âme, aux ondulations de la reverie, aux soubresauts de la conscience? (Baudelaire 1969:7-8)

- (9) Reverdy does not mention Jacob in the 'Chronique mensuelle' of this issue of Nord-Sud, but the inference is obvious enough when he says:

...Et il faut reconnaître que le précurseur de ce genre actuel, celui chez qui ont puisé tous ceux qui publient encore des poèmes en prose, c'est Arthur Rimbaud. () Il serait inadmissible de refuser à ce génie bizarre et incomplet la seule part qui lui revient. () Tout le monde aussi voudrait être aujourd'hui l'inventeur du poème en prose et de l'esthétique qui en constitue la plus grande valeur. Il est un peu tard. Rimbaud est mort depuis longtemps mais son oeuvre reste. Il n'est défendu à personne d'y puiser un enseignement. Cela n'autorise, cependant, pas à se parer de plumes qui ont poussé sur le dos d'un autre. (Reverdy 1975:34)

- (10) These poems, like some of the other short pieces to follow, are taken from the sections 'Le coq et la perle' and 'Exposition coloniale' (Cornet:54-74 and 241-245). Though at times excessively short, they are undoubtedly intended as separate poems. Moreover, one could in this respect refer to the precedents of Rimbaud's illuminations ('Phrases') or Apollinaire's Alcools ('Chantre'), or to the fact that, as indicated above, several of these pieces conform to the haiku type.
- (11) This poem in fact seems to be an elaboration of another, shorter and more general poem in the section 'Le coq et la perle':

Pour se venger de l'écrivain qui leur a donné la vie,  
 les héros qu'il a créés lui cachent son porte-plume.  
 (Cornet:60)

The same paradox between fiction and ~~paradox~~ appears here, yet only 'Les rongeurs d'arbres' is discussed in some details because of its greater formal complexity.

- (12) G. Kamber (1971:42) also briefly comments on this poem but appears to misread these images when he writes that

The poem states very definitely that the donkey is the only animal not walking with his feet toward the sky - a blatant impossibility since there is no contact for the feet at all. But when we learn that there are words written on his white belly, this implies that the donkey too must be walking upside down or we would be unable to see them. ( ) Even the light colored suns in the black dress which may be the skin seen through holes in the cloth is a plausible optical illusion, except for the fact that the patches of skin are green!

Kamber's problem may be solved by visualizing painted animals seen from underneath, all with their legs up except for the donkey. As for the princess' dress, there is no reason to believe that she wears the dress on her bare (green?) skin (Kamber seems to read the word "la" in "...si on la voyait..." as referring only to "princesse"; it may also refer to "sa robe").

- (13) It is the failure to come to terms with these properties of Jacob's literary adaptation of Cubism which makes most critical studies of the technique of his prose-poems inadequate. Only A. Collier's two articles (1956 and 1957) seem to point in this direction, without however going all the way. G. Kamber (1971:9-10) also discusses 'Omnia vanitas' and is led to pointless observations ("'prières et sanglots' refers to the author's conversion", and similar details), seeing the poem as "pointilliste tableau" and as a "probing of the 'unconscious'", which is totally at odds with the basic principles underlying Jacob's writing.
- (14) Such patterns of sound-repetition and the like could of course be extended virtually indefinitely. In G. Kamber's discussion of the poem (1971:37-41) even patterns like the W/J repetition in "Equatoriales/doigts/pied/nouveaux" are pointed out, and one could include for instance the series "en faire/effrayez/au travers", or "intention/entente", etc. There must however be a stage where the listing of these data ceases to be pertinent, as J. Culler (1975:55-74) shows in his comments on Jakobson's grammatical analyses of particular poems. For this reason only the most conspicuous and evidently pertinent series are singled out.
- (15) Further puns might of course be detected, the most enticing one being the phrase "...au taureau haut qui n'est qu'un homme et qui combat", in which "taureau haut" could be read as suggesting 'torero'. But here again the question of pertinence and relevance raises its head.

- (16) To quote just three obvious examples:

Le toit, c'est quatre, quatre, quatre: il y en a quatre.  
Le perron est une pelouse que nous opérons et qui les  
jalouse. Les toits sont amarante: reflet d'orage! rage!  
rage! et l'ensemble est en sucre, en stuc, en ruche, moche,  
riche. (Cornet:68)

Mille bouquets de bosquets, mille bosquets de bouquets et  
mille camomilles. Si tu veux, ma gentille, tu mettras  
ta mantille. La mare a, dans la nuit, des vertebres aussi  
profondément vertes que les mousses de mes pistils.  
(Cornet:69)

J'ai un mari honnête, je suis maligne, honnête et pourtant  
je ne suis qu'une marionnette. (Cornet:241)

- (17) J. Palacio (1973:177) reveals that the manuscript (in his possession) originally had "garçon d'écurie" instead of "homme de peine", and that the original title of the poem read 'Sir Elizabeth, hélas' instead of 'Sir Elizabeth (prononcez soeur)'. Both changes in the final text clearly indicate the emphasis on the male/female opposition: in the title euphony makes place for a significant (crucial) pun, while the opposition is more strongly brought out by 'homme' than by 'garçon'. At the same time the parallel Elizabeth/Happney is made less explicit, because 'garçon d'écurie' would have referred directly to the "porte d'écurie" mentioned in the description of the town. The tendency to duplicity is unmistakable.
- (18) Cf. Apollinaire in Les peintres cubistes (1912): "La vraisemblance n'a plus aucune importance (). Le sujet ne compte plus ou s'il compte c'est à peine." (Apollinaire 1966:18). Though it is clear enough what Jacob means, his terminology may cause confusion, since he also occasionally refers to the reader as 'sujet' (the 'subject' of artistic emotion); these pitfalls are avoided by Reverdy, who distinguishes between 'object', as the subject-matter treated in the poem, and 'subject', as the actual work itself, the poem or painting; the objects are only elements to be used for the sake of the construction of the work of art; cf. Nord-Sud, March 1917 (Reverdy 1975:18-19).
- (19) Gray (1953:129-133), Golding (1959:116, 135-137), Richardson & Stangos (1974:71) all agree that Gris' painting from about 1913-1914 onwards represents the purest and most consistent elaboration of Synthetic Cubism. The following discussion of Gris and Jacob is not - in case this still needs to be pointed out - an influence study; this would make little sense anyway since (a) many of Jacob's poems appear to have been written between 1907 and 1916, and (b) Gris' theoretical comments date from the 1920's only, so that no historical (documentary) basis is available to warrant such an influence study.
- (20) In the following paragraphs, texts by Gris are referred to only by the dates of their first publication. They are:  
1921: untitled text in L'esprit nouveau, 5, 1921;  
1923: 'Notes sur ma peinture' (Der Querschnitt, 1-2, 1923);  
1924: 'Des possibilités de la peinture' (lecture delivered in Paris, 15 May, 1924);

1925: 'A quelques questions qu'on me pose sur le cubisme'  
(Bulletin de la vie artistique, Jan. 1925).

All these texts may be found in Gris 1974:20,29-42,48-50.

## Chapter 7

Georg Trakl: Existential Conception and  
Semantic Ambience.

The central sections of this chapter will be concerned less with the structure of particular poems than with general characteristics of Trakl's mode of writing and the principles informing it. The first part is mainly chronological in character, as in the chapters on Heym and Apollinaire. Sections 1 and 2 describe primarily thematic aspects of the early work, concentrating on the (neo-)romantic assumptions underlying the prose text 'Traumland' of 1906, and the rejection of these assumptions in the poems of the Sammlung 1909. Sections 3 and 4 explore aspects of the formation of Trakl's mature style, the development of juxtaposition and the progressive de-familiarization of, in particular, colour terms. Section 5 attempts to outline Trakl's basic existential and historical conception, which invites comparison with Heym's views. Further elements of Trakl's technique, relating mainly to the creation and the function of semantic indeterminacy of various kinds, are discussed in section 6. The final section then sketches a rough diachronic and synchronic pattern, with reference to Mallarmé, Pound and Apollinaire.

## 1.

Trakl's early work (i.e. his writings up to 1909) consists of the poems collected in the Sammlung 1909 and a few prose pieces and dramatic fragments. Not surprisingly, Trakl's first literary products, like Heym's, are stylistically and thematically steeped in the conventions of the late nineteenth century, particularly in what J. Hermand (1972:191) broadly calls the "Stilkunst um 1900". They range from the sentimental and the (neo-)romantic (as in the prose sketch 'Traumland' of 1906, Trakl's first published prose text) to the hyperbolic and the monumental (as in the hymnic 'Morgenlied' of 1908, his first published poem) (cf. Lindenberger 1958:22; Wölfel 1958:51-52; Muschg 1961:106). As was the case with Heym's work, a glance at one of these very early texts may prove instructive, as an understanding

of its form, structure and implied assumptions will provide the groundwork for the appreciation of Trakl's later poetic concerns and techniques.

'Traumland. Eine Episode' (DW:109-113)<sup>(1)</sup> first appeared in May 1906. The text adopts the form of a first-person reminiscence, harking back to the days of childhood ("Manchmal muss ich wieder jener stillen Tage gedenken...", "Ich sehe mich wieder als Schulbube...", "Aber die Erinnerung an jene stillen Tage voll Sonnenschein sind (sic) in mir lebendig geblieben."). The temporal scheme thus projects an obvious duality between past (the story) and present (the writing), between childhood and adulthood. The events narrated in the fourteen paragraphs of the 'episode' take place in idyllic surroundings, isolated from the outside world. The location is "jene kleine Stadt im Talesgrund", hidden by pine forests ("feierliche, schweigsame Tannenwälder"); the house and garden where the boy roams and dreams are surrounded by protecting trees and bushes; the time he spends there appears to him afterwards as "ein losgelöster, eigener Teil meines Lebens - ein Leben für sich".

Having established this sheltered setting, however, the story soon develops a contrast between natural harmony and beauty on the one hand and human suffering, sickness and death, as apparent disharmony, on the other. The idea of natural harmony is expressed in two ways. Nature itself is referred to in a number of traditional (neo-)romantic clichés (such as "des Wassers Liebesgeflüster", "die leuchtenden Farben der Blüten", "dieses geheimnisvolle Geräusch des ewigschaffenden Lebens"), whereby the metaphors and the frequent use of two or more attributive adjectives qualifying one noun convey an appropriate, if conventional, atmosphere of delicacy and preciousness. The relation between the narrator and nature is similarly presented in terms of a perfect, all-encompassing harmony; among the most frequently used terms in this respect are "Traum" and "träumen", "Duft" and "duften", "Rausch" and "berauschen"; the garden is seen as a 'temple', and observing how the mountain tops reach into the sky, the boy reflects: "...in dieser Berührung von Himmel und Erde scheint einem der Weltraum ein Teil der Heimat zu sein."<sup>(2)</sup> Yet two of the key paragraphs in the story (6 and 9) develop, in parallel constructions, the central contrast of the episode: the disruption of the boy's sense of ideal harmony with nature by the sight or thought of the sick girl Maria. In the first

case the contemplation of nature provokes "ein seltsam tiefes Glücksgefühl", but this feeling is abruptly shattered by "der Gedanke an die kranke Maria", as a result of which the boy experiences "einen dumpfen Druck, dass ich hätte weinen mögen". In the second case the smells, colours and sounds of natural life make the boy appreciate "die Grösse und Schönheit des Lebens. Damals war mir auch, als gehörte das Leben mir", but noticing the sick girl he is besieged by contradictory feelings of compassion, fascination and guilt; his enraptured daydreaming turns into "eine schmerzliche () Sehnsucht, die mich rätselhaft und verwirrend dünkete", and he leaves the garden, "als hätte ich kein Recht, in diesem Tempel zu verweilen".

The contrast, then, on this level of the narrative, clearly concerns the opposition between an untroubled, idealized and almost pantheistic sense of unity with the natural world, and the realities of human suffering, decay, and death. Even though the boy's attitude towards this suffering remains ambivalent, incorporating unease and shame as well as fascination and guilt, the experience means to him essentially the shattering of his naïve dreamworld, and acquires the character of a loss of innocence. This thematic contrast in fact also occupies an extremely significant place in the later poetry. One aspect of the Elis figure for example consists in Elis being "die Traum-Figuration für das stille und gerechte Einverständnis mit der Natur"(C.Heselhaus, in von Wiese 1957:403), and "Das Wort 'Elis' steht daher stets für den Zustand der Kindheit schlechthin, für eine noch ungebrochene Einheit des Seienden"(Hermann 1972:271). The distance which separates the early 'Traumland' from the world of the later work, however, may be gauged from Trakl's two surviving aphorisms (the first of which dates from 1908, the second from 1914):

1. Nur dem, der das Glück verachtet, wird Erkenntnis.
2. Gefühl in den Augenblicken totenähnlichen Seins: Alle Menschen sind der Liebe wert. Erwachend fühlst du die Bitternis der Welt; darin ist alle deine ungelöste Schuld; dein Gedicht eine unvollkommene Sühne. (DW:255)

'Erkenntnis', in other words, consists in the full awareness of suffering and bitterness, and precludes any innocent or naïve assumption, let alone experience, of happiness; and this awareness creates the inescapable responsibility and guilt which the poem will never be able to expiate. But where in the later poems this state of affairs constitutes one of the major unresolved tensions of Trakl's

poetic world, 'Traumland' still presents a sufficiently solid and secure world view to accommodate a resolution. Although Maria's illness and death are seen as mysterious (the nature of her illness remains unexplained, and her death comes "als wäre sie gestorben ohne sichtbare Ursache - ein Rätsel"), thus enhancing the dramatic contrast between human decay and natural pantheistic harmony, the whole episode, as mentioned above, is safely set in the past, and offered as an experience with which the narrator has now come to terms, even if something (namely naïve innocence) has had to be sacrificed. In that sense 'Traumland' possesses essentially the structure of a 'Bildungsroman': it describes the narrator's growth to maturity, and the integration of the inevitability of suffering and death into a more 'adult', more serene and complete conception of life. The narrator's point of view is that of a mature person reconstructing one of these inevitable crises of adolescence, a crisis now distant in time and place. In other words, the presentation of the episode as a reminiscence is functional precisely in that it allows the confrontation between childlike innocence and the existence of pain and decay to resolve itself dialectically into a more 'realistic' conception - and interestingly enough, after Maria's death the narrator returns to the 'city' of contemporary life.

The nature of this basic assumption may be further clarified by comparing the views underlying 'Traumland' with the Neo-Romantic treatment of the theme of the 'formal garden' (cf. Sheppard 1972a, with discussions of poems by Hofmannsthal, George and Rilke). In the second part of Rilke's Neue Gedichte (1908), the sequence 'Die Parke' (written in August 1907; Rilke 1966:359-363) presents the once stable, hierarchical harmony of the gardens as threatened by decay because some unspecified vital, sustaining power is found to be missing (Sheppard). The conventional gods have lost their appeal (poem V speaks of "höchstens angelächelte, doch nie/ angeflehte Götter"), and spring fails to bring new life ("Selbst der Frühling ist da nicht mehr gebend,/ diese Büsche glauben nicht an ihn", poem VII). Yet, as R. Sheppard (1972a:245-246) emphasizes, in the sequence as a whole the sense of the reality of the received structures, anachronistic though they may be, is still strong enough to prevent the gardens from disintegrating. The gardens, remnants of an aristocratic, pre-industrial order (Sheppard), are afflicted by an unobtrusive and pervasive decay, but they can still inspire awe. They may be viewed with a certain



irony, but not with despair. For the narrator in Trakl's 'Traumland' the secluded village and the garden represent an equally anachronistic and secluded location, but the sense of security of which the episode bears witness belongs to a state prior even to the awareness of the onset of disintegration which Rilke's sequence testifies: in 'Traumland' the garden retains its character of a 'temple', and, in sharp contrast with the later aphorisms quoted above, the structure of the episode as a reminiscence indicates that disharmonies are there to be resolved in due course and that a final, more mature harmony is still attainable. This is precisely the vantage point which the later work - including most of the poems in the Sammlung 1909 - will find radically untenable.

The motif of the park also occurs, in a way comparable to Rilke's conception of the 'formal garden', in another of Trakl's early prose texts, 'Verlassenheit' (DW:119-122). Here, as in Rilke's sequence, the castle and the park surrounding it are clearly seen as remnants of the past. Their grandeur has gone for good: emptiness, silence, immobility and darkness appear as symptoms of death and alienation<sup>(3)</sup>. The park lies in its "Todesschlaf", and each of the three sections of the text ends on the phrase "das Schweigen der Verlassenheit". In the castle the duke reads of "der Vergangenheit Grösse und Herrlichkeit", living in this illusory world "bis die Gegenwart, der er nicht angehört, versinkt". The duke's lonely existence in the castle however has nothing of the idyllic seclusion of 'Traumland', but is all alienation and isolation, inspired by fear of the outside world, which to him seems "riesengross, traumhaft, gespensterlich! und schrecklich". The duke himself is not a heroic but a pathetic figure who lives "wie ein kleines, irres Kind, über dem ein Verhängnis steht, und das nicht mehr Kraft hat, zu leben". Grotesque as well as pitiful, the duke presents an inversion of the symbols of haughty and aristocratic refusal of the contemporary world and the withdrawal into an ivory tower as George's generation sees it. Like the neo-romantic garden, the duke's life is a doomed existence, incapable of coming to terms with reality. In that sense 'Verlassenheit', though formally no less steeped in fin-de-siècle conventions and clichés than 'Traumland', foreshadows the sense of helpless alienation voiced in the Sammlung 1909. But whereas 'Traumland' moves from idealization via crisis to serenity, 'Verlassenheit', for the first time portraying reality as ghostlike, distorted and fearsome, confronts anguish in the

face of the world with the hopelessness of a flight into the past, and thus pre-empts a resolution.

A third early text should be mentioned before the poems of the Sammlung 1909 can be considered. 'Maria Magdalena. Ein Dialog' (DW: 115-119) dates from 1906, and is a semi-philosophical conversation taking place in Palestine at the time of Christ's death. Agathon stands for an unproblematic and unquestioning acceptance of life ("Wir wollen leben und nicht fragen. Das Leben ist voll des Schönen", and "Ich will fröhlich meiner Wege gehen und die Schönheit preisen"). His interlocutor, Marcellus, confesses to incessant uncertainty, bewilderment and doubt. His statement: "ich bin hier in fremder Erde" obviously refers to more than just his presence as a Roman in Palestine. Fundamental to his conception is the observation: "Wir schauen nie den Grund der Geschehnisse", and this view of the essentially incomprehensible nature of things is then elaborated in the words:

Die Götter lieben es, uns Menschen unlösbare Rätsel aufzugeben.  
Die Erde aber rettet uns nicht vor der Arglist der Götter;  
denn auch sie ist voll des Sinnbetörenden. Mich verwirren die  
Dinge und die Menschen. Gewiss! Die Dinge sind sehr schweigsam!  
Und die Menschenseele gibt ihre Rätsel nicht preis. Wenn man  
fragt, so schweigt sie. (DW:118)

Silence, here, like Maria's silence in 'Traumland', implies mystery and the inexplicable. Where Agathon speaks of love and beauty, Marcellus' life is a fruitless groping in the dark:

Mir geziemt es, im Dunkel zu wandern. Doch hier trennen sich  
unsere Wege. Deiner harret die Geliebte, meiner - das Schweigen  
der Nacht! (ibid.)

- an idea, incidentally, which is repeated in the poem 'Gesang zur Nacht' (Sammlung 1909), but then with reference to the persona of the poet:

[Ich bin] ein Schatten verlörener Gärten,  
Und habe zum todesdunklen Gefährten  
Das Schweigen der leeren Mitternacht. (DW:138)

It is, in view of Trakl's subsequent work, highly significant in this respect that the themes of darkness and silence facing Marcellus are also linked with a missed opportunity for redemption. Marcellus has witnessed the encounter between Christ and Maria Magdalena, he knows of the impending crucifixion, and realizes that he may find salvation and an answer to his questions by catching Christ's glance ("Seine Augen würden vielleicht zu mir gesprochen haben. Ich glaube, sie hätten gesprochen"). But he decides to stay away, thus forfeiting the chance of being redeemed. In contrast to Maria Magdalena who

follows her saviour, Marcellus' darkness is not relieved ("Und in mir ist es dunkel geblieben"). Thus the world remains as inscrutable and alien as before, and in addition Marcellus' position is tinged with remorse and guilt on account of his failure to attain redemption when the opportunity presented itself. In the poems of the Sammlung 1909, then, this view is further elaborated in first-person statements in terms of the familiar Expressionist notions of the anguished, fragmented individual faced with an equally fragmented, hostile and inexplicable world with which he cannot cope.

## 2.

The poems which make up the Sammlung 1909 adopt mainly traditional forms (sonnets, or poems consisting of four-line stanzas with cross-rhyme or embracing rhyme), but there is no evidence to suppose that this regularity should be seen as a formal mask in Heym's sense. Heym's 'monumental' or 'robust' forms served as a vehicle for his stance of impassivity and objectivity. In Trakl's pre-1909 poems the 'Ich' form is very frequent indeed; in his case the transition to objectivation and depersonalization is, on the contrary, closely followed by the emergence of free verse forms.

Some of the poems in the Sammlung 1909 (such as 'Das tiefe Lied' and 'Vollendung', DW: 139, 149) recall the stylistic features of 'Traumland'. The great majority however amount to a radical anti-stylization (Bakhtin)<sup>(4)</sup> of Trakl's (neo-)romantic first products, in the same way as Heym's city poems of 1910 constitute stylistically and thematically a negation of his earlier work. In that sense the Sammlung 1909 further explores the notions of incomprehension and forlornness which characterized Marcellus' position in 'Maria Magdalena', extending them to encompass a total loss of values, and feelings of terror and powerlessness in the face of unknown and uncontrollable forces.

The third section of the poem 'Drei Träume' (probably written in 1907) may serve to illustrate the nature of this anti-stylization:

Ich sah viel Städte als Flammenraub  
 Und Greuel auf Greuel häufen die Zeiten,  
 Und sah viel Völker verwesen zu Staub,  
 Und alles in Vergessenheit gleiten.

Ich sah die Götter stürzen zur Nacht,  
 Die heiligsten Harfen ohnmächtig zerschellen,  
 Und aus Verwesung neu entfacht,  
 Ein neues Leben zum Tage schwellen.

Zum Tage schwellen und wieder vergehn,  
 Die ewig gleiche Tragödie,  
 Die also wir spielen sonder Verstehn,

Und deren wahnsinnsnächliche Qual  
 Der Schönheit sanfte Gloria  
 Umkränzt als lächelndes Dornenall. (DW:132)

Where 'Traumland' referred only in passing to the city as the narrator's place of residence, this sonnet contains a type of urban image reminiscent of Heym's demonic city poems (though predating these by several years); the same view of the city is also retained in several later poems which treat of the city in particular ('Westliche Dämmerung', 'Vorstadt im Föhn', and others). It may be indicative of the speed with which Trakl's writing moves towards a fully Expressionist type of discourse that the twice repeated "Ich sah", which in Heym's early Berlin poems introduced a realistic mode of observation, is here used to announce distorted dream visions (as the title of the poem suggests). Also reminiscent of Heym is the central emphasis on the cyclical, directionless and desperate movement of life: as "die ewig gleiche Tragödie", life is repetitive, hollow, doomed and beyond comprehension (in 'Die Stadt', written in November 1911, Heym speaks of "Gebären, Tod, gewirktes Einerlei,/ Lallen der Wehen, langer Sterbeschrei,/ Im blinden Wechsel geht es dumpf vorbei"; cf. Heym 1971: 83).

The second stanza introduces the theme of 'Entgötterung', in a way not unfamiliar in later Expressionist work (cf. Eykman 1974:63-107; W. Rothe, in Rothe 1969:37-66). Whereas the prose text 'Maria Magdalena' spoke of man foregoing his salvation, here an intensified image of the death of God and of a soulless existence has prevailed (even if Trakl uses a plural on this occasion). In a wider context, Trakl thus approaches the Expressionist theme of what G. Lukács calls man's "transzendente Heimatlosigkeit" (quoted in Vietta & Kemper 1975:183). The direction which the motif takes in Trakl's early poetry is indicated in the first two stanzas of the sonnet 'Dämmerung', stanzas which contain several echoes of the previous poem:

Zerwühlt, verzerrt bist du von jedem Schmerz  
 Und bebst vom Misston aller Melodien,  
 Zersprungne Harfe du - ein armes Herz,  
 Aus dem der Schwermut kranke Blumen blühen.

Wer hat den Feind, den Mörder dir bestellt,  
 Der deiner Seele letzten Funke stahl,  
 Wie er entgöttert diese karge Welt  
 Zur Hure, hasslich, krank, verwesungsfahl! (DW:133)

The "Du" whom or which the text addresses may be either the sunset to which the title of the poem refers, or the poet's own persona. In both cases however the oncoming darkness is associated with spiritual disintegration. The sense of dissonance in the poem springs not only from the musical references ("Misston aller Melodien", "zersprungne Harfe"), but also from the foregrounding, through conspicuous accumulation, of verbal prefixes denoting fragmentation or loss ("Zerwühlt", "verzerrt", "zerspringen", "entgöttert")<sup>(5)</sup>. The world is degraded to the status of a prostitute and thus seen as pitiable as well as hateful and sinful (the latter two inferences being the result of the opposition "entgöttert" versus "Hure", which has the aspect of an oxymoron and is enhanced by enjambment). The association of the night with spiritual darkness is also repeated in 'Gesang zur Nacht', where the poet speaks of midnight as "Ein Himmel, aus dem kein Gott mehr blüht"(DW:138).

The total absence of any perspective of hope or salvation constitutes one of the central themes of the Sammlung 1909. Where the figure of God appears at all it is mostly as a helpless victim. The crucified Christ is "Ein bleicher Gott, geschändet, angespien", for the poor he represents "ihrer Erdenqualen Schicksalsspiegel" ('Crucifixus', DW:146) - a not uncommon image in Expressionist writing (God "wird zur exemplarischen Figur menschlichen Leidens und menschlicher Erniedrigung", Eykman 1974:66). In the same way the established and conventional practice of religion becomes a purely ritual, senseless act which offers no perspective and remains devoid of hope: the church is the place where "der alten Hoffnung Sternenkränze/ An längst entgöttertem Altar verblühen"(DW:140). The occasional defamiliarization of religious figures enhances the sense of alienation with regard to religion; thus in 'Die Kirche'(DW:163-164) painted figures of god and the angels are viewed seemingly uncomprehendingly as no more than painted figures. Perhaps the clearest statement on the futility of religious ceremony occurs in the poem 'Die tote Kirche':

Der Priester schreitet  
 Vor den Altar; doch übt mit müdem Geist er  
 Die frommen Bräuche - ein jämmerlicher Spieler,  
 Vor schlechten Betern mit erstarrten Herzen,  
 In seelenlosem Spiel mit Brot und Wein.  
 ( )

Ein blutend Schmerzensantlitz  
 Hüllt sich in Dunkelheit und die Verzweiflung  
 Starrt ihm aus vielen Augen nach ins Leere. (DW:151)

The adjectives speak for themselves; the view of the priest as a poor actor (reinforced by the assonance 'Priester/Spieler') in a soulless play obviously stresses the meaninglessness of the proceedings, and recalls the notion (above) of life as an endless and incomprehensible tragedy. Significantly, Marcellus' predicament (in 'Maria Magdalena'), encountering only darkness and silence as answers to his pressing questions, is repeated here: the crucified Christ holds out no hope. This void and hopelessness also reflect on the personal pleas, outside the framework of established religion, which are voiced in several other poems; thus the saint in 'Der Heilige' utters his "Qualschrei": "Exaudi me, o Maria"(DW:150); and each of the three stanzas of 'Blutschuld' ends on the guilt-ridden plea: "Verzeih uns, Maria, in deiner Huld!"(DW:148); but precisely the fact that these anguished cries come at the end of a stanza and of the poem strongly suggests that no reply is forthcoming. In each case man is left with his guilt, despair, bewilderment.

The significance of these themes of 'transzendente Heimatlosigkeit' and 'Metaphysikverlust' becomes fully apparent when they are seen as reversals of Romantic and Neo-Romantic positions. In this respect Novalis' 'Hymnen an die Nacht' (1800) are directly relevant. While Trakl's borrowings from Novalis are well substantiated (cf. Vietta & Kemper 1975:240ff.; Marston 1976:371ff.), the breakdown of beliefs and values in Trakl's work constitutes a negation of the Christian perspective of the 'Hymnen' and inscribes itself in a post-Nietzschean context. The third section of Novalis' 'Hymnen' (cf. Novalis 1958:30-40) describes the poet's grief and despair over the loss of the beloved ("...da in Schmerz aufgelöst meine Hoffnung zerrann...", "von unsäglicher Angst getrieben"), and his overcoming of these feelings as a spiritual bond of "Verklärung" reunites lover and beloved ("...zusammen floss die Wehmut in eine neue, unergründliche Welt", "Zur Staubwolke wurde der Hügel - durch die Wolke sah ich die verklärten Züge der Geliebten"). This scene of

liberation and light is then followed by an interpretation of history and existence in a Christian perspective: Christ's death is not pitiful defeat as in Trakl's Sammlung 1909, but triumph (the cross is "eine Siegesfahne unseres Geschlechts"), and the resurrection promises comfort and redemption for mankind ("Gehoben ist der Stein -/ Die Menschheit ist erstanden").

In contrast with this conception, Trakl's poems clearly view Christianity and the figure of Christ from an angle which totally obscures this moment of hope and renewal of life. But if the religious perspective offers no prospect of liberation, at least one escape route is contemplated. Indeed several poems both before and after 1909 contain more or less veiled references to drugs and alcohol (and biographical evidence amply illustrates Trakl's own inclination in this respect). The poem 'Ermatten' speaks unequivocally of the "Verwesung traumgeschaffner Paradiese"(DW:145) - but the oxymoron ("Verwesung/Paradiese") is again telling, for the flight into intoxication proves incapable of banning "des Alltags grauer Gram". In this respect too the negative transformation of motifs from 'Traumland' is clearly in evidence. In 'Traumland' the term "Rausch" was used mainly in connection with natural smells and colours, and carried overtones of growth, fertility and mild ecstasy. In the Sammlung 1909 the word refers to an unnatural, even perverse kind of intoxication (as in "Rausch der Wohlgerüche und der Weine", DW:145); the experience leaves "ein überwach Gefühl der Scham"(ibid.) and will again provoke feelings of guilt and remorse. Flowers and smells appear in similarly negative constellations of sickness and decay ("So spielt um kranke Blumen noch die Sonne", DW:132; "der Schwermut kranke Blumen", DW:133; "Versunkner Gärten kranke Düfte/ Umkosen leise den Verfall", DW:141), or, when applied to the drug experience, they acquire almost satanic connotations: in 'Sabbath', "Ein Hauch von fiebernd giftigen Gewächsen" brings visions of "blutfarbne Blüten" and "pestfarbne Blumen", "gleich einem Sabbath toller Hexen"(DW:135). The same association of flowers with the pernicious effect of drugs prevails in 'Das Grauen': "Dumpfe Fieberglut/ Lässt giftige Blumen blühen aus meinem Munde"(DW:134).

A final element in the pattern projected by these poems, is the image of man himself. This image, again, largely conforms to early Expressionist conceptions on this point (as found, for example, in

the section 'Sturz und Schrei' in Pinthus' anthology; cf. Pinthus 1959:39-119), and stands at the far end of the gentle serenity of 'Traumland'. The image of man in general and of the individual (the poet's own self) in particular is marked by alienation, fragmentation, forlornness and even terror. As such it is part of the

...tiefgreifende Erfahrung der Verunsicherung, ja Dissoziation des Ich, der Zerrissenheit der Objektwelt, der Verdinglichung und Entfremdung von Subjekt und Objekt, Erfahrungen die ebenfalls und in dieser Radikalität literaturgeschichtlich zum ersten Male im Expressionismus zur Darstellung kommen. (Vietta & Kemper 1975:21)

Not surprisingly, the poems developing this notion show some striking similarities with Heym's work. Thus, in the first section of 'Gesang zur Nacht' (a poem which, in contrast with Nova's 'Hymnen an die Nacht', leaves not a glimmer of hope):

Vom Schatten eines Hauchs geboren  
Wir wandeln in Verlassenheit  
Und sind im Ewigen verloren,  
Gleich Opfern unwissend, wozu sie geweiht.

Gleich Bettlern ist uns nichts zu eigen,  
Uns Toren am verschlossnen Tor.  
Wie Blinde lauschen wir ins Schweigen,  
In dem sich unser Flüstern verlor.

Wir sind die Wanderer ohne Ziele,  
Die Wolken, die der Wind verweht,  
Die Blumen, zitternd in Todeskühle,  
Die warten, bis man sie niedermaht. (DW:135)

The text hardly needs comment: mankind ("wir") appears as dispossessed, lost, blind, uncomprehending; the only perspective is death. Essential in this context is the view of man as a driven creature, unable to determine his own fate; in the poem 'Zigeuner' the gypsies are described likewise as wanderers driven by "ein unseliges Geschick", in search of "jener Heimat, die sie niemals finden"(DW:144). Fulfilment is unthinkable, all movement is either pointless and circular or imposed by an inscrutable, malignant power. The past is equally dead and devoid of sense: the portraits of the ancestors are expressionless and empty:

Verlorner Sinn vergangner Zeiten  
Blickt aus den steinernen Masken her,  
Die schmerzverzerrt und daseinsleer  
Hintrauern in Verlassenheiten. (DW:141)

This general conception of man's predicament is complemented by a number of poems which treat of the 'dissociation of the self' ('Ichdissoziation') in the first person singular. The final stanzas of the sonnet 'Das Grauen' are characteristic of this sense of dissociation:



Aus eines Spiegels trügerischer Leere  
 Hebt langsam sich, und wie ins Ungefähre  
 Aus Graun und Finsternis ein Antlitz: Kain!

Sehr leise rauscht die samtene Portiere,  
 Durchs Fenster schaut der Mond gleichwie ins Leere,  
 Da bin mit meinem Mörder ich allein. (DW:134)

The motif of the murderer occurred already in 'Dämmerung' (above), and will be used in later texts as well ('Kaspar Hauser Lied', 'Traum und Umnachtung'). The characteristic trait of this poem however lies in the presence of an overtly schizophrenic element (cf. Muschg 1961: 111): man's second self acts independently, and reveals a criminal double. The impact of the poem is enhanced by the archetypal aspect of the scene: the reference is not only to the mythical first murder (Cain), but also implies the murder of primal innocence - viewed, however, not as the transition from naïve innocence to maturity, as in 'Traumland', but as a nihilistic, suicidal act. A similar schizophrenic streak is apparent in the poem 'Confiteor', which may be quoted in full:

Die bunten Bilder, die das Leben malt  
 Seh' ich umdüstert nur von Dämmerungen,  
 Wie kraus verzerrte Schatten, trüb und kalt,  
 Die kaum geboren schon der Tod bezwungen.

Und da von jedem Ding die Maske fiel,  
 Seh' ich nur Angst, Verzweiflung, Schmach und Seuchen,  
 Der Menschheit heldenloses Trauerspiel,  
 Ein schlechtes Stück, gespielt auf Gräbern, Leichen.

Mich ekelt dieses wüste Traumgesicht.  
 Doch will ein Machtgebot, dass ich verweile,  
 Ein Komödiant, der seine Rolle spricht,  
 Gezwungen, voll Verzweiflung - Langeweile! (DW:147)

The poem, as the title suggests, has the character of a personal confession. The contrast with 'Traumland' is, again, obvious enough. Whereas in the prose text the colourful richness of life provoked speculations about universal creativity, beauty and contentedness, the opposite is true here: the diversity of outward appearances is regarded as a superficial mask concealing a dissonant world of darkness, horror, anguish and death. For the Expressionist, C. Eykman notes, the visible world is "eine gespensterliche Kulissenwelt" (1974:114). As in 'Drei Träume' and 'Gesang zur Nacht', life, itself unreal, finds itself inexorably in the grip of death. Existence is essentially pathetic: a "Trauerspiel", yet a poor spectacle, without a hero, poorly acted. Man's part in this 'tragedy' is, paradoxically,

that of a poor and miscast actor ("Komödiant"); his role, in other words, is grotesque as well as pathetic. Yet, reluctant and resentful player that he is, no escape appears possible, since an anonymous "Machtgebot" maliciously forces him to stay and play his part. Hence, just as life, which is no more than appearances ("Bilder") and shadow-play ("Schatten"), is dominated by death, so the individual (the 'I'), a pathetic actor in a pathetic tragedy, is dominated by an unspecified, sinister "Machtgebot". The repetition of "bezwungen" and "gezwungen" in lines 4 and 12 reinforces this parallel, in the same way as the repetition of "Verzweiflung" (lines 6 and 12) conveys both the subjective emotion of the reluctant but powerless actor and the objective reality he perceives behind the theatrical masks which life puts on. The moment of 'Ichdissoziation' in this set-up thus comprises two aspects: as an actor, man is not himself but only a shadow of his own self (cf. in 'Gesang zur Nacht': "Ich ward ein toter Schatten im Tag", DW:137), but in spite of his awareness of this he is prevented from becoming himself again, from escaping his macabre tragedy, and the sense of self-alienation increases accordingly. The central paradox of the poem (and paradox and oxymoron are central figures here) lies also in this field: the deceptive appearances of existence may be unmasked (even if the reality behind the mask proves hideous and desperate), but no changes can be brought about; similarly, man remains unable to free himself, even though he is lucidly and painfully aware of his predicament. The key word of the poem, consequently, must be the fateful "Machtgebot" - but this concept, significantly enough, is not further specified or elaborated, or even questioned.

## 3.

In comparison with the poems of the Sammlung 1909 the poetry of the years between, roughly, 1909 and 1912 strikes one as on the whole less introspective and tormented. The gradual introduction of a different vocabulary and a different technique, and hence of a modified conceptual approach to the material, may account for this changed aspect. The most conspicuous characteristics of the poems of this period - the transition to the mature style of the later work - could be subsumed under the use of juxtaposition and parataxis. and the paradoxical trend to objectivation on the one hand, and the

increasing de-materialization of reality on the other. The reliance on juxtaposition and parataxis leads towards the end of the period to the isolated series of images introduced by the impersonal "Es ist" of 'De Profundis' and 'Psalm'(DW:27,32). The impact of Rimbaud is clearly noticeable in both poems; as several commentators have observed, Rimbaud's influence (via K.L.Ammer's translation) may also be discerned behind some other features of Trakl's mature style, from the use of free verse to various syntactical irregularities and sudden shifts in perspective (cf. Lindenberger 1958:21), and, in a broader sense, the crucial transition from a radical foreshortening of logically still coherent images to an apparently alogical imagery (cf. R. Grimm & H.J. Schmidt, in Weisstein 1973:73). This development goes hand in hand with an increasing de-substantialization or de-materialization of reality as it appears for example in the use of neuter nouns with indeterminate meaning or in what K.L. Schneider (1954:123) calls "eine Art adjektivischer Usurpation" of the noun, which affects the referential character of the substantives. At the same time a certain objectivity and distance will be created by the replacement of the first person singular of the poetic voice by a third-person persona, and by the reliance on juxtaposition as a means of objective, detached presentation. The precise meaning of these techniques and features and their coherence should become clearer in the following pages.

In general, the pre-1909 poems, as will have become evident from the quotations in the previous sections, are marked by strongly emotional metaphors and equally expressive compound nouns, adjectives and participles (cf. Blass 1968:156-157), many of them with extreme anguished or apocalyptic overtones. Most of these disappear after 1909, and with the change to a more neutral vocabulary the atmosphere of direct emotionality is toned down as well, and transferred to a more connotative, and hence indirect, system of signification. The number of poems dealing with religious themes also diminishes; Christian attributes and images (bread and wine, the cross, figures of monks and the like) persist in the later work, but instead of forming a primary thematic focus they appear as motifs or symbols whose symbolic or connotative potential then interrelates with the semantic structure of the poem as a whole.

Juxtaposition and parataxis, however, emerge as the major formal

innovations of this phase. Their development may be traced on the basis of three poems. 'De Profundis' (not the poem of the same title mentioned above) probably written in 1909, reads as follows:

Die Totenkammer ist voll Nacht  
Mein Vater schläft, ich halte Wacht.

Des Toten hartes Angesicht  
Flimmert weiss im Kerzenlicht.

Die Blumen duften, die Fliege summt  
Mein Herz lauscht fühllos und verstummt.

Der Wind pocht leise an die Tür.  
Die öffnet sich mit hellem Geklirr.

Und draussen rauscht ein Ährenfeld,  
Die Sonne knistert am Himmelszelt.

Von Früchten voll hängt Busch und Baum  
Und Vogel und Falter schwirren im Raum.

Im Acker mähen die Bauersleut'  
Im tiefen Schweigen der Mittagszeit.

Ich schlag' ein Kreuz auf den Toten hin  
Und lautlos verliert sich mein Schritt im Grün. (DW:153)

The syntactic structure is here exceedingly simple: virtually each line consists of one clause (with two exceptions: stanzas 2 and 7, but even there the lines constitute complete syntagms, and in stanza 7 the second line is an adverbial complement entertaining only a loose syntactic relation with the preceding line). Conjunctions and other syntactic connectors are rare<sup>(6)</sup>: only "und" occurs twice (between sentences), and in the one instance where a causal relationship exists between the two lines of a couplet (in stanza 4) they are demonstratively separated by a full stop. Stanzas 3 to 7 in fact present a series of loosely parallel scenes; the poem gives no binding reason for them to appear in that particular order, as the sequential aspect has been consistently eliminated. Collectively, however, these central stanzas present a string of romantic topoi denoting activity and movement, in opposition to the figure of the dead man in the opening stanzas. The various images in the poem may then also be conceived as impressions received by the son ("Ich") during his wake (as line 6 suggests). In that sense several unifying factors are still indicated in the text, holding the various juxtaposed scenes together. In 'Der Gewitterabend'(1910) the role of these factors has been much reduced, and the poem is clearly more

in line with the 'Reihungsstil' of early Expressionism (cf. Vietta & Kemper 1975:229):

O die roten Abendstunden!  
Flimmernd schwankt am offenen Fenster  
Weinlaub wirr ins Blau gewunden,  
Drinne nisten Angstgespenster.

Staub tanzt im Gestank der Gossen.  
Klirrend stösst der Wind in Scheiben.  
Einen Zug von wilden Rossen  
Blitze grelle Wolken treiben.

Laut zerspringt der Weiherspiegel.  
Möven schreien am Fensterrahmen.  
Feuerreiter sprengt vom Hügel  
Und zerschellt im Tann zu Flammen.

Kranke kreischen im Spitale.  
Bläulich schwirrt der Nacht Gefieder.  
Glitzernd braust mit einem Male  
Regen auf die Dächer nieder. (DW:17-18)

In the previous poem the role of the 'Ich' was reduced to that of a receptor of various impressions from outside. No such 'Ich' is mentioned here. The conceptual unity of the text however can conveniently be reconstructed (taking the title as an obvious clue), progressing from sunset via the references to wind and clouds to the final downpour of rain; these phenomena in turn relate to an observer whose presence is here only implied. The semantic cohesiveness is further reinforced by various repetitions of particular words and metaphors, and by conspicuous patterns of assonance and alliteration. Yet the crucial point about the poem is precisely that due to the use of parataxis and juxtaposition the conceptual coherence and the temporal sequence developed in the poem are not reflected in the syntactic construction, which tends on the contrary to isolate brief individual occurrences and images (whereby their 'isolation' is enhanced by the coincidence of line endings with syntagmatic units). In a letter of July 1910 Trakl himself speaks (with reference to 'Der Gewitterabend') of his "bildhafte Manier, die in vier Strophenzeilen vier einzelne Bildteile zu einem einzigen Eindruck zusammenschmiedet" (DuB:478). Thus, in a way not unlike the deciphering of a Cubist work, reading the poem requires a process of reconstruction and linking of semantic items, in a context from which the syntactic expression of these links has been deleted. The poem indeed appears to depend on a degree of semantic overlapping between individual sentences and lines and on the continual

coordination between the referential and the metaphorical level. The role of repetitions, assonances and alliterations and of the paragrammatic dimension in general lies obviously in this sphere as well, and these elements acquire comparatively greater significance as constructive patterns as the role of the syntactic apparatus diminishes. Trakl's concern with this aspect of poetic construction is already apparent in a review dating from February 1908 ('Gustav Streicher', DW:124-126); the review praises the qualities of Neo-Romantic literature and 'melopoeia' (to use Pound's phrase) in particular, referring to the "Mollklang" of Streicher's language and the "Melos des Wortes", pointing out "wie oft der Klang des Wortes einen unaussprechlichen Gedanken ausdrückt und die flüchtige Stimmung festhält"(DW:126). Naturally, these observations apply in the first place to the preciousness and euphony of a text like 'Traumland', but they retain their relevance with regard to Trakl's later work where suggestive sound-patterns are consistently foregrounded - a point corroborated by the "starke Klangorientiertheit"(Vietta & Kemper 1975:255) of Trakl's handling of the drafts and variants of particular later poems, and by the relatively frequent use of musical structures and patterns of repetition and variation. As W. Killy (1960:66) puts it, Trakl's is a poetry "welche mit Elementen musiziert".

With 'De Profundis'(II) and 'Psalm', both written in 1912 and closely related in origin (as is attested by several similarities and by their shared indebtedness to Rimbaud's 'Enfance'), the 'Reihungsstil' enters another phase. After the deletion of explicit references to an observer at the centre of perception, the semantic coherence of the text is here largely dismantled as well. Thus in the first stanza of 'Psalm', the series of parallel and impersonal "Es ist" constructions tends to emphasize the isolation of each separate statement and line, pre-empting conventional attempts to treat the individual images as part of one over-all scene or situation:

Es ist ein Licht, das der Wind ausgelöscht hat.  
 Es ist ein Heidekrug, den am Nachmittage ein Betrunkener  
 verlässt.  
 Es ist ein Weinberg, verbrannt und schwarz mit Löchern voll  
 Spinnen.  
 Es ist ein Raum, den sie mit Milch getüncht haben.  
 Der Wahnsinnige ist gestorben. Es ist eine Insel der Südsee,  
 Den Sonnengott zu empfangen. Man rührt die Trommeln.  
 Die Männer führen kriegerische Tänze auf. ..  
 Die Frauen wiegen die Hüften in Schlinggewächsen und  
 Feuerblumen,  
 Wenn das Meer singt. O unser verlorenes Paradies. (DW:32)

With the introduction of a free verse form, a number of formal elements have also disappeared (metre, rhyme) whose properties might have signalled semantic relations. Taking the stanza as a whole, lines 1 to 4 could nevertheless be conceptualized as belonging to a fairly coherent scene, in contrast with the South Sea environment of the following lines. The relation between the two parts may be indicated in the final phrase, "O unser verlorenes Paradies", suggesting an opposition between the primal innocence of the exotic scene in lines 5 to 9 and the emptiness and desolation which the images in the first part seem to have in common. Such a reading however is based on the adoption (itself based on conventional expectations regarding semantic coherence) of a general perspective for the whole stanza and ultimately for the whole poem, a perspective which also suggests a reading of the text along metaphorical or symbolic lines and not as a factual statement (as was still the case in the previous two poems). This perspective, it appears, becomes progressively more difficult to sustain as the text continues its pattern of juxtaposition, and as continually changing levels of discourse and a degree of referential uncertainty undermine the possibility of an interpretation based on a predisposition to find conceptual coherence on the level of the poem's 'signified'. Characteristic in this respect is the fact that in the first draft of the poem the phrase "O unser verlorenes Paradies" (which formed the basis of the assumed opposition between the two parts of stanza 1 and hence for its metaphorical reading) was followed by two similar phrases later in the text ("Es ist der Untergang, dem wir zutreiben", and "Wie eitel ist alles!", DW:201-202). In the final version however these phrases have both been deleted, and with them the possibility to extend to the whole poem the interpretation which still seemed to hold for the first stanza. A further unsettling factor, apart from the continued enumeration of isolated scenes and images which do not seem to allow the abstraction of a common denominator, consists in the apparent 'unreality' of Trakl's language as referential discourse. This is particularly obvious in the third stanza:

Die fremde Schwester erscheint wieder in jemand's bösen  
 Träumen.  
 Ruhend im Haselgebüsch spielt sie mit seinen Sternen.  
 Der Student, vielleicht ein Doppelgänger, schaut ihr lange  
 vom Fenster nach.  
 Hinter ihm steht sein toter Bruder, oder er geht die alte  
 Wendeltreppe herab. (DW:33)

Adverbs and conjunctions like "vielleicht" and "oder", which occur frequently in Trakl's work in similar positions, contribute to the creation of semantic indeterminacy (cf. below), in lines which in themselves are highly 'irreal' and phantasmagoric. The figure of the student as 'double' and in conjunction with the image of the 'sister' would, on the basis of references in other poems (and irrespective of biographical evidence), seem to invite the identification of the student with the poetic persona, but that approach is again rendered unlikely by the consideration that the large number of personae adopted by the poet in other texts never includes the figure of "Student" as "Doppelgänger". On the other hand "der Fremde" is a frequently used persona, but here he only appears in the sentence "Man begräbt den Fremden" - which may or may not be associated with the statement "Der Wahnsinnige ist gestorben" in the first stanza. Thus a mode of reading which yielded acceptable results in previous poems here runs continually into difficulties. The problems of interpretation along conventional lines are further confounded by unexpected changes in the level of discourse, like the shift to metaphorical statement within the sentence "Die Kinder des Hausmeisters hören zu spielen auf und suchen das Gold des Himmels", and by the introduction of deliberate obscurity and increasing metaphorization, as in the change from "Wo immer man geht rührt man ein früheres Leben" in the first version of the poem to "Auf silbernen Sohlen gleiten frühere Leben vorbei" in the final text. Similarly, where the poem's closing line in the first draft ("Wie eitel ist alles!") read like a general meta-thematic statement on the transience of things, offering a reliable vantage point for the interpretation, the final version ends on the line:

Schweigsam über der Schädelstätte öffnen sich Gottes  
goldene Augen.

- a characteristically ambivalent image (cf. Berger 1971:106), since the word "Schweigsam" appears to negate the conventionally positive associations going with "goldene Augen". In its ambivalence however this final line only reinforces the sense of fragmentation and alienation which the poem as a whole conveys through the juxtapositioning of a large number of single, mostly irreal or unsettling images. In other words, where in earlier poems alienation was used as a central thematic element, treated discursively and in the first person singular (in this respect too a title like 'Confiteor' is more



revealing than may at first be apparent), here the notion of incoherence and alienation has become part of the writing as such. Given the overtones of emptiness, absence, desolation and irreality which mark the majority of the images, the accumulation of highly unpredictable statements and scenes allowing (at best) only the establishment of partial, tentative and ambivalent relations between them projects in effect a state of alienation in the very structure of the poetic discourse, in a much more radical way than was previously possible. The problems pertaining to the determination of the semantic content of particular terms, figures and images may be resolved only by taking into account the entire structure of Trakl's poetic language. Indeed in his mature work semantic indeterminacy and polyvalence stand in such conspicuous opposition to the limited thematic range of his poetry and the frequency with which particular terms and constellations recur, that the search for the referential 'meaning' of individual occurrences invariably results in a continually regressive, complex and essentially paradoxical and open-ended pattern of cross-references. For the moment, however, these patterns of cross-references may be the most propitious inroad to determine the principles underlying Trakl's mature writing.

## 4.

The elusive semantic structure of Trakl's language has already led to characterizations of his poems as 'cyphers' (Killy 1960) or as instances of 'figural' language (Schier 1970), as 'autonomous' metaphors (C. Heselhaus, in von Wiese 1957) or 'absolute' metaphors (Hermand 1972). An examination of one well-documented aspect, Trakl's use of colour terms, may prove instructive as a means to explore the precise workings of his poetic writing. The following paragraphs, then, do not attempt to determine the 'semantic core' (as Philipp 1971:45 calls it) of individual colour terms; in virtually all cases only the vaguest approximation is possible in this field anyway (as existing studies bear out; cf. Mautz 1957; Philipp 1971: 35ff.; Rovini 1971:101ff.; Palmier 1972:232ff.): seemingly uniform and unequivocal patterns in particular poems are inevitably subject to modifications and counter-examples on the basis of other poems. On the other hand, a description of the transition from the

conventional and referential to the idiosyncratic and hermetic use of colour terms may shed light on the development and the functioning of Trakl's 'universe of meaning'.

Colour terms are relatively rare in the early poems, and they have a predominantly descriptive function. They occur in phrases like "Die roten Wälder flüstern and verdämmern"(DW:134), "das Himmelsblau"(DW:142), "blut-purpurne Himmel"(DW:131), "bläulich Gefleck und brauner Staub"(DW:158). The later work sees a gradual de-construction of this descriptive and attributive character of the colour terms. Generally speaking this de-construction comprises several closely related moments, the first of which consists in the dissolution of the conceptual unity of the colour adjective and the associated substantive. In the syntagm 'adjective plus substantive' the semantic characteristics of the latter are no longer the determining element for the selection of the colour adjective. In other words, the noun ceases to be 'selectionally dominant'(Chomsky 1965: 116)<sup>(?)</sup> - as is in fact the case in metaphorical usage in general (ibid.:148ff.). Thus, although the combination (colour) adjective plus noun remains a very 'stable' syntagm in Trakl's language (cf. Dietz 1959:49-50), there is a considerable loosening of selectional constraints. As E. Philipp (1971:40) puts it: "...das Farbwort [steht] isoliert neben seinem Kontextpartner und emanzipiert sich vom in ihm mitgegebenen sachlichen Gehalt". As a result a second aspect becomes apparent, especially in cases which can be considered as 'bold metaphors' ("kühne Metapher", cf. Weinrich 1963). Where the noun no longer functions as the dominant semantic unit, this leads not only to a foregrounding and defamiliarization of the colour adjective (because of the selectional deviation), but also to the wide-ranging and characteristic phenomenon that in Trakl's language "...die Merkmalsvorstellung die Gegenstandsvorstellung überwältigt und sogar gänzlich verdrängt"(K.L. Schneider 1954:94; cf. also Dietz 1959:57). The broader context to this formal characteristic is indicated in W. Killy's argument that in Trakl's work qualities seem to predominate over phenomena; what the poems offer is only "...ein allgemeiner Rahmen von Sinnfälligkeit, welcher mehrfache Weisen der Realisierung aufnimmt"(Killy 1960:41). This feature is in turn correlated with the instability and the de-substantialization of the phenomenal world in Trakl's writing (cf. below). The diverse applicability of colour (and other)

adjectives should, clearly, also be seen in the context of Trakl's relatively limited arsenal of images, the restricted thematic field covered by his poems, and the almost formulaic patterns (including for example alliterative patterns) which are regularly employed.

A further moment, then, in the de-construction of the descriptive and attributive quality of the colour adjective presupposes the above context. It may be called the 'intra-textual' semantic dimension, and concerns the 'deictic' aspect of individual colour terms (cf. Philipp 1971:52). Given the restricted thematic world of Trakl's poetry and the recurrent linguistic and formal patterns, each individual occurrence also refers back to other, comparable occurrences in other poems and other contexts, so that, through a process of 'semantic accumulation' (Mukařovsky 1976:53ff.)<sup>(8)</sup>, a kind of paradigmatic network of echoes and associations is established. Particular nouns occur in conjunction with various colour adjectives, and vice-versa the same colour adjective can be paired with a large number of different nouns. Apart from the fact that colour terms may function as "affektive Farbmeter" (Mautz 1957:20ff.) or as "Metapher der Gestimmtheit" (Dietz 1959:57), and irrespective of the possible presence of a symbolic or intertextual component (as in "blaue Blume", with its echo of Novalis; cf. Vietta & Kemper 1975:240), the semantic value of individual colour terms will be determined not only by their particular occurrence in this or that poem (i.e. by its local, 'textual' value), but will find itself also continually complicated and modified by the implicit intra-textual network of references and echoes established by positionally similar occurrences in other poems. This phenomenon evidently contributes to the hermeticism and the semantic elusiveness of Trakl's writing, and affects the whole range of his vocabulary. Thus nouns, which would normally be conceptually stable elements, not only cease to be selectionally dominant, but are inevitably drawn into the complex of meaning lying behind particular colour adjectives. At the same time, and for obvious reasons, the 'semantic ambience' (Mukařovsky 1976:44) of these terms is essentially multivalent and dynamic, since it is modified, expanded, diversified and reinforced by each individual occurrence, the semantic relation between noun and adjective being always reciprocal (for neither is manifestly dominant), so that individual colour adjectives (and hence the whole paradigmatic complex) are likewise affected by the semantic

field of particular substantives and the particular context (the poem) in which the syntagm occurs.

As Trakl's poetry develops, the actual process of the deconstruction of the descriptive and attributive qualities of colour terms is accomplished in a variety of ways. Still fairly close to the primarily visual designations of the early work are those metaphors in which the semantic relations conflict with the syntactic relation. This type of metathesis appears in metaphors like "der schwarze Flug der Vögel"(DW:63), "eines Gongs braungoldne Klänge"(DW:18), "die braune Stille der Eichen"(DW:218), "der Eichen braunes Schweigen"(DW:24), "das goldene Schweigen der Ebene"(DW:161). The last example however is indicative of the complications which may arise in this field, for the meaning of "golden" is determined not only by the context of the poem (corn fields in summer), but also by the connotations of 'golden' in conventional usage and in other poems by Trakl (cf. the final line of 'Psalm', above).

A similar pattern is also at work in combinations like "die blauen Glocken des Abends"(DW:65), "des Abends blaue Taube"(DW:87), "des Abends blauer Flügel"(DW:62), and "blaue Klage eines moosigen Waldquells"(DW:185), "blaue Klage eines Wildbachs"(DW:96), "das blaue Lachen des Quells"(ibid.). In each case a type of metathesis (in the above sense) occurs, but the 'semantic ambience' of the colour terms is also directly affected by a large number of instances where 'blue' carries religious connotations of various kinds. Thus in the first two metaphors just quoted, "Glocken" and "Taube" belong in the same category with phrases like "blaues Orgelgeleier"(DW:60) (which is not explicable by metathesis), "ein blaues Tabernakel"(DW:176), "in heiliger Bläue..."(DW:47), "Sonjas Leben, blaue Stille"(DW:60, itself complicated by the allusion to Dostoevsky), "blaue Stimme des Engels"(DW:189). The religious component is discernible in the terminology itself, but carries overtones of a more general religious frame of reference which includes, for example, the symbolic value of 'blue' as connoting saintliness and virtue (with particular reference to the Virgin Mary). Trakl further speaks of "das Läuten bläulicher Blumen"(DW:207), which recalls the above-mentioned cases involving church music and the pealing of bells as well as, more immediately, phrases like "das Heilige blauer Blumen"(DW:63) and beyond these the significance of the 'blaue Blume' motif in Novalis'

work and in Romanticism in general. Yet further complications for the semantic content of such constellations arise when designations like "ein blaues Wild" and "ein blaues Tier" are taken into account, which are frequently used in the later poems to refer to the poetic persona or as appositions qualifying other human figures, in varying contexts. If, due to visual and religious associations, the term 'blue' still appears to have a reasonably stable semantic core, this stability is likely to be undermined again by the unequivocally negative overtones of some other combinations. An untitled poem from the period 1912-14 has a mad woman ("die Irre") living "in blauen Zimmern"(DW:177), and where the first version of 'Trübsinn' speaks of "des toten Freundes Hand"(DW:31), the second version has "des Freundes blaue Hand"(DW:200), where the colour adjective carries both a visual sense and connotations of death.

An additional aspect concerning the interaction between literal and highly connotative meanings of the term 'blue' involves the relation between "blau" and "hyazinthen" (cf. Staiger 1973:279). In a number of instances the latter functions as an equivalent of the former. References to "blaue Stimme" stand side by side with "hyazinthene Stimme"(DW:55); the "blaue Stille" of the night (DW:192) also occurs as "die Hyazinthene Stille der Nacht"(DW:97), and as "hyazinthene Dämmerung"(DW:187); in 'Unterwegs' the phrase "das Hyazinthene Antlitz der Dämmerung" is followed four lines later by "Eine blaue Wolke/ Ist dein Antlitz auf mich gesunken in der Dämmerung"(DW:48). The wider implications of this interrelation become clearer however when the two terms are considered in the light of the Elis motif and the Novalis allusions ('blaue Blume', 'Hyazinth') accompanying them (cf. Marston 1976), in particular a line like "Dein Leib ist eine Hyazinthe" in 'An den Knaben Elis' (DW:49-50) and the prominence of the colour 'blue' in 'Elis'(DW:50-51).

Ramifications of this kind, and the ensuing semantic multivalence, are an integral part of Trakl's writing. They are, of course, by no means limited to colour terms. To take but one example, a metaphor like the above-mentioned "der schwarze Flug der Vögel" also relates to a whole series of instances involving the ambivalent (and not, as Staiger 1973:276 holds, exclusively negative or mysterious) connotations of the flight of birds. Phrases like "dunkle Deutung des Vogelflugs"(DW:17), "des Vogelflugs wirre Zeichen"(DW:19),

"Unsäglich ist der Vögel Flug"(DW:61) occur alongside instances like "Voll Harmonien ist der Flug der Vögel"(DW:79), "der Vögel wundervolle Flügen" which are "gleich frommen Pilgerzügen"(DW:35). The flight of crows is like "eine Sonate"(DW:56), although elsewhere it is "wie ein Leichenzug"(DW:9). In fact the pattern of associated and related figures could be extended almost indefinitely, bringing into the open a continuing series of parallels and paradoxes. One extension of the motif involving the flight of birds includes an even more wide-ranging, if more homogeneous, series of instances referring to bird calls and their meaning. Several early poems have such conventional metaphors as "Die Drossel lacht aus den Büschen her" (DW:154) and such like, but in most of the later poems bird calls acquire ominous overtones. The lines

Elis, wenn die Amsel im schwarzen Wald ruft,  
Dieses ist dein Untergang. (DW:17)

are related to a host of similar instances linking 'Amsel', 'Drossel', or unspecified birds with terms like '(sanfte) Klage', '(dunkler) Ruf' or 'Untergang' (cf. DW:35,53,70,77,174,183). Stars and their constellations are in turn seen in several poems as equally foreboding and ominous, and thus a new related perspective unfolds, revealing further and further ramifications - all of which, however, can only be grasped (however tentatively) in the context of what will later be called the existential and historical framework of Trakl's poetic writing, and not on the basis of textual evidence, which (so much should be clear) becomes more and more a matter of infinite regression.

Returning to Trakl's colour terms, then, another aspect of his handling of them concerns the technique of de-substantialization - the dissolution, that is, of "das reale Substrat" of reality (Staiger 1973:280) in favour of the creation of a semi-abstract, self-contained language world. This process is never quite complete, as the poems continue to refer to elements of the observable world, but the tendency is clearly discernible and forms part of Trakl's hermetic poetic universe. The background to this type of de-substantialization may be found in a kind of pictorial schematization which in some early poems leads to the presentation of reality in its purely pictorial aspect (cf. lines like "Im weissen Plan sind Dörfer eingemalt", DW:171; "Ferne schweben Frauengesichter/ Geisterhaft ins Blau gemalt", DW:176). A similar but more radical pictorial

schematization seems to produce such metaphors (structurally not unlike the metathesis metaphors mentioned above) as "rote Blumenpöhle" (DW:160) and a number of related cases like "die gelben Mauer des Sommers" (DW:40), "die roten Mauer" of autumn (*ibid.*), "die schwarzen Mauer des Abends" (DW:103). Roughly the same effect also results from the use of colour adjectives as adverbs, as in "In einer Kinderschar fliegt rot ein Kleid" (DW:30), where the colour designation is syntactically dissociated from the noun it qualifies ("Kleid"), or in conjunction with more 'abstract' nouns which do not normally attract colour attributes: "Blauer schon die Winde wehn" (DW:163), "Schwärzlich folgt der Schritt dem Mond" (DW:183) - with more or less pronounced activation of additional connotative meanings.

A further step in the elimination of the 'real substratum' from the designation becomes discernible in the 'substantivation' of colour terms while their actual referent recedes into indistinctness. This device may be related to conventional usage where terms like 'das Grün' may stand for nature and flora in general, although Trakl also uses this term without the definite article normally required ("Hell Grünes blüht, ein dunkles Grün verwest", DW:199; "tönendes Grün und Rot", DW:20). Substantivation of the colour term nearly always implies referential ambivalence or indeterminacy. Thus in 'Die Verfluchten' (DW:58-59) the line "Im Dunkel der Kastanien lacht ein Rot" appears to point to a natural phenomenon, but in a comparable line further in the poem, "Im Dunkel der Kastanien schwebt ein Blau", the colour term refers unmistakably to a woman's cloak ("Der süsse Mantel einer fremden Frau"). In lines like "Die frierenden Arme/ Hielten Schwarzes umschlungen" (DW:178) complete uncertainty prevails as to the identity of "Schwarzes", and various literal and connotative fields of meaning present themselves simultaneously.

Trakl's handling of the attribute 'golden' for the sun is characteristic in this respect. In several conventional metaphors the sun is designated as "die goldne Scheibe der Sonne" (DW:187) or as "ein goldner Karren" (DW:12) (the latter phrase, clearly, points not only to the classical inventory, but also to Hölderlin's Helios, as also the early 'Morgenlied' indicates). Trakl modifies and extends this received usage however by speaking of the sun as "ein goldner Kahn", both in self-explaining appositions ("ein goldner Kahn sank die Sonne", DW:209) and in less obvious metaphors ("Am

Hügel sinkt ein goldener Kahn..."DW:218). The fact that this image too is immediately confounded by a series of other occurrences of the 'goldner Kahn' in different contexts and with different meanings (as in "Ein goldener Kahn/ Schaukelt, Elis, dein Herz...", in 'Elis',DW:50; and the "ängstlicher Kahn" which presumably refers to the figure of man and man's "goldnes Bildnis" in 'Klage',DW:94) may be set aside for the moment. From the point of view of de-substantialization and de-materialization it is interesting to observe that the line "Am Hügel sinkt ein goldener Kahn" which was just quoted comes from the first draft of the poem 'Vorhölle':

Am Saum des Waldes - es wohnen dort die Schatten der Toten -  
Am Hügel sinkt ein goldener Kahn, der Wolken blaue Ruh  
Weidend in der braunen Stille der Eichen. (DW:218)

and that this passage subsequently came to read:

An herbstlichen Mauern, es suchen Schatten dort  
Am Hügel das tönende Gold  
Weidende Abendwolken  
In der Ruh verdorrter Platanen. (DW:72)

The virtual absence of punctuation here makes the relation between "das tönende Gold" and the "Abendwolken" ambiguous (all the more so as clouds also adopt the quality 'golden' on occasions, and even in the form of a substantivized apposition: "ein Goldnes/ Verlor sich die Wolke..."DW:69), but the most conspicuous alteration consists in the impossibility to recognize the feature 'sun' in the phrase "das tönende Gold". The originally implied 'tenor' of the metaphor has totally disappeared from the textual surface, the quality "Gold" has acquired substantive status, and its potential connotative range has been greatly expanded, for the phrase "...es suchen Schatten dort/ Am Hügel das tönende Gold" has now entered a different sphere of associations, linked on the one hand with the conventional connotations of 'gold' and, on the other, with a number of specific instances in other poems where motifs of search or pursuit are coupled with 'gold', such as "Besessne jagen goldnen Träumen nach"(DW:169) or the line from 'Psalm' quoted above: "Die Kinder ( ) suchen das Gold des Himmels"(DW:33) (conversely, speculation is now permitted as to whether in this line from 'Psalm' the term "Gold" also implies the feature 'sun'). In this sense, then, "das tönende Gold" stands not only for the material 'gold' as such, but also appears as the entirely de-substantialized and grammatically substantivized form of a formerly attributive quality pertaining to 'sun'. In that respect, too, the process involved has its parallel cases. Where



in one poem Trakl speaks in a conventional phrase of "das herbstliche Gold der Ulme"(DW:58), a substantivized form appears as an apposition in "ein Goldnes/ Verlor sich die Wolke" (above), and as a fully autonomous if referentially vague category in a line like "In Goldnem schwebt ein Duft von Thymian"(DW:26). Although in some cases a semantic field can be outlined to accommodate indeterminate references of this type, the issue of their precise semantic and poetic value is invariably complicated by the network of cross-references and parallel constructions, as well as by conventional associations and particular symbolic attributions (as in 'Winkel am Wald', where the line "In alten Kellern reift der Wein ins Goldne, Klare" is strangely coupled with "Auch zeigt sich sanftem Wahnsinn oft das Goldne, Wahre", DW:23; both recall, through parallel and opposition, the first version of 'Afra', which has: "Ein frommer Geist reift ins Kristallne, Klare", DW:211; etcetera.).

Two final points may be briefly mentioned in connection with the defamiliarization of colour designations. The first of these relates to the foregrounding of the autonomous value of colour terms in 'bold' metaphors (cf. above, Weinrich 1963)<sup>(9)</sup>. In their weakest form these appear in such combinations as "im braunen Grün"(DW:182) or "die weisse Nacht"(DW:67), where the semantic incompatibility is only superficial and can easily be accounted for. This is not the case in metaphors like "im rosigen Schnee"(DW:182), "roter Schnee"(DW:60), "schwärzliche Flammen"(DW:61), where the dissociation between adjective and noun is sharply in evidence and, as the semantic predominance of the noun decreases, the 'factual' character of the statement is affected as well, with a corresponding increase in the connotative, expressive and symbolic value of the adjective. The second additional point concerns a kind of synaesthesia, a transposition from one sphere of perception to another. Thus a term like "silbern", which would seem to appeal to sight, or, in a figurative sense, to hearing, is also applied to the sense of smell, in the line "Narzissenduft, der silbern dich berührt"(DW:161). Trakl further speaks of "der blaue Ton der Flöte"(DW:69), "Wind, weisse Stimme"(DW:181) and so on. The combination with "Stimme" is widely used, with varying degrees of abstraction, from "die Silberstimme des Windes"(DW:51) and "die Silberstimme der Sterne" (DW:53) to "die Silberstimme des Engels"(DW:53) and "die blaue Stimme des Engels"(DW:189). As in previous cases, the interweaving

of descriptive and metaphorical with expressive and symbolic values, and the uncertainty as to when these apply and to what degree, precludes any 'stable' interpretation in individual instances and makes recourse to the virtually unlimited paradigmatic set of associated occurrences inevitable - even though it then soon becomes apparent that a large number of references and images remain highly enigmatic all the same and that no well-defined and unequivocal picture can be reconstructed anyway, since paradoxical and openly contradictory associations and connotations are allowed to exist side by side.

## 5.

The preceding paragraphs should have made it clear that it is impossible to speak of a clear-cut 'colour system' or of 'colour symbolism' in Trakl's work, since the intra-textual network which circumscribes the 'semantic ambience' of particular designations is manifestly open-ended and infinitely regressive. This open-endedness stands in close correlation to the referential vagueness of Trakl's language, the shifting patterns of association and opposition on various levels, and the syntactic and semantic indeterminacy of his mature poetry. As a result, a general conceptual indeterminacy is accompanied by the constant activation of secondary (expressive, connotative) levels of signification, which seem to revolve around a group of basic, 'deeper' motifs and themes (alienation, doom, guilt, decay). These then constitute what may be termed the existential and historical conception which informs the poetic discourse. It may be useful, before further aspects of syntactic and semantic indeterminacy are examined, to trace the major categories and components of this basic conception, and to see then how these relate to Trakl's technique. Naturally, the starting point for this outline is provided by the poems of the Sammlung 1909 and by the negative categories outlined there. These centred around the notion of self-alienation, bewilderment and the loss of values<sup>(10)</sup>. In the later work these notions are transposed from the thematic to what must be seen as the structural level (as was suggested in regard to 'Psalm'). The discursive and introspective treatment of these notions is gradually abandoned in favour of juxtaposition, objectivation of the poetic persona into a third-person figure (subsequently 'de-humanized'

by the use of non-human and even inanimate designations), a type of discourse emphasizing the de-materialization and de-substantialization of reality, and syntactic and semantic polyvalence and indeterminacy.

One aspect of the general frame of reference correlated with these formal characteristics is clearly indicated in the final stanzas of the poem 'An Johanna' (1914):

Wer sind wir? Blaue Klage  
Eines moosigen Waldquells,  
Wo die Veilchen  
Heimlich im Frühling duften.

Ein friedliches Dorf im Sommer  
Beschirmte die Kindheit einst  
Unsres Geschlechts,  
Hinsterbend nun am Abend-

Hügel die weissen Enkel  
Traumen wir die Schrecken  
Unseres nächtigen Blutes  
Schatten in steinerner Stadt. (DW:185)

The lines contain a number of oppositions basic to Trakl's whole outlook. "Dorf" is opposed to "Stadt" not only in temporal terms (as in 'Traumland') but also, more importantly, by means of the adjectives "friedlich" and "steinern" (whereby intra-textual evidence shows mostly negative connotations relating to "steinern", in particular in combination with "Stadt" and in such images as 'bread and wine' turning into stone). "Kindheit" is likewise opposed to the present ("nun"), when "wir" are identified as "die weissen Enkel" and "Schatten" (whereby "Schatten", again, carries the overtones of self-alienation it had in the Sammlung 1909 and implies the reverse of the growth to maturity suggested in 'Traumland'). The sheltered existence of childhood has been transformed into "Schrecken" and a life which has death built into it ("Beschirmte" becomes the assonant "Hinsterbend"). Spring and summer have become an "Abendhügel" (autumn?) and develop further into night (winter perhaps, but also the spiritual night of the Sammlung 1909). The question "Wer sind wir?" receives either an ambiguous and incomprehensible reply, or none at all. The sexual overtones ("Die Schrecken/ Unseres nächtigen Blutes") are obvious enough, but the loss of innocence is again loaded with terror and guilt, in line with the sense of criminality and incest suggested in several other poems.

In 'Traum und Umnachtung' (1914), the prose text which closes

Sebastian im Traum, a similar antithetical structure is developed:

O, dass draussen Frühling wäre und im blühenden Baum ein lieblicher Vogel sänge. Aber gräulich verdorrt das sparliche Grün an den Fenstern der Nachtlichen und es sinnend die blutenden Herzen noch Böses. O, die dämmernden Frühlingswege des Sinnenden. Gerechter erfreut ihn die blühende Hecke, die junge Saat des Landmanns und der singende Vogel, Gottes sanftes Geschöpf; die Abendglocke und die schöne Gemeinde der Menschen. Dass er seines Schicksals vergesse und des dornigen Stachels. () O der Schauer, da jegliches seine Schuld weiss, dornige Pfade geht. () Ein Schatten ging er den Saumpfad hinab unter herbstlichen Sternen. Schnee fiel, und blaue Finsternis erfüllte das Haus. Eines Blinden klang die harte Stimme des Vaters und beschwor das Grauen. Weh der gebeugten Erscheinung der Frauen. Unter erstarrten Händen verfielen Frucht und Gerät dem entsetzten Geschlecht. Ein Wolf zerriss das Erstgeborene und die Schwestern flohen in dunkle Gärten zu knöchernen Greisen. Ein unmachteter Seher sang jener an verfallenen Mauern und seine Stimme verschlang Gottes Wind. O, die Wollust des Todes. O ihr Kinder eines dunklen Geschlechts. Silber schimmern die bösen Blumen des Bluts an jenes Schläfe, der kalte Mond in seinen zerbrochenen Augen. O, der Nachtlichen; o, der Verfluchten.

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Schweigende versammelten sich jene am Tisch; Sterbende brachen sie mit wächsernen Händen das Brot, das blutende. Weh der steinernen Augen der Schwester, da beim Mahle ihr Wahnsinn auf die mächtige Stirne des Bruders trat, der Mutter unter leidenden Händen das Brot zu Stein ward. O der Verwesten, da sie mit silbernen Zungen die Hölle schwiegen. (DW:82-83)

Where in the previous poem the contrast was between past and present, here wish and 'visionary' reality are opposed: the images of peacefulness, rightfulness and wholeness in the first part adopt the subjunctive, and contrast sharply with terms like "Schicksal", "das Böse", "Grauen", "Erstarrung", "Fluch", "Verfall", "Stein", "Verwesung" in the second part - a series of key words in Trakl's later work, and terms which also occur in other constellations in other poems and in other parts of 'Traum und Umnachtung'. The adjectives reinforce the main oppositions, either directly or indirectly (in the sense that 'neutral' adjectives acquire additional meanings from the context, meanings which are then transferred to other, often apparently 'neutral' contexts as well). It is not difficult to recognize in these oppositions the pattern originally indicated in 'Psalm' (first version), in the three statements: "O unser verlorenes Paradies", "Es ist der Untergang, dem wir zutreiben", and "Wie eitel ist alles!".

Throughout Trakl's poems, in fact, a number of associated lines appear to speak on this general level. They seem to stand as over-all

'meta-thematic' statements, separated from the poetic discourse in the rest of the text, and offering observations of a more general nature on man's predicament, often in the form of exclamations. In several cases also these statements build directly on the major categories outlined in the Sammlung 1909. Thus the third section of 'Heiterer Frühling' begins with the line "Wie scheint doch alles Werdende so krank!" (DW:29), which recalls the closing line of the early poem 'Abendgang': "Das Werdende sei dein Schmerz!" (DW:149). The poem 'Anif' interrupts its scenic passages with "O, wie alles ins Dunkel hinsinkt" and "Gross ist die Schuld des Geborenen" (DW:63-64) (with characteristic ambiguity as to whether 'der Geborene' or 'das Geborene' should be understood). In 'Allerseelen' human figures appear as "arme Puppen", "voll Angst und Demut", and direct echoes from the early work are unmistakable in

Unwirklich scheint der Lebendigen Reigen  
Und wundervoll zerstreut im Abendwind.

Ihr Leben ist so wirr, voll trüber Plagen. (DW:21)

In this atmosphere of desolation and doom, the temporal and historical framework can, at the very best, contain just a glimmer of hope. The general view in this respect is identical to that indicated in 'An Johanna'. The poems speak of "Vergebliche Hoffnung des Lebens" (DW:75), "Erinnerung, begrabene Hoffnung" (DW:90), and in one of the dramatic fragments the question "Wer sind wir?" is answered by a desperate exclamation: "O vergebliche Hoffnung des Lebens; o das versteinerte Brot!" (DW:253). The Elis figure has its place in this same temporal perspective (and hence not just as a figure of pristine innocence, but as signifying "die verlorene Reinheit schlechthin", Hermand 1972:273), and so does the figure of Kaspar Hauser: initial innocence (the sphere to which the terms 'ernsthaft', 'gerecht' and 'rein' belong) is inexorably threatened by the 'murderer', and thus doomed. Yet in some poems the earlier oppositions appear to be inverted. In 'Abendländisches Lied' the "bittere Stunde des Untergangs" is counterpointed by "der süsse Gesang der Auferstandenen" (DW:67), and thus seems to leave room for a perspective of resurrection. In 'An die Verstummen' a similar contrast is established between the horrors of the city and a final image in which out of these horrors "das erlösende Haupt" emerges (DW:69), again alluding to the motif of salvation and redemption. These images, however, remain isolated cases which no more than

hint at the possibility of salvation, in as non-committal and ambiguous a manner as the final image of 'Psalm'; they are, moreover, outweighed and neutralized by the overwhelming negativity of the dominant categories of Trakl's poetic world (cf. Calbert 1974:78) and by the instability, fragmentation and alienation manifested in the structure of the discourse itself.

Clearly, Trakl's work cannot be dissociated from the "historische Strukturkrise des modernen Subjekt- und Wirklichkeitsbegriffs" which marks early Expressionist writing in general (Vietta & Kemper 1975:185). It comes as no surprise, then, to find that the basic premises of Trakl's writing interlink with Heym's conception. As it is, both Heym's and Trakl's earliest work stands under the aegis of Noe-Romanticism. The rejection of the late nineteenth century modes eventually implies in both cases the temporary adoption of a stance of objective observation (in Heym's early city poems, in Trakl's early juxtaposition poems), of various forms of depersonalization (even if these manifest themselves in somewhat different ways), and ultimately of free verse. Where both poets employ only a limited degree of metaphORIZATION in the transitional phase to their mature work, this feature is subsequently radically intensified. Heym's poetry then moves towards monumental and 'demonic' distortion and finally to the late 'cypher'-like poems, with the use of situational indeterminacy (in the 'entgrenzende Metapher') and a narrowing of the thematic field. In Trakl's case growing de-substantialization and increasing semantic and syntactic polyvalence result in the construction of an eminently self-centred, hermetic and de-materialized poetic universe, with an equally restricted thematic range (as his limited lexicon indicates; cf. Wetzel 1971; Calbert 1974:209).

The similarity in outlook as it appears in Heym's diary and in Trakl's letters is no less remarkable, in particular where it concerns such subjects as dissociation of the self and the experience of the world as dominated by some incomprehensible malevolent force. As early as 1906 Heym's diary contains entries like "...das Leben ist mir bis auf den Tod feindlich", and "Wir sind von einer Kette von Rätselfn umgeben"(Heym 1960:72,75-76). In later years he professes to deny man's free will and to prefer to believe instead in a malignant god or a 'deus absconditus' of sorts. Echoes of a

Nietzschean hatred of Christianity which he sees as "krank am galiläischen Mitleid" (ibid.:60) alternate with contentions that not divine providence but a blind and malicious fate governs the world. Trakl's letters evince much the same attitude, but without Heym's assumed front of rebellious and frustrated vitality. In a letter of October 1908 he writes:

...Und einen Augenblick spürte ich etwas von dem Druck, der auf den Menschen für gewöhnlich lastet, und das Treibende des Schicksals.

Ich glaube, es müsste furchtbar sein, immer so zu leben, im Vollgefühl all der animalischen Triebe, die das Leben durch die Zeiten wälzen. Ich habe die fürchterlichsten Möglichkeiten in mir gefühlt, gerochen, getastet und im Blute die Dämonen heulen hören, die tausend Teufeln mit ihren Stacheln, die das Fleisch wahnsinnig machen. Welch entsetzlicher Alp! (DuB:472)

"Das Treibende des Schicksals" and "animalische Triebe" are mentioned close together; their conjunction may be regarded as indicative of the sense of the 'totality' and inescapability of self-destruction, as outer and inner forces - the latter with obvious sexual overtones, but both essentially irrational, uncontrollable, and destructive - combine to determine the individual's fate. Another (undated) letter also contains the resentful statement: "Das Schicksal scheint mir idiotisch, das mich nicht besser verwertet" (DuB:550), and in February 1913 he refers to the 'inexplicable hatred' which seems to act as an autonomous, adverse force in his life:

Es erschreckt mich, wie sehr sich in der jüngsten Zeit ein unerklärlicher Hass gegen mich mehrt und in den kleinsten Geschehnissen des täglichen Lebens in fratzenhafte Erscheinung tritt. Der Aufenthalt ist mir hier bis zum Ueberdruß verleidet, ohne dass ich Kraft zu dem Entschluss aufbringe, fortzugehn. (DuB:504)

It is no coincidence that both Heym and Trakl should describe their own mental make-up as "zerrissen", and that in both cases this 'Zerrissenheit' is considered as only a reflection of the disintegration and fragmentation of the world around them. In a diary entry of July 1909 Heym notes: "Ich liebe alle, die in sich ein zerrissenes Herz Haben", placing himself in the line of Marlowe, Hölderlin, Kleist, Grabbe, Büchner and Rimbaud (1960:128). And in September 1911 he sums himself up as "...ich, ein zerrissenes Meer, ich immer im Sturm, ich der Spiegel des Aussen, ebenso wild und chaotisch wie die Welt" (ibid.:164). Similarly, "Was für ein sinnlos zerrissenes Leben führt man doch", Trakl remarks in a letter of July 1910 (DuB:479), and three years later he refers to himself as

"diese Spottgestalt aus Kot und Fäulnis (), die ein nur allzugetreues Spiegelbild eines gottlosen, verfluchten Jahrhunderts ist"(DuB:519).

Trakl's key statement in this respect however is the passage in a letter of November 1913:

...und es haben sich sonst in den letzten Tagen für mich so furchtbare Dinge ereignet, dass ich deren Schatten mein Lebtage nicht mehr loswerden kann. Ja, verehrter Freund, mein Leben ist in wenigen Tagen unsäglich zerbrochen worden und es bleibt nur mehr ein sprachloser Schmerz, dem selbst die Bitternis versagt ist. () Vielleicht schreiben Sie mir zwei Worte; ich weiss nicht mehr ein und aus. Es ist ein so namenloses Unglück, wenn einem die Welt entzweibricht. O mein Gott, welch ein Gericht ist über mich hereingebrochen. Sagen Sie mir, dass ich die Kraft haben muss noch zu leben und das Wahre zu tun. Sagen Sie mir, dass ich nicht irre bin. Es ist ein steinernes Dunkel hereingebrochen. (DuB:529-530)

The two poets' reactions to these experiences diverge however.

In Heym's case an acute awareness of forlornness and desperation appears to call for vigorous sublimation, as is shown in his historical projections (Maillard, in the story 'Der fünfte Oktober'; Danton, in the diary; cf. Heym 1960:164), the identification with Robespierre (*ibid.*:203), or his longing for violent upheaval of some kind. Trakl speaks of his "ununterbrochen schwankende und an allem verzweifelnde Natur" and of "ein Gefühl wilder Verzweiflung und des Grauens über dieses chaotische Dasein"(DuB:476,505). On one occasion however Trakl also identifies himself with a historical figure, when he remarks in a letter of April 1912: "Ich werde doch immer ein armer Kaspar Hauser bleiben"(DuB:487). But in contrast with Heym's strong-willed heroes, Trakl's reference implies displacement, estrangement and victimization, and reflects on the 'Kaspar Hauser Lied'(Dw:55-56), where the figure of Kaspar Hauser (designated as "der Fremdling" in the first draft of the poem) is situated in a context of primal wholeness and innocence - but destined to be murdered.

The similarities between Heym and Trakl also extend to questions of poetic technique. Of particular significance in this respect are the comments on the dual nature of poetic production, seen as a precarious balance to be struck between imagination and vision on the one hand, and objectivation and presentation on the other. Already in 1906 Heym notes: "die Welt in mir ist mir 100mal mehr wert als alle anderen"(Heym 1960:66), and in 1908 Trakl observes likewise: "...mein beschwingtes Auge träumt wieder seine Bilder, die schöner



sind als alle Wirklichkeit!" (DuB:472). The notion of imagination is viewed by both poets as an overwhelming, autonomous force dictating its own terms and which the poet strives to keep under control. "Die dichterischen Bilder rauchen mir aus den Ohren heraus, statt, dass ich sie zu Papier bringe", Heym notes in 1910 (1960:154), and a year later he adds: "...meine Phantasie ist gegen mich aufgetreten und will nicht mehr wie ich will" (*ibid.*:174). Trakl makes a very similar remark in a letter of July 1910:

Aber ich bin derzeit von allzu viel (was für ein infernalisches Chaos von Rythmen und Bildern) bedrängt, als dass ich für anderes Zeit hätte, als dies zum geringsten Teile zu gestalten ().  
(DuB:479)

Given this premise, writing becomes essentially a process of objectivation: the exclusion of overt subjectivity implies in both cases a recourse to modes of depersonalization, which manifest themselves in Heym's case in the stance of the neutral observer and in Trakl's case in projections into third-person figures replacing the (first-person) poetic persona as 'actant' in the poem. This 'objectivation' of the poetic voice does not prevent the poetry from continuing towards metaphorization and, especially in Trakl's case, de-substantialization, to the virtual exclusion of any recognizable or mimetic depiction of states of affairs in the empirical world<sup>(11)</sup>. As C. Eykman (1965:97) points out, in Trakl's work "Objektivierung des Ich" is concurrent with "Subjektivierung der Welt" (cf. also Calbert 1974:178-179). The distinctive character of Heym's as well as Trakl's poetic practice consists precisely in this. Trakl's key statement on his own technique, a passage on the poem 'Klagelied' (DW: 162) in a letter of 1911, underlines this point:

Anbei das umgearbeitete Gedicht. Es ist umso viel besser als das ursprüngliche als es nun unpersönlich ist, und zum Bersten voll Bewegung und Gesichten.

Ich bin überzeugt, dass es Dir in dieser universellen Form und Art mehr sagen und bedeuten wird, denn in der begrenzt persönlichen des ersten Entwurfes.

Du magst mir glauben, dass es mir nicht leicht fällt und niemals leicht fallen wird, mich bedingungslos dem Darzustellenden unterzuordnen und ich werde mich immer und immer wieder berichtigen müssen, um der Wahrheit zu geben, was der Wahrheit ist.

(DuB:485-486)

Not only is the highly personal and lyrical expression which marks the Sammlung 1909 abandoned in later years in favour of an 'impersonal' and therefore more 'universal' form, but the comment also stresses the implicit dialectical relation between the expression of what was called the existential and historical conception ("das Darzustellende")

and its presentation in impersonal or at least de-personalized terms. The elimination of the first-person lyrical subject in the later poems is illustrated by changes in particular poems; the poem first published in Der Brenner (January 1913) as 'An meine Schwester' appears in the Gedichte as 'An die Schwester' (DW:34); in 'Passion' the lines "Zwei Wölfe im finsternen Wald/ Mischten wir unser Blut..." are subsequently altered to read "Unter finsternen Tannen/ Mischten zwei Wölfe ihr Blut..." (DW:216,69). On the whole, statistical evidence also confirms the declining role of the lyrical 'I' in the later work (Eykman 1965:97; Calbert 1974:176ff.): "Zurückdrängung des Ichs" goes hand in hand with "Versachlichung des Ausdrucks" (Kaufmann 1969:213ff.). On the other hand the 'visionary irreality' (Eykman 1965:59) of Trakl's poetic world increases considerably. In this respect K. Wölfel (1958:55) speaks of "Realsetzung des Metaphorischen" and "Vergegenständlichung der Innerlichkeit"; A. Berger (1971:26,29), drawing on H. Friedrich (1956) refers to notions of "diktatoriale Phantasie" and "Eigenmacht der Sprache". These impressions, however, imply not only the phenomenon of 'objectivation' in Trakl's discourse, but also the polyvalent and self-enclosed character of the later poems. These aspects, which relate further to the creation of referential and syntactic indeterminacy and 'ambiguation' (Calbert), will presently be examined.

## 6.

It was observed in the discussion of Trakl's colour designations that the polysemic nature of his language - and its extraordinary richness - springs from a certain semantic overdetermination. The semantic load of particular terms (and this includes all the key terms and concepts with which he operates) is determined by a network of cross-references, so that each individual occurrence invariably enters a complex, dynamic and - paradoxically - increasingly opaque and unpredictable pattern of semantic attraction and inclusion. The value of individual terms, in other words, is circumscribed not only by their immediate textual meaning in a particular line or poem, but also by 'intra-textual' and intertextual relations. 'Intra-textual' relations refer to comparable occurrences of particular terms elsewhere in Trakl's work. Given the restricted lexicon and the equally limited thematic scope of the work, a large number of terms

occur again and again, in varying and often contradictory constellations, so that regressive strings of paradigmatic relations develop. Closely interrelated groups of poems which are genetically linked (such as the 'Helian' complex, analyzed in Killy 1960:52ff.) only exemplify, so to speak, the over-all coherence of Trakl's poetry. Investigations into the value of some particular items (colour terms, words like 'wall', 'stone' and such like, cf. Killy 1956:122ff.; Rovini 1971:39ff., 108ff.) rarely prove conclusive ("Es bleibt immer ein mehr oder weniger grosser Rest, der nicht aufgeht", Vietta & Kemper 1975:243), or yield results only in the most approximate of terms, i.e. in the general context of Trakl's existential and historical framework as sketched above. Apart from this 'idiosyncratic' matrix of connotation which virtually each term carries, intertextual relations (cf. J. Kristeva, in *Tel Quel* 1968:311ff.) further complicate and obfuscate the semantic ambience of individual words and motifs by pointing to the presence behind the text of a Rimbaud, a Novalis, a Hölderlin, or, in a more general sense, to received religious or conventional data. The simultaneous determination of the value of particular occurrences on the basis of two or more interlocking levels, then, constitutes one aspect of the semantic polyvalence of Trakl's poems. E. Philipp (1971:17) speaks in this respect of "Offenheit der Wortbedeutung"; J. Calbert (1974) further relates this characteristic process of semantic 'ambiguation' to the lack of specificity of the predicative structure of Trakl's discourse and to the vagueness of the situational context (the spatio-temporal framework) to which the poems refer. A basic paradox thus pervades Trakl's discourse, in that only a limited number of almost archetypal elements are employed, while their semantic identity, and hence their place as functional units in Trakl's poetic world, remains permanently fluid.

Clearly, the creation of referential and syntactic indeterminacy is part of this pattern. In its simplest form, referential indeterminacy appears as no more than imprecise perception. In the poem 'Im Mondschein' (DW:160) identities and contours are presented as blurred or uncertain ("Im Hofe scheinen Lichter hinzugleiten...", "Man sieht Konturen noch von anderen Dingen...", "Durch leere Gänge bleiche Flecken schauern...") so that no precise picture emerges. The frequent use of 'vielleicht' (3 times for example in 'Menschliches Elend', DW:36-37) and 'oder' (when no logical alternative is provided,

as with the 3 occurrences in 'Sebastian im Traum', DW:52-53) also leaves room for doubt concerning the referential character of Trakl's language. The frequent deletion of deictic references and the ensuing lack of specificity of the situational context (i.e. the "non-orientational" nature of Trakl's writing, due to the elimination of the dynamism of deictic spatio-temporal oppositions; cf. Calbert 1974:167-168, 173-174) contributes to the same effect in emphasizing the dissociation between the 'archetypal' world of the poem and the referential nature of language. In this respect Calbert's remarks give substance to the categories 'Auflösung' and 'Verdinglichung' which W. Preisendanz applies to Trakl's discourse:

Die Auflösung betrifft jenes Moment der semantischen Funktion der Sprache, das normalerweise Mitteilung und Bezeichnung von aussersprachlich Vorgestelltem ist; Verdinglichung tritt ein, sofern die sprachverhafteten Vorstellungsmassen und -komplexe selbst und ausschliesslich zum 'Seinsgrund' des Gegenständlichen im Gedicht werden. (W. Preisendanz, 'Auflösung und Verdinglichung in den Gedichten Georg Trakls', in Iser 1966:251)

The references in section 4 above to the process of de-materialization and de-substantialization are also to be inserted in this context. The use of referentially indeterminate neuter nouns is perhaps the most obvious symptom of this. In many cases natural phenomena are designated by such terms, sometimes by means of ambiguous appositions (as in "Die Zeder, ein weisses Geschöpf", DW:42), but mostly by means of substantivized adjectives or participles. In many cases the use of neuter nouns allows doubt as to the human, animal or inanimate nature of the signified. Thus in the opening of 'Amen':

Verwestes gleitend durch die morsche Stube;  
Schatten an gelben Tapeten; in dunklen Spiegeln wölbt  
Sich unserer Hände elfenbeinerne Traurigkeit. (DW:34)

where "Verwestes" may or may not imply human presence (elsewhere Trakl speaks of "O des Menschen verweste Gestalt", DW:70). The highly indeterminate grammatical and poetic structure of the text prevents unambiguous inferences. This is also the case for example in the lines:

Wieder kehrt die Nacht und klagt ein Sterbliches  
Und es leidet ein anderes mit. (DW:24)

or in the final stanza of 'Verwandlung':

Geruhiges vor einer Schenke spielt,  
Ein Antlitz ist berauscht ins Gras gesunken.  
Hollunderfrüchte, Flöten weich und trunken,  
Resedenduft, der Weibliches umspült. (ibid.)

In each case originally attributive terms acquire 'substantial'

status, while precise outlines and identities, even the kind of reality the poem presents, remain vague and elusive.

The dehumanization of the human figure is intimately linked with this mode of reference. In a number of instances a human presence is designated only metonymically by parts of the body. In 'Sebastian im Traum', the lines

In steinerner Mauer

Neigte sich ein gelbes Haupt, schweigend das Kind () (DW:53)

still contain both elements of the designation. Often however the reference is merely to a 'face', to a 'head' or to 'steps', so that the identity of the human figures remains as indeterminate as the situational context in which they move. The frequent use of nominal sentences lessen the impact of this human presence on the surroundings even further. If in the Sammlung 1909 the poetic voice refers to itself as "ein toter Schatten im Tag"(DW:137), the later poems indeed reduce the human figure to a contingent, shadowy presence.

Dehumanization however forms part of the objectivation of the lyrical subject, and the central line of development in this respect concerns the emergence of third-person figures replacing the 'I'-persona of the early work. The connection between 'der Fremdling' or 'der Einsame' and the figure of the poet is established in several poems. In 'Träumerei am Abend'(DW:167-168) reference is made to "des Fremdlings Hände" and "der einsam Sinnende", which, given the title of the poem, may be assumed to refer to the poetic persona himself. In a later poem Novalis is addressed as "heiliger Fremdling"(DW:182). The poem 'In Venedig' mentions "der Einsame", "der Heimatlose" and "Ich" in structurally similar positions (DW:72). In addition to these fairly transparent identifications, a large number of semantically more or less closely related terms perform the same function. The precise extent to which these various figures ('Jener, der Wanderer, der Schauende, der Schreitende, der Dunkle, der Geduldige', etc.) overlap or coincide with the poetic persona must remain a matter of speculation. Even in so far as they do refer to the poetic voice, they denote no more than a dis-individualized human presence. When subsequently the 'Ich' appears again in some of the final poems, it cannot be equated with the lyrical ego of the early work but implies instead an archetypal, universal 'Ich', circumscribed by the objectivation of the poetic

voice in the intervening poems (as indeed R. Blass 1968:114-115 argues). The use of appositions further de-centres the lyrical subject when it still occurs in the later poetry (usually as "wir" rather than as "Ich"). These appositions appear in the form of substantives ("Hirten gingen wir...", DW:66; "da wir friedliche Mönche...", ibid.), or as substantivized adjectives and participles ("Versteinerte schauen wir...", DW:177; "Erstorbene ruhen wir...", DW:38). Occasionally they develop into multiple identifications, as in 'An Johanna' (above) or in 'Abendland', although here the punctuation again prevents unambiguous inferences:

...Und wir haben im Schlaf geweint;  
Wandern mit zögernden Schritten  
An der dornigen Hecke hin  
Singende im Abendsommer,  
In heiliger Ruh  
Des fern verstrahlenden Weinbergs;  
Schatten nun im kühlen Schoss  
Der Nacht, trauernde Adler.      (DW:76)

The element of dehumanization is also introduced via these identifications and appositions. The human figure appears repeatedly as 'ein blaues Wild' or 'ein blaues Tier', or is transformed into non-human entities, as with the figure of Christ in the first version of 'Passion':

Jener aber ward ein schneeiger Baum  
Am Beinerhügel,  
Ein Wild äugend aus eiternder Wunde,  
Wieder ein schweigender Stein.      (DW:216)

In the prose-poems, finally, this type of designation becomes almost common practice. 'Verwandlung des Bösen' identifies a "Du" with "Baum, Stern, Stein", with "ein grünes Metall" and "ein purpurner Mond" (DW:56-57). In 'Traum und Umnachtung' the character ("Er") is described as "ein flammender Wolf", "ein wildes Tier", "ein Schatten", "ein umnachteter Seher" (DW:80-84). And in 'Offenbarung und Untergang' the central "Ich" is referred to as "ein strahlender Leichnam", "ein wilder Jäger", "ein Schweigendes", "ein Fremdling", "ein Wild", while visions and transformations of the self and others appear and disappear (DW:95-97). Finally, as was the case with other phenomena, the identity of the human figure is further deconstructed through the substantivation of attributive terms into neuter nouns. In some instances the text makes it clear that the neuter noun designates a human figure (as in "Ein Schauendes ist der Mensch", DW:189, or "...dass ein Sanftes/ Ein Kind geboren werde", DW:219), but, in the

absence of a conclusively construed context, references like "ein Träumendes" or "ein Bleiches"(DW:51,64) leave considerable doubt as to the human or non-human character of the designation. With the use of the term "ein Menschliches"(DW:51), in which the grammatical form contradicts the semantic content, the wheel of dehumanization comes full circle, stripping the human figure of all identity but the barest generic category.

The objectivation and dehumanization of the poetic persona and the human figure in general, however, also intensifies the semantic fluidity of Trakl's poetic world, as its discourse becomes increasingly non-orientational, de-centred and referentially contingent. The final aspect of Trakl's language which should be mentioned in this respect is the creation of syntactic indeterminacy. With the introduction of juxtaposition the syntactic apparatus of Trakl's poems is considerably simplified. As soon, however, as the writing supersedes the mere juxtaposition of isolated observable phenomena, the process of ambiguity which is set in motion on other levels also involves the syntactic structure. The reduction in the use of syntactic connectors (cf. above) affects the conceptual and 'communicative' structure of the text as well. In many cases Trakl reverts to the concatenation of purely nominal clauses or to intransitive constructions, both of which imply a weakening of the predicative structure of his discourse (cf. Philipp 1971:59ff.; Calbert 1974:205ff.). Among the most common syntagmatic units in Trakl's poems are appositions (which are often pre-positioned, so that their semantic impact increases) and adverbial clauses; both are constructions which are only loosely bound by syntactic constraints (Philipp). In addition, sentences regularly appear to be discontinued or syntactically incomplete (anacoluthon), while in other cases ambiguity prevails as to the subject-object relation in the sentence (as in "...und seine Stimme verschlang Gottes Wind", DW:83). On the whole, then, Trakl's syntax offers no vantage points for the determination of precise syntagmatic or semantic relations in individual sentences - or, for that matter, in the text as such, since, due to the principle of juxtaposition and the non-orientational character of the discourse, the poetic structure only extends and expands the indeterminacy of the sentence construction. The syntagmatic and sequential ordering of the poems does not comply with conventional expectations of causality

or logical development, and, as E. Philipp observes: "...ein Verlust der Kontiguitätsverhältnisse [ist] eindeutig feststellbar" (1971:80)<sup>(12)</sup>. The result is the same emancipation of the linguistic structure and of the poetic world as such from the empirical world which was summed up above in the terms 'Auflösung' and 'Verdinglichung' (Preisendanz).

The aptness of the term 'semantic ambiguation' (Calbert 1974: 205) with regard to Trakl's language is further illustrated by examinations of Trakl's manuscripts, which, as W. Killy has shown in tracing Trakl's "entwerfende Variation" (1960:73-74), develop entirely outside the bounds of any descriptive or representational concern, conforming instead to strictly immanent poetic principles which Vietta & Kemper (1975:255-256) summarize as "die starke Klangorientiertheit, das assoziative Moment und die relativ enge Begrenztheit des Motiv- und Bildbestands". The strongly associative and contrapuntal technique which is exhibited in many individual poems and in the work as a whole (in relation, for example, to the historical conception), further underlines the inherently contingent, paradoxical and inconclusive nature of Trakl's discourse. The 'sense' of Trakl's language-world must then be an open-ended question of internal relations and oppositions, and remains essentially indeterminate, polymorphous and self-contained. In that respect J. Hermand's remark (1972:268) on Trakl's poems as effectuating a continuous "Realitätszersetzung" and W. Killy's comments (1960:34) on the process of "Verrätselung" in Trakl's work, only highlight two concurrent aspects of the same phenomenon.

It will be clear that the ultimate motivation informing Trakl's poetic practice must be sought in the nature of the existential and historical conception around which the poems seem to arrange themselves. If oversimplifications are to be avoided, W. Killy argues,

...so muss in diesen Gedichten etwas sein, was die Kontradiktion enthält, was den Austausch hervorruft, zu immer anderer Wortwahl drängt, ja ganze Wort- und Vorstellungsketten auslöst. (1960:45)

The explanation which spans this principle of inner contradiction is then provided in existential terms:

In einer Welt ohne Sinn und Sicherheit gilt es, zunächst im Gedicht erst einmal Verhältnisse zu schaffen, unter denen überhaupt zu reden möglich ist. (*ibid.*:46)

It follows that the images and motifs of disintegration to which the



poems return again and again, and the structural and semantic inconclusiveness of Trakl's language, while being correlated phenomena, are to be judged on different levels. Structurally, it appears, Trakl's poetic practice can be regarded as an attempt to establish the space in which radical disintegration - the notion which the poems continually circumscribe - can be formulated. The conceptual hinterland to the work, then, remains what Rilke in his comment on Trakl called "das grenzenlos Wortlose" (cf. Berger 1971:99), in the sense that the poems, that even language as such, can at best only endeavour or approximate such a formulation. This also appears to be the import of Trakl's own remark in June 1912: "Man kann sich überhaupt nicht mitteilen" (quoted in Basil 1965:101) - a devastating statement, coming precisely (as Basil points out) at the moment when Trakl's mature poetic style begins to assert itself in full with the writing of 'Helian'. It is via this awareness however that the essentially tentative and polyvalent character of Trakl's work may be grasped: the existential core of his writing does not allow of a conventionally discursive or representational approach. On the contrary: approximation, association, echo, encirclement and enclosure define the formal categories of Trakl's discourse. Trakl's poems, as E. Philipp notes, are "Versuche einer Ansprache (), hinter der sich Fraglichkeit und Unentscheidenheit verbirgt" (1971:127). And in the same vein J. Hermand remarks that Trakl's images can present only "Chiffren für ein Ungesagtes, die sich in ständiger Kreisbewegung einander zu nähern scheinen, ohne sich je im Schnittpunkt einer weltanschaulichen Eindeutigkeit zu treffen"(1972:268).

## 7.

Considering Trakl's work in its broader synchronic and diachronic context, the fact cannot escape attention that several of the characteristic techniques in his poetry are curiously reminiscent of Mallarmé's writing. In particular the dissolution of precise referentiality and of 'das reale Substrat', the foregrounding of euphony, polysemy and idiosyncratic connotations, the principle of depersonalization, all these seem to echo a Mallarméan type of discourse. Yet, if some formal aspects of Trakl's work seem to resemble Symbolist practice rather than the approach of the Modernist poets discussed so far, there can be no doubt that the nature itself

of Trakl's writing embodies a conception which is basically and radically incompatible with the Symbolist position. The similarities in technique, that is, cover functionally totally different operations, and thus recede before the fundamental discrepancies between the two poetic systems.

As was indicated in chapter 1, Mallarmé views the social position of the poet as that of an outsider, but in his case isolation and social alienation are sublimated into the projection of a metaphysical Ideal. The core of the Mallarméan aesthetic may be said to lie in the unassailable firmness with which this Ideal is postulated - all the more so since the Ideal is by definition also unattainable. Mallarmé can then declare with double irony and without loss of confidence that the poet is a "raté" (cf. Mondor 1941:665): being a 'failure' in social terms is irrelevant since for the poet the criteria of social success or failure are irrelevant, being a 'failure' in poetic terms - by being unable ever to realize the Ideal - is a natural consequence of the premise, frustrating perhaps but comforting too, as it underlines precisely the sublimity of the Ideal and thus makes the poet's unremitting efforts only more worthwhile. Hence the belief in the Ideal is, for Mallarmé, "mon crédo peut-être désespéré mais qui me fait vivre" (*ibid.*). Trakl's third-person personae ('der Fremdling', 'der Einsame', 'der Abgeschiedene') are equally built on notions of isolation and alienation, but his entire conception is not just social but existential in nature, and precludes the postulate of an Ideal, metaphysical or otherwise. The role of the existential and historical perspective underlying the poems is here obviously crucial: in so far as concepts of wholeness and purity are implied at all in Trakl's discourse, they make themselves felt as absence, as loss, or as belonging to an archetypal past which is irretrievably lost. The present is thus marked by negatives on all sides: as loss of pristine innocence and thus as guilt-ridden, as subjective and objective disintegration and dehumanization, and as containing future doom and decay. Images of a possible redemption do occur, but they are mostly ambiguous or inconclusive, only occasionally and barely glimpsed, and on the whole outweighed by the "schwarze Verwesung" which stands central in 'Grodek' (*DW*:94), by the figure of the murderer pursuing Kaspar Hauser, and by the ominous bird calls reaching Elis. In

Mallarmé's case the power of the poetic word is limited to negation (of materiality) and intimation (of a transcendental Synthesis, even if that Synthesis is identical with Non-Being). Trakl stands at the furthest possible remove from this conception: his poetry constitutes a desperate attempt to establish or at least outline the basic categories to formulate (and possibly to exorcise) disintegration and dissonance. Mallarmé's use of (traditional or autarchic) symbols functions in a context of intimation and prefiguration. The inappropriateness of the term 'symbol' in Trakl's poetic (cf. above) stems precisely from the fact that his writing pre-empts the establishment of a definite code of reference and thus a priori of a coherent conceptual world.

In this sense Mallarmé's and Trakl's divergent approaches to syntax are perhaps more significant than a number of apparent similarities at other levels of expression. In spite of the duplicities surrounding Mallarmé's treatment of syntax (as an instrument for the dissolution of referentiality and for the activation of polysemy rather than for its traditional purposes), the syntactic intricacy and sophistication of his poems is emblematic in that it embodies the principle of contiguity which underlies the network of correspondences and thus prefigures, in the perspective of a Mallarméan poetic, the immaterial complexity of transcendental harmony. In Trakl's poetry syntax largely dissolves itself, and contributes to the central phenomenon of conceptual instability. As such it is complemented by the general practice of juxtaposition, which instead of discovering correspondences draws attention to dissonance, fragmentation and alienation. As was pointed out above, it is precisely the sense of coherence and perspective, essential in Mallarmé's conception, which is destroyed in Trakl's practice by means of juxtaposition, conceptual instability, semantic dissonance and syntactic indeterminacy. The survival in his work of a number of forms, motifs, images or rhythms from the poetic code of the previous generation is entirely subordinate to these fundamental contrasts; they only emphasize the extent to which Trakl's writing radically re-organizes and re-orientates the inventory of a previous poetic.

Within the context of Modernist poetry too, however, Trakl's position clearly distinguishes itself from that of, say, Pound, Jacob or Apollinaire, even if formal characteristics like juxtaposition,

syntactic simplification and depersonalization of one kind or another are common to all.

In Pound's case the contrast is self-evident, and springs mainly from his insistence on the need for poetry to render the 'materiality' of particular phenomena, with the ensuing emphasis on precision, on the 'bodily vision', and on the primarily referential use of language. Trakl's poetry on the other hand becomes increasingly 'abstract' and non-visual, and questions of precise conceptual meaning (as "Sinn"; cf. Killy 1960:50; Philipp 1971:85) must remain unanswered, as the denotative value of particular terms is over-determined and destabilized by highly connotative patterns of cross-reference and by syntactic and semantic inconclusiveness. Hence, while Pound's language aims at referential fullness (concentrated precision and complexity), Trakl's language divests itself of referentiality and denotation. The objectivation of the poetic voice which in Pound's work takes the form of the adoption of personae (as dramatic masks) or of a withdrawal into the 'presentative' method, manifests itself in Trakl's case in the impersonal juxtapositions of the 'Reihungsstil' or in the projection into various personae appearing as 'actants' in the poem, with consistent overtones of alienation and dehumanization. These overtones however are at the same time indicative of the thematic coherence of Trakl's production as a whole - a coherence which Pound's poetry lacks at that level because in his case, as for Jacob or Reverdy, each individual poem is seen as a fully autonomous 'construct' in its own right, unrelated to an over-all existential conception which informs the whole work. For Trakl, as for Heym, the underlying framework motivating the form and function of the poetry manifests itself continually on a secondary level of signification - as is also the case, but from a totally different angle, in Mallarmé's writing.

As was observed in chapter 5 above, Pound's dissatisfaction with the literature of the previous generation centres mainly on matters of poetic technique, and given the direct social value he attributes to the use of language, his preoccupation with accuracy of expression also reflects a social and didactic concern. Trakl's "Man kann sich überhaupt nicht mitteilen" obviously stands at the far end of such a conception, and should be placed in terms of literary history in the line of Hofmannsthal's Chandos letter. Where Pound speaks of revitalization and Risorgimento, Trakl's writing attempts to find

ways and means to deal with hopelessness and a total loss of coherence. The wholeness and integrity which Pound's approach takes for granted is unthinkable in Trakl's context - which must imply that, if both Pound and Trakl are to be described as 'Modernists', the common ground for their respective approaches must be sought in their common opposition to the paradigms presented by the previous generation, in particular the (Mallarméan) Symbolist poetic; that is to say in an interpretation which regards both practices as different (on account, mainly, of socio-cultural factors) but fundamentally concurrent attempts to build a new mode of discourse on premises which exclude the Symbolist (idealist) projection. Trakl's writing, it may then be argued, constitutes in this context the moment of disintegration which follows upon the repudiation of a poetic and an associated world-vision based on harmony and convergence, while Pound's conception (and that of the Cubists) presents the moment of composition and reconstruction, concentrating on new uses of poetic language and on a re-evaluation of the status of the poetic product.

This distinction also applies to the relation between Trakl and the Cubists, who to an even greater extent than in Pound's case place themselves in an exclusively literary series, with complete disregard for the non-literary (non-artistic) environment. In Jacob's and Reverdy's poetic, a notion like depersonalization refers directly to the withdrawal of the poetic voice in favour of the autonomy of the poetic form, as 'objet construit' (Jacob) or as 'poème-objet' (Reverdy). In the case of Apollinaire's Cubist poems, the projection of a multiple ego reveals both a structural and a thematic aspect: structural in the sense of the Cubist changing point of view (as manifested in the 'je/tu' alternation in 'Zone'), thematic in that the persona is seen as composed of multiple fragments (as in 'Cortège'). The context here however points to a Unanimist and Futurist sphere, and thus to an urban, technological environment in which an omnipresent, multiple ego acts as and represents a collective figure and a vehicle of imaginative, Orphic ubiquity, inviting - with characteristic flair - further projection on a global scale (as happens in 'Vendémiaire'). Apollinaire's gesture, in other words, is one of appropriation, and fragmentation of the self and the technique of juxtaposition are part of that gesture. Juxtaposition in particular is relied upon for the creation

of a diversity of semantic fields. In the Cubist poems it serves the re-arrangement and re-ordering of a basically narrative substructure. In the simultanist poems it has a double purpose: to posit an all-encompassing expansive/receptive persona covering a simultaneous multiplicity of phenomena, and, on the textual level, to create extreme semantic diversity and an apparent arbitrariness which stresses both the potentially unlimited scope of the poem and the poet's sovereign power in creating such a language-world.

The ideological contrast between this approach and Trakl's existential framework is even sharper than that between Trakl and Pound, and implies a diametrically opposed attitude. Apollinaire's and Trakl's respective views of the city are symptomatic in this respect, as they oppose total acceptance to total rejection. Where Apollinaire's poems attempt to span the widest spatio-temporal stretches in one inclusive glance, Trakl's world is deliberately restricted in thematic scope, practically timeless due to the frequent use of noun phrases and present tenses (Calbert 1974:160-161), and mostly indeterminate in geographical location - indifferent to spatio-temporal circumstance, but preoccupied exclusively with its own unspeakable existential centre. Where Apollinaire presents an image of omnipresence, appropriation and confidence, Trakl repeatedly projects an inversion of the parable of the prodigal son, returning home to find the house empty. Although the foregrounding of semantic incongruity is an essential device for both Apollinaire and Trakl, for the former it functions as an aspect of Orphic multiplicity and diversity reflecting its kaleidoscopic richness in the poem, while for the latter it points to a profound and inescapable sense of existential dissonance, and belongs in the sphere of incomprehension and disintegration.

## NOTES

- (1) The following abbreviations will be used in this chapter:

DW: Georg Trakl, Das dichterische Werk (Auf Grund der historisch-kritischen Ausgabe von W. Killy und H. Szklenar). München, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1972.

DuB: Georg Trakl, Dichtungen und Briefe. Ed. by W. Killy and H. Szklenar. Salzburg, O. Müller, 1969.

- (2) As was pointed out above in the case of Heym's early work (cf. chapter 3, section 1), the Neo-Romantic parentage of these views of natural and idyllic harmony can perhaps best be illustrated by referring to Hofmannsthal's (pre-Chandos) conception of nature as it appears in the essay 'Dichter und Leben' of 1897:

Der Dichter begreift alle Dinge als Brüder und Kinder eines Blutes; dies führt ihn aber zu keiner Verwirrung. Er schätzt die Einzigkeit der Begebenheit unendlich hoch. Ueber alles setzt er das einzelne Wesen, den einzelnen Vorgang, denn in jedem bewundert er den Zusammenlauf von tausend Fäden, die aus den Tiefen der Unendlichkeit herkommen und sich nirgends wieder, niemals wieder völlig so treffen. Hier lernt er, seinem Leben gerechtzuwerden. (in Landmann 1965:37)

- (3) The opposition between life as colour, sound, movement, and death as darkness, silence, and immobility also occurred, in a weaker form, in 'Traumland'. In a dramatic fragment of this period, 'Don Juans Tod' (1907-08) the same opposition is used, with the same effect. Of the dead Donna Anna, Don Juan says:

Ah! Schwebst du mir noch vor und blickst mich an  
Aus toderstarrten Augenhöhlen, worin  
Die Finsternis, die noch kein Lichtstrahl je  
Erhellte, weint. Und füllst den Raum mit Schweigen, ().  
(DW:247)

A little later he speaks of "des Lebens/ Vielstimmiges Geräusch", and he declares of himself:

Und [ich] atme ein die Welt, bin wieder Welt  
Bin Wohllaut, farbenheisser Abglanz - bin  
Unendliche Bewegung - bin. (ibid.)

The significance of the opposition becomes clearer in the later poems, when verbs like 'verstarren' and 'versteinern' are consistently loaded with connotations of death. Already in the poem 'Confiteor' (below) however, life's "bunte Bilder" are seen as no more than the outward appearance, the illusion of life, behind which death and despair have become the only certainties.

- (4) M. Bakhtin describes the concept of 'anti-stylization' as follows:

Any literary discourse more or less keenly senses its listener, reader or critic, and reflects anticipated objections, evaluations, and points of view. Besides, literary discourse senses alongside it other literary

discourse, other style. An element of the so-called reaction against a previous literary style, present in every new style, is just such an internal polemic; it is a hidden antistylization (so to speak) of another style, which often unites with an outright parody of it. (in Matejka & Pomorska 1971:291)

'Anti-stylization' is thus a property of intertextuality (Kristeva). In the sense in which the term is used here, the "other literary discourse" is not a work (or works) by a different author, but Trakl's own earlier work whose assumptions and style are abandoned and replaced by an antithetical approach.

- (5) Derivational morphemes can be de-automatized first of all by excessive accumulation. If a striking number of words derived by means of a certain suffix is used throughout an entire text or in one of its segments, not only is our attention drawn to the suffix as a speech sound pattern, but the semantic nuance which this suffix introduces into words is also emphasized. (Mukařovský 1976:39).
- (6) There is, of course, ample statistical evidence documenting the scarcity of syntactic connectors (conjunctions, mainly) in Trakl's mature work. Most of these analyses use Rilke and Goethe for comparable data. Thus R. Schier (1970:25), working on J. Leitgeb's samples of 2,000 words, reports the use of only 73 "Bindewörter" in Trakl's sample, as opposed to 141 for Goethe and 216 for Rilke. Trakl's language also shows a paucity of verbal forms, but a remarkably high frequency of substantives and adjectives. J. Calbert (1974:118-119) lists much the same findings (a much higher frequency of conjunctions in Rilke's poetry than in Trakl's), reminding the reader that syntactic connectors have their importance for the discursive function of language: they express basic logical relations which are essential in ordinary discourse for the communicative process. Roughly the same point is also made by W. Killy (1956:125) in connection with Trakl's concatenations of images: Trakl's poetry has "eine Fülle von Bildern, die nicht der Einsicht dienen, weil sie der Verbindlichkeit entraten, die zur Kommunikation Voraussetzung ist."
- (7) To speak of the 'semantic' characteristics of the substantive is inaccurate if a strictly Chomskyan view is adopted, but the term may be used for the sake of convenience. Chomsky (1965: 82) describes lexical items (lexical formatives) as possessing a set of syntactic features. Items of lexical categories (like Noun, Verb, etc.) can be analyzed into 'complex symbols', each complex symbol being "a set of specified syntactic features" (*ibid.*) which determine the item's combinatory possibilities in the sentence.
- (8) J. Mukařovský applies the term 'semantic accumulation' in the first place to the semantic structure of individual sentences. It denotes, roughly, the retention and accumulation (in the listener's or reader's mind) of preceding semantic items as the communication develops: "...every unit following another is perceived against the background of that one and all the preceding ones so that the entire set of semantic units of



which the sentence is composed is simultaneously present in the listener's or the reader's mind at the conclusion of the sentence" (Mukařovsky 1976:54). However, as Mukařovsky points out, the same principle also applies to "the structure of wholes higher than the sentence" (*ibid.*:56), i.e. in Trakl's case not only to poems as such, but also to the entire work. That this principle of semantic accumulation entails highly idiosyncratic complexes of meaning is self-evident. As B. Eikhenbaum writes: "...la particularité principale de la sémantique poétique réside dans la formation des significations marginales qui violent les associations verbales habituelles" ('La théorie de la méthode formelle', 1925, in Todorov 1965:62). It is precisely these 'marginal meanings' which are activated to the full in the context of Trakl's peculiar language-world.

- (9) H. Weinrich (1963:337) describes metaphor in general as "eine widersprüchliche Prädikation", and a 'bold' metaphor as "eine Prädikation, deren Widersprüchlichkeit nicht unbemerkt bleiben kann". The bold metaphor, then, has essentially the structure of an oxymoron - a figure which plays an important part in the treatment of the themes of alienation, 'Metaphysikverlust' and 'Ichverlust'. Taking into account the aspect of syntactic irregularity and indeterminacy of Trakl's discourse (cf. below), oxymoron and anacoluthon may be regarded as the basic stylistic figures in his poetic writing.
- (10) Thematic parallels in the writings of Heym, van Hoddiss, Lichtenstein, Benn, Kafka and other Expressionists are not hard to find. It may suffice here to indicate just one: Ehrenstein's monologue 'Tubutsch' (1911) in which Tubutsch says about himself:

Um mich, in mir herrscht die Leere, die Oede, ich bin ausgehöhlt und weiss nicht wovon. Wer oder was dies Grauensvolle heraufgerufen hat: der grosse anonyme Zauberer, der Reflex eines Spiegels, das Fallen der Feder eines Vogels, das Lachen eines Kindes, der Tod zweier Fliegen - danach zu forschen, ja auch nur forschen zu wollen, ist vergeblich, töricht wie alles Fahnden nach einer Ursache auf derer Welt. Ich seh nur die Wirkung und Folge. Dass meine Seele ihr Gleichgewicht verloren hat, etwas in ihr geknickt, gebrochen ist, ein Versiegen der innern Quellen ist zu konstatieren. Den Grund davon, den Grund meines Falles vermag ich nicht zu ahnen, das Schlimmste: ich seh nichts, wodurch in meiner trostlosen Lage eine wenn auch noch so geringe Aenderung eintreten könnte. (Ehrenstein 1961:277)

- (11) Cf. W. Preisendanz, 'Auflösung und Verdinglichung in den Gedichten Georg Trakls', in Iser 1966:250-251:
- Normalerweise, in der Ausdrucks- und Mitteilungsrede, ergeht an uns die Aufforderung etwas ausserhalb der Sprache Liegendes, etwas aussersprachlich Vorliegendes oder Existentes den bezeichneten Vorstellungskomplexen zuzuordnen. Und dieser Impuls nun, nämlich einen durch Wörter und Begriffe genannten Vorstellungskomplex und eine ihm zuzuordnende aussersprachliche Realität zu verbinden, geht meines Erachtens von Trakls Lyrik nicht mehr aus. Durch diese Lyrik werden vielmehr die durch die Sprachlichkeit unserer Welt gleichsam aufgespeicherten Vorstellungskomplexe so zueinander in Relation gebracht,

dass ein semantischer Bezug dieser Sprache nur mehr auf die in Wörtern vertretenen Vorstellungskomplexe, aber nicht auf die sonst den Vorstellungskomplexen zuzuordnenden Dinge und Sachverhalte besteht.

- (12) T.W. Adorno's distinction between "ästhetische" and "diskursive Logizität" is instructive in this respect, in that it underlines the presence of 'logical' categories in Trakl's poetic composition as well as their indirect, 'obscured' character, poetically transformed beyond recognition. The 'logic' of Trakl's poetry, in other words, is of an idiosyncratic nature:

Der Unterschied ästhetischer Logizität von der diskursiven wäre an Trakl zu belegen. Die Flucht der Bilder ( ) macht gewiss Sinnzusammenhang nach der Prozedur von Logik und Kausalität aus, so wie sie im apophantischen Bereich, zumal dem der Existentialurteile waltet, trotz des Traklschen 'es ist'; der Dichter wählt es als Paradoxon, es soll sagen, dass ist, was nicht ist. Trotz des Scheins von Assoziation jedoch überlassen seine Gefüge sich nicht einfach deren Gefälle. Indirekt, verdunkelt spielen logische Kategorien hinein wie die der in sich, musikhafte, steigenden oder fallenden Kurve der Einzelmomente, der Verteilung von Valeurs, des Verhältnisses von Charakteren wie Setzung, Fortsetzung, Schluss. Die Bildelemente haben an derlei Formkategorien Anteil, legitimieren sich indessen einzig vermöge jener Relationen. Sie organisieren die Gedichte und erheben sie über die Kontingenz blossen Einfalls. (Adorno 1970:431-432)

## Chapter 8

Reverdy: The Poem as Object

Reverdy ranks with Jacob among the major theorists of literary Cubism, and the parallels and divergences between the views of both poets receive attention in this chapter, as does the role of the plastic arts for Reverdy's general outlook. In contrast with the discussion of Jacob however, relatively little space will be devoted to individual poems. The text concentrates on the central concepts and categories of Reverdy's theory of artistic production and of poetic writing in particular, and their relation to some of the theories outlined in previous chapters. Sections 1 and 2 deal with Reverdy's interpretation of the principles of Cubist painting and their adaptation to poetic writing. Sections 3 and 4 examine more particular points, namely the concept of the image and the notions of 'le réel' and 'l'esprit'. The final section considers aspects of the structuration of Reverdy's poems.

## 1.

Reverdy's approach to poetic writing is, like Jacob's, marked by its proximity to the activities of the Cubist painters, and shows an obvious preoccupation with questions of technique and structuration. The emphasis he places, generally speaking, on the need for discipline and on a conscious awareness of the limitations imposed by the nature of the artistic (pictorial, literary) material itself, may be seen both as the expression of a typically Cubist concern and as a reaction against what was regarded at the time as late-nineteenth century over-stylization. In a series of aphoristic notes in the December 1917 issue of Reverdy's periodical Nord-Sud, Braque observes that "In art, progress does not consist in extension, but in the knowledge of limits", and subsequently that "Limitation of means determines style, engenders new form, and gives impulse to creation" - which leads him to the peculiarly formalistic conclusion that new means produce "new subjects" (cf. Chipp 1968:260; but cf. below on the meaning of the term 'subject'). Salmon argues in a similar way

that Cubist painting was "becoming a science and quite an austere one" (*ibid.*:202). Paul Dermée on the other hand, in the essay 'Quand le symbolisme fut mort...' in the first issue of *Nord-Sud* (March 1917), refers to a purely literary context when he observes that "A une période d'exubérance et de force doit succéder une période d'organisation, de classement, de science, c'est-à-dire un âge classique" (cf. Greene 1967:23)<sup>(1)</sup>. As was the case with Hulme, Pound and Jacob, Reverdy's conception too will focus on discipline and restraint, on the well-defined, self-enclosed nature of the poem, on composition, construction and formal equilibrium. Dermée's reference to a new 'classical' age and to the resurgence of a 'classical' conception of artistic and literary creation will also be repeated by Reverdy, and this again aligns him with Hulme, Pound and Jacob (who as early as December 1916 speaks of Reverdy as "un classique", praising the 'situation' of his work and his attempts at 'objectivation': "Reverdy rassemble en paraissant disperser. Reverdy est maître de lui-même c'est un poète conscient, c'est un classique"; cf. *Mercurie de France* 1962:16-18).

Although the editorial preface to the first issue of *Nord-Sud* calls on poets to rally behind Apollinaire (*NS*:13)<sup>(2)</sup>, the periodical appears to offer primarily a forum for the discussion of Cubist ideas; Reverdy's enthusiasm for Apollinaire soon waned in any case<sup>(3)</sup>, whereas he claims Cubism proper to be "l'art qui nous intéresse et dans lequel nous avons foi" (*NS*:24). Yet Reverdy, like Pound, is careful not to draw too close a parallel between painting and writing: pictorial principles are considered inapplicable to literature and vice versa, and the concept of 'Cubist poetry' or a 'Cubist poetic' is emphatically rejected (*NS*:16,79,145). The term (which is still somewhat controversial, in the literature on Reverdy as well; cf. Admussen 1968:21,24; Rizzuto 1971:188) will nevertheless be used in the following pages, partly as a matter of convenience, partly because in spite of Reverdy's strenuous denials the close interrelations between the two spheres appear sufficiently conscious and consistent to warrant the label (as Greene 1967:42 also observes), and partly because in a later interview Reverdy himself, like Jacob (cf. above, chapter 6, section 3), admits the direct influence of the example of the plastic arts when he declares that "de 1910 à 1914 j'ai reçu la leçon des Cubistes. Ces tableaux si dépouillés,

si simples!... j'ai eu l'ambition d'obtenir cela en littérature" (1956; quoted in Guiney 1966:13).

Reverdy's conception of Cubist pictorial principles stems primarily from his contact with the work of Picasso, Braque and Gris. Indeed Aragon at one time claimed that "Toute la parenté de Reverdy, de sa poésie, et du cubisme, est dans l'amitié qui le liait à Juan Gris, à Picasso, à Braque" (quoted in Bernard 1959:638). Further evidence is readily at hand: Braque, as was already mentioned, publishes a series of brief theoretical statements (a type of exposition often adopted also by Reverdy in subsequent years) in Nord-Sud in 1917; in 1919 Reverdy dedicates his Self Defence to Juan Gris (NS:103); in the early twenties he devotes several laudatory essays to Picasso's achievement (cf. NEP:191-204; NS:185-204). With these considerations in mind, Reverdy's first major theoretical essay, 'Sur le Cubisme', in the first issue of Nord-Sud (NS:14-21), commands closer attention. Following similar publications on Cubism by Salmon, Gleizes and Metzinger, Apollinaire and others, the text presents Reverdy's own reading of the main tenets of Cubist paintings, and ends with a promise of a sequel on poetic writing (the 'Essai d'esthétique littéraire' follows in Nord-Sud 4-5, June-July 1917; NS:39-47).

Reverdy's basic point in 'Sur le cubisme', and a recurrent idea in later texts on poetry as well as on painting, is the observation that "Le Cubisme est un art éminemment plastique; mais un art de création et non de reproduction ou d'interprétation"(NS:17). This statement, clearly, echoes earlier commentators, Apollinaire among them, on the irrelevance of 'vraisemblance' (as visual likeness) in Cubist art<sup>(4)</sup>. From the start, however, "création", as opposed to "reproduction" and "interprétation", appears as the crucial notion in Reverdy's conception, in the poetic as well the pictorial sphere. In the 'Essai d'esthétique littéraire' he also speaks of the need to 'create', to practice "un art qui soit sans prétension d'imiter la vie ou de l'interpréter"(NS:40). Conceptualization and the ensuing visual distortion are viewed throughout not as ends in themselves but as means - the end always being 'creation', seen as the opposite of 'imitation'. "Car imiter le mieux possible c'est bien créer le moins possible" he observes later (NS:45; GC:28). Mimetic or iconic reproduction is described as superficial because

concerned only with the "apparence visuelle" of a model (NS:18), and as placing the work of art in a position of inferiority in regard to external reality. Conventional realism, he claims, is "le genre qui nous est le plus opposé"(NS:20), thus siding, not surprisingly, with Gleizes and Metzinger, for whom "Imitation is the only error possible in art" and who, likewise, regard the Realistic painter as "a slave to the worst possible visual conventions", concerned exclusively with "superficial realism" (cf. Herbert 1964:3), the kind of mimeticism which Kahnweiler calls elsewhere "the verisimilar optic image which describes the object from a single viewpoint" (cf. Chipp 1968:256). But whereas several contemporary commentators interpret Cubism as aiming at 'total representation' (Salmon, in Chipp 1968:203) or at a 'stereometric' or 'synthetic' reproduction (Kahnweiler, *ibid.*:256), implying a mode of representation which is not illusionist but conceptual, Reverdy appears largely to discard the entire question of conceptualization as a mode of representation in favour of a preoccupation with the establishment of the work of art as an artistic construct, a separate artistic reality. The term "création" then refers precisely to this constitution of the work as an object in its own right, irrespective of its representational value.

In his aphoristic pronouncements in Nord-Sud, Braque seems to develop a similar line of thought. Although he states that "Painting is a method of representation", this is immediately followed by the observation that "One must not imitate what one wants to create" and that "To be pure imitation, painting must forget appearances" (cf. Chipp 1968:260). Two other statements however bear directly on the status of the work as an autonomous reality:

The subject is not the object, it is a new unity, a lyricism which grows completely from the means.

The goal is not to be concerned with the reconstitution of an anecdotal fact, but with the constitution of a pictorial fact. (*ibid.*)

These are also the two points - the distinction between object and subject, and the practice of art (painting, poetic writing) as primarily the constitution of an artistic (pictorial, poetic) fact - which Reverdy puts into relief in his discussion of Cubist principles of construction generally. The basic opposition between traditional and Cubist painting is then not, it appears, that between 'mimetic' and 'conceptual' representation, but between the work as representation

and as autonomous structure. The latter approach implies that the elements of which the work consists are not considered in terms of their representational aspect (i.e. as 'signifiers' referring to a non-artistic reality) but as formal components in the new, self-enclosed reality which is the work of art. While conventional perspective, Reverdy argues, allows the representation of a model from a particular angle at a particular moment,

...il y a dans le cubisme les moyens de construire le tableau en ne tenant compte des objets que comme élément et non au point de vue anecdotique. (NS:18)

The 'subject' of the work, consequently, is the work itself, its formal construction, since neither the elements (the 'objects') of which it is composed nor the work as a whole refer back to a model:

Il devient alors nécessaire de préciser la différence qui existe entre l'objet et le sujet. Celui-ci est le résultat de l'emploi des moyens de création que l'on s'est acquis: c'est le tableau lui-même. (NS:18-19)

Reverdy's conception, in other words, does not necessarily result in a non-figurative technique, not even in a 'deductive' method like that of Juan Gris (cf. above, chapter 6, section 3). It revolves, rather, around the overriding concern with artistic production as the creation of an art-world in its own right (Braque's 'pictorial fact'). The 'objects' which enter this art-world, although derived from external reality, no longer function primarily as iconic signs but as compositional elements in an exclusively artistic structure.

It is the changed conception of the function of the object in the work of art which in Reverdy's view accounts for the visual distortion and geometric schematization characteristic of Cubist painting. Disregard for the iconic aspect of the work and its components implies the irrelevance of 'vraisemblance' and hence the elimination of everything pertaining to the 'anecdotal' aspect, the 'momentary' appearance of the model. Conceptualization and the ensuing reduction to 'primary qualities' (Kahnweiler) are thus not means to achieve a different mode of representation, but a consequence of the altered conception of the status of the artistic product:

Les objets n'entrant plus que comme élément on comprendra qu'il ne s'agit pas d'en donner l'aspect mais d'en dégager, pour servir au tableau, ce qui est éternel et constant (par exemple la forme ronde d'un verre, etc.) et d'exclure le reste.

L'explication de la déformation des objets, que le public n'a jamais eue, est là. Elle est une conséquence et ne saurait être admise comme fantaisie arbitraire du peintre. (NS:19; the point is repeated in an essay on Picasso in 1923; cf. NEP:200)

(A second reason for the recourse to schematization lies in the requirement of a certain distance - in the sense of Jacob's 'situation' - to be created between the work and the empirical world; non- iconicity prevents the automatic identification of an artistic element with external reality, and thus affirms the autonomy of the work. Cf. below).

The reduction to essential formal features ("ce qui est éternel et constant"), in other words, follows from the logic of construction itself, from the orientation towards artistic production as the constitution of a work which has its own separate and irreducible existence. This concern also explains Reverdy's remark (*ibid.*) that the very notion of a Cubist 'portrait' is self-contradictory, since the term itself calls for identification with a model, and if that is indeed the aim then formal schematization and distortion would be pointless and unforgivable artistic whims. In later years he speaks in a similar vein of the need to break the "hypnose du sujet" (*NEP:24*, "sujet" here in the sense of 'subject-matter'), and to concentrate instead on 'le réel' as "la réalité profonde" (*NS:212*) and in opposition to the "apparences fugitives" (*GC:47*); this point will be resumed below.

The summarizing statement of 'Sur le cubisme' again emphasizes the aspects of non- iconicity and their role for the autonomy of the work of art. Interestingly enough, Reverdy's terminology here ("raconter", "histoires") leaves no doubt that the observations apply to poetry as well as to painting:

Nous sommes à une époque de création artistique où l'on ne raconte plus des histoires plus ou moins agréablement mais où l'on crée des oeuvres qui, en se détachant de la vie, y rentrent parce qu'elles ont une existence propre, en dehors de l'évocation ou de la reproduction des choses de la vie. Par là, l'Art d'aujourd'hui est un art de grande réalité. Mais il faut entendre réalité artistique et non réalisme; c'est le genre qui nous est le plus opposé. (*NS:20*)<sup>(5)</sup>

This fundamental conception is clarified in later texts. In an essay in *Sic* in October 1918 Reverdy states categorically that "Une oeuvre d'art représentative est toujours fausse" (*NS:134*). In *Self Defence* (1919) he claims that reality does not 'motivate' art: although the artistic product derives its material from the world of phenomena, it does not return to it but constructs instead its own reality ("La réalité ne motive pas l'oeuvre d'art. On part de la vie pour atteindre



une autre réalité", MS:117). The inferiority of the mimetic work thus stems from its subordination to - i.e. its being a sign of - something which lies outside itself, and in this respect Reverdy speaks variously of 'parasitic' art (GC:28) and of "asservissement" and "soumission à la réalité sensible" (NS:45,212). In the same way as Jacob confesses to his "horreur du naturalisme et de toute oeuvre qui ne vaut que par la comparaison qu'on peut faire avec le réel" (in a letter of 1917; Jacob 1953:133), Reverdy rejects conventional realism in favour of a "réalité artistique, bien entendu par opposition à l'oeuvre d'art imitative de la réalité" (NS:146).

Bearing in mind the close contacts between Jacob and Reverdy on the one hand and the leading Cubist painters on the other, the similarity in the theoretical stances of both poets is not surprising. Where Reverdy holds that works of art "ont une existence propre, en dehors de l'évocation ou de la reproduction des choses de la vie", Jacob states in the preface to his Cornet à dés that "Une oeuvre d'art vaut par elle-même et non par la confrontation qu'on peut faire avec la réalité" (Jacob 1945b:23). The sense of 'detachment' of which Reverdy speaks finds a direct echo in Jacob's reference to "la marge qui entoure [l'oeuvre]" (ibid.:22), emphasizing the self-sufficient and self-enclosed nature of the work and the need to 'transplant' the reader from his conventional conception of reality into the artistic universe of the poem. Similarly, where Reverdy works with an opposition between "création" and "imitation" ("reproduction", "vraisemblance"), Jacob opposes "invention" to "le vrai" ("Inventez donc, c'est le seul moyen d'être séparé du vrai", in Emié 1954:27). Certainly on these basic points Reverdy's and Jacob's positions are virtually indistinguishable. In their further elaboration of them however they diverge. Reverdy, it will be seen, eventually develops the notions of 'le réel' and 'l'esprit', in an effort to grasp the 'otherness' and stability of the artistic product, while Jacob concentrates on 'invention', mainly in terms of the (apparent or real) incompatibility between the poem and the logic of empirical reality - an aspect which Reverdy only explores with respect to the poetic image. In his poems also Jacob underlines both the 'style' and 'situation' of his work by means of a foregrounding of paronomasia, a concentration on verbal association and play which he indeed advocates in his Conseils à un jeune poète ("Aimer un mot, le repeter, s'en gargariser..."; cf. Collier 1957:159). For Reverdy on the other hand "l'amour des mots tue le style" (GC:56),

and he clearly prefers "sobriété verbale" to "ébrété verbale"(NS: 122) - a point borne out by the restrained syntactic constructions, the elementary vocabulary and the thematic limitations imposed on his poems (further reasons for the adoption of this 'verbal sobriety' relate to the concept of 'le réel' and are set out below).

A final aspect touched upon in 'Sur le cubisme', and subsequently in Self Defence and other writings, concerns the relation between the work of art and its recipient (spectator, reader). Both Jacob and Reverdy insist that the sole aim of the work is to provoke 'artistic emotion', a response, that is, which results from the formal organization of the artistic product and is unrelated to the nature of its subject-matter, thus precluding an interpretation of the work as the transference of the artist's state of mind or emotional condition. Jacob emphasizes in this respect the paradoxical attitude elicited by the poem which remains its own separate self and yet displays an absorbing and fascinating power of attraction (whence the relevance of the notion of 'transplantation'). Reverdy's view of the reader or spectator appears to be tinged to a degree by historical circumstance, namely the atmosphere of incomprehension which accompanied the emergence of Cubist painting. He is in line with T.E. Hulme in arguing that the prevalence of conventional norms accounts for this lack of understanding, as the public approaches unfamiliar phenomena with a set of inadequate traditional assumptions and expectations, which are bound to be frustrated by works built upon radically different principles of construction. Reverdy's outlook, like Hulme's, is thus essentially historical, and bears on the relativity of aesthetic norms and values. Unlike Hulme however he does not pursue the point in terms of a broad scheme to reinvigorate poetic language (and indeed language as such), regarding the question instead as involving merely a temporal lag and as a matter of "habitude" and "éducation" on the part of the prospective audience (NS:110-111). In Self Defence he argues that

On assiste à notre époque à une transformation fondamentale de l'art. Au lieu d'un changement de sentiment il s'agit d'une nouvelle structure d'où résulte une fin toute neuve. C'est une conception nouvelle dans la forme et dans le fond. (NS:108)

The conventional appreciation of art however centres on a mimetic conception of the work as a vehicle for something else (as representation, expression, narrative, description), and hence the work which purports to be its own subject falls outside the established

categories and expectations. The public's incomprehension, that is, springs from the artist's adherence to a new and radically unconventional norm, and "Ce que le public ne veut pas comprendre c'est qu'on veuille lui montrer autre chose que ce qu'il cherche"(NS:113). Assuming that public appreciation will eventually come with a process of habituation, Reverdy summarily dismisses the problem with the observation that "plaire au public, ce qui sera la conséquence du résultat, n'est qu'une affaire d'éducation de sa part"(NS:18).

## 2.

Although Reverdy continues to publish essays and notes on the plastic arts in later years, it is primarily the shape of his poetic theory which needs to be further examined in the following pages. The key texts in this respect would seem to be the 'Essai d'esthétique littéraire' published in Nord-Sud in the summer of 1917 (NS:39-47) and the collection of 109 aphorisms which appeared as Self-Defence in 1919 (NS:103-124). These texts are complemented by various other more topical essays in Nord-Sud (among them 'L'émotion', October 1917; NS:52-60; 'L'image', March 1918; NS:73-75) and by assorted notes and essays in other periodicals ('Certains avantages d'être seul', Sic, October 1918; NS:130-135; 'Poésie', Le journal littéraire, June 1924; NS:204-207, and others). Reverdy's major collections of notes and aphorisms (Le rant de crin, 1927; Le livre de mon bord, 1948; En vrac, 1956), finally, will occasionally provide additional information.

On the whole, Reverdy's observations on the conceptions underlying the new writing are concurrent with his discussion of the principles of Cubist painting. In Self Defence he consistently refers to 'art' and 'artists' in a general sense, implicitly stressing the applicability of the concepts outlined to poetry as well as to painting. At the same time however he insists on the autonomy of both art forms, not only in rejecting the label 'Cubist poetry' (cf. above) but also by claiming (in the essay 'Le Cubisme, poésie plastique', L'art, February 1919) the ascendancy of the poets in the creation of a non-mimetic art. The poets, he argues, preceded the painters in the adoption of a non-descriptive mode of writing, focused on the relations between things rather than on the things themselves - indeed this is one of the properties of poetry as such ("Dégager,

pour créer, les rapports que les choses ont entre elles, pour les rapprocher, a été de tous temps le propre de la poésie" (NS:144). Following this lead the painters then arrived at a non-imitative art. Conceptualization and distortion ("déformation", ibid.) result from this concern with relations between objects instead of with objects themselves. From Reverdy's other essays, however, it is evident that his argument here is based on the properties of the poetic image as he understands it, namely as the conjunction of two apparently unrelated or even incompatible realities between which the poetic mind ('l'esprit') has nevertheless perceived a significant relation (cf. below). But this notion of the image itself grows from the conception of poetic writing as the creation of a separate artistic reality - and this conception owes an essential debt to the practice of the Cubist painters. Reverdy's claim, in other words, is at best retrospective, at worst void, even if the parallel between a non-descriptive poetic reality, epitomized by the image, and a non-imitative pictorial reality like that presented by the Cubists remains highly pertinent and productive.

The basic principle of Reverdy's Cubist poetic, then, is identical to that informing the plastic arts. The 'Essai d'esthétique littéraire' states the aim unequivocally: "Créer [une] oeuvre d'art qui ait sa vie indépendante, sa réalité et qui soit son propre but" (NS:41). Hence the watchword remains the same: the creation of an irreducible artistic (poetic) reality, and not reproduction, whether of an external model or of an inner state of mind or feeling, but the construction of an autonomous work. The implications of the principle thus involve a subjective and an objective aspect. The poem, being neither description nor anecdote, does not offer a representation of an objective state of affairs, although (cf. above) it derives its material from observable phenomena; the referential aspect of the word, it will be seen, is defamiliarized (by reducing its specificity) but no attempt is made to break it down altogether. Neither is the poem a locus for lyrical expression or the effusion of the poet's inner state. "L'art," Reverdy remarks in a later issue of Nord-Sud (August-September 1917), "est au-dessus de cette simple faculté de s'exprimer" (NS:50). This does not mean however that for Reverdy art is not profoundly 'personal': his distinction between the "personnalité sentimentale de l'artiste" and the use of "moyens personnels acquis et employés" (NS:60) underlines precisely

the point that an artistic personality will show in the selection and handling of the material at hand, while avoiding to reduce the work to a vehicle for lyrical expression. The argument, it will be remembered, closely resembles Jacob's (later) distinction between "l'art arlequin" and "l'art pierrot" (above, chapter 6, section 1), which is itself an elaboration of the observation made as early as 1907 that the work of art should be "étrangère à son auteur", meaning that far from being 'impersonal' it is for the artist "une oeuvre qui n'étant pas son reflet ne fait pas double emploi avec lui"(Jacob 1953:30-31).

Reverdy's objections to the poem as emotional expression (as a "manifestation de personnalité sentimentale ou spirituelle", as he also puts it;NS:89) are in fact justified with the same arguments used earlier to discredit pictorial iconicism. From the point of view of the poet the 'lyrical' poem exists primarily as representation and evocation (NS:135), i.e. as a vehicle (a sign) and not as an end in itself - as a "reflet" in Jacob's terminology and not as a "noyau nouveau dans l'univers"(Jacob 1953:30). From the point of view of the reader the lyrical poem tends to reinforce the "hypnose du sujet" to which all mimetic work is subjected, as the response it elicits will relate to the sentimental appeal of the poem's subject-matter. This question, then, bears on the definition of artistic emotion. For Reverdy the essential point in this respect appears to be the distinction between the poet's original state of mind ("l'émotion créatrice",NS:148), which may act as an impulse for the process of writing, and the effect produced by the finished work, which should be a purely poetic (artistic) emotion. The two are fundamentally different:

Il ne faut pas oublier () que l'émotion créatrice a pour résultat la production d'une oeuvre dont le but est de faire naître, à son tour, une autre émotion. On ne devrait pas avoir besoin de dire que ces deux émotions sont de nature différente. (NS:148)

Thinking this idea through to its logical end Reverdy even concludes that "toute oeuvre créée doit, une fois faite, avoir quelque surprise pour son auteur lui-même"(NS:59).

As in the case of the objects which enter the pictorial process as 'elements' and not as iconic representations inviting identification with external reality, poetic writing demands that the poet's 'creative emotion' be treated as a purely compositional factor, divested

of its subjective overtones and enveloped in the structure of the objective universe which is the poem: "...nous voulons avec la connaissance de tous les sentiments, comme éléments, créer une émotion neuve et purement poétique"(NS:41). It follows, although Reverdy does not elaborate the point in those terms, that this 'creation' (as opposed to expression, or transference of emotion) implies a similar process of objectivation as that mentioned in Jacob's poetic theory. Jacob's requirements bearing on the objective categories of 'style' and 'situation' translate in Reverdy's conception as the deployment and organization of the poetic material (resulting from "l'idée que l'on a de la possession des ses moyens", NS:45) and the status of the poetic product as a work which has "sa réalité propre, son utilité artistique, sa vie indépendante et [qui] n'évoquera rien autre chose qu'elle-même"(ibid.). As far as the recipient is concerned, artistic emotion arises solely out of the perception of the poem's formal organization. Where Jacob describes aesthetic emotion as "l'effet d'une activité pensante vers une activité pensée" (1945b:21), whereby the structural tightness and sophistication of the latter increases the intensity of the former, Reverdy wants it measured "en raison directe du degré d'élévation des moyens et des éléments employés et de la justesse de leur emploi" (NS:47), so that the emphasis falls on the perception of the finished product as a carefully contrived construct in its own right, since the "élévation" of the material and the "justesse" of its arrangement can only be accounted for in terms of the separate reality construed by the poem itself and not in terms of the nature of its thematic substance.

In the end, Reverdy's approach comes up against the problem, which Jacob also faced, of the semantic component of language, the fact that as a signifying system language is made up of 'discrete' signs (cf. Lotman 1975:334) with a referential character. But where Jacob attempts to find a solution for this problem by creating a discrepancy between the level of the signifier and that of the signified (by concentrating on the 'verbal substructure' and by the systematic exploitation of semantic incongruity and duplicity), Reverdy appears to focus mainly on the self-reflexiveness of the poem as a whole, while at the same time countering the referential nature of larger units within the poem by means of semantic departicularization, the isolation of brief syntagms, and a non-

discursive and discontinuous poetic structure. In his "Essai d'esthétique littéraire" he observes:

On part d'un champ général où l'on puise les matériaux pour l'oeuvre qui une fois terminée consitute le sujet et forme un tout qui ne doit rien qu'à l'art et forme son couronnement.  
(NS:46)

Once completed, the poem consitutes an entity which, being its own subject, has ceased to be a sign of anything outside itself. Although individual words and syntagms in the text inevitably refer to an external reality, the final product stands as a sign of itself only. "L'anecdote disparaît devant l'ensemble nouveau obtenu", he remarks in a later essay on Gris (1955;NEP:124): given the autotelic nature of the poem as a whole, the various elements employed in it are not evaluated primarily as 'signifiers' which in their syntagmatic concatenation represent a state of affairs to be visualized or imagined independently of the poem's formal organization; indeed, as will be seen, the whole poetic structure, with its strongly marked discontinuity on the formal and on the semantic level, prevents the establishment of an identifiable situational context. Reverdy's conception, in other words, amounts to a reconsideration of the poetic text as signifier, and posits the poem as an essentially autotelic sign.

Not surprisingly, in the context of a Cubist aesthetic, the techniques associated with this reconsideration of the status of the poem revolve around non-discursiveness, structural discontinuity and an over-all isotopic contiguity (cf. below, section 5). In Reverdy's poetic practice, a certain situational vagueness prevails almost continuously at the lexical level, due to the sparsity of deictic references on the one hand and the indeterminate and unstable use of personal pronouns on the other (the frequent occurrence, for example, of such indefinite pronouns as "quelqu'un" and "on" in the volume Les ardoises du toit is symptomatic in this respect; cf. Rizzuto 1971:42ff). The impression of situational vagueness is further enhanced by the frequent use of concrete but unspecific terms, as aspect which is to be seen not only in function of the express demand for stylistic simplicity (discipline and "sobriété verbale", as opposed to what Reverdy regards as the ornateness and stylistic "alambiquage" required by the conventional poetic norm; cf. NS:39, 81)<sup>(6)</sup>, but also, in the context of the structure of the poems themselves, in relation to the notion of 'le réel' as the stable,

static and durable aspect of reality, an aspect which discards the situational particularity of the "apparences fugitives" which form the concern of mimetic art forms but inheres rather in "toutes choses simples, profondes, constantes, que le temps n'apporte ni n'emporte" (NS:205) and may be best conveyed by the use of simple and concrete but, through the absence of a situational context, unspecific terms (cf. below).

The reconsideration of the words and syntagms of the poetic text as constructive units rather than primarily as signifiers also affects the referential quality of individual terms as such. In Self Defence Reverdy points out that

C'est au moment où les mots se dégagent de leur signification  
littérale qu'ils prennent dans l'esprit une valeur poétique.  
C'est à ce moment qu'on peut librement les placer dans la  
réalité poétique. (NS:107)

What is involved, then, is a principle of defamiliarization, and the creation of a certain conceptual opacity and indefiniteness. The objective is to prevent, or at least trouble and delay, the immediate association of signifier and signified in a particular, recognizable context, so that the verbal material is perceived as entirely enveloped by a poetic structure which is 'imprisoned' in itself ("Une oeuvre est enfermée en elle-même, il faut la considérer telle qu'en ses limites l'art l'a enfermée, sans la rattacher à rien", MEP:20). In the poems the departicularization of individual terms has its role in this context, while the referential opacity of the whole is reinforced by a type of discourse consisting of brief, juxtaposed syntagmatic units (clauses, sentences, nominal word groups), in a general poetic structure marked by discontinuity and occasional syntactic ambiguity. The point of the operation, it appears, lies in the suppression of discursive sequences which would be liable to develop into narrative, descriptive or expressive (i.e. representational) discourse. The type of structural discontinuity required by Reverdy's strategy, it should be noted, distinguishes itself from Apollinaire's Cubist practice, where in poems like 'Zone' and 'Le musicien de St-Merry' the sequential discontinuity is the result of fragmentation imposed on a narrative substructure. In Reverdy's case the notion of discontinuity is inscribed in his very conception of poetic writing. In an illuminating later comment Reverdy observes:



Le poète pense en pièces détachées, idées séparées, images formées par contiguïté; le prosateur s'exprime en développant une succession d'idées qui sont déjà en lui et qui restent logiquement liées. Il déroule. Le poète juxtapose et rive, dans les meilleurs cas, les différentes parties de l'œuvre dont le principal mérite est précisément de ne pas présenter de raison trop évidente d'être ainsi rapprochées.

(LB:132)

Juxtaposition and discontinuity (usually indicated, symptomatically, by the disjointed typographical arrangement of the poem on the page), whether or not they incorporate the idea of association implied in the above quotation, are thus part of the principles of construction of Reverdy's poetic discourse as such. The poem itself is built on a constant interplay between conceptual fragmentation and cohesion, and relies on the interaction between on the one hand a necessary degree of semantic disparity between a number of relatively isolated syntagms and, on the other, the perception of the whole as a unity held together by contiguity relations and in which each element has its proper place. It is the dialectical relation between these two factors, and the fact that the precise nature of the relation is not immediately obvious, which establishes and continually emphasizes the non-mimetic, irreducible quality of the poem as a verbal construct. The interpretation of the poem as anecdote or expression is preempted because of the semantic discrepancies and the degree of indeterminacy (and occasionally ambiguity) governing the relations between the various syntagms.

The self-enclosed and self-reflexive character of the poetic text as a whole, then, follows essentially from the sense of constant defamiliarization affecting various levels of the poetic structure. The peculiar typographical arrangement of most of Reverdy's poems also underlines the general discontinuity of the textual surface. As such it differs fundamentally from Apollinaire's calligrammatic experiments - which Reverdy regards as something of an aberration (cf. above, chapter 4, section 5). Where Apollinaire's calligrams aim at the creation of concurrent pictorial and verbal levels of signification, Reverdy's special typography, as he explains in Self Defence, is informed by a "raison d'être purement littéraire", following from a new rhythmical structure and serving an essentially grammatical function in the poem (NS:122). Since traditional punctuation and conventional syntactic patterns and linkings are no longer considered desirable or even appropriate in the new conception

of a discontinuous mode of writing, a new typography takes their place to indicate the internal organization of the text (NS:62,82). At the same time the new typographical arrangement is also seen as a logical continuation of the use of free verse, and as functional in drawing attention to the material aspect of the written text, its spatial lay-out on the page. In his comment on typography in Self Defence Reverdy points out that the new technique

...répondait en même temps au besoin de remplir par l'ensemble nouveau la page qui choquait l'oeil, depuis que les poemes en vers libre en avaient fait un cadre asymétriquement rempli.

(NS:122-123)

This second function is a necessary complement to the first. The spatial arrangement stands for more than mere guidance in the reading process, it also offers a visual manifestation of the discontinuous structure of the poem (and is as such the most obvious counterpart to the geometric fragmentation on a Cubist canvas), and emphasizes the identity of the written text as a separate object. Whereas a narrative text, Reverdy claims, lends itself to oral paraphrase (the extrapolation of a 'fable'), "le propre d'une oeuvre d'art littéraire est de ne pouvoir être conçue et réalisée autrement qu'écrite" (NS:53-54), and it is precisely this aspect which is highlighted by the unfamiliar visual impact of the typographical arrangement. Basically, then, the visual lay-out continually stresses the discontinuous nature of the poem by foregrounding its syntagmatic and semantic disjunctions, while simultaneously focusing attention on the material (written) form of the poem and thus on its essential 'otherness'.

### 3.

Reverdy's conception of the image is also to be considered in this same context of non-discursiveness, discontinuity, and the autonomous status of the poem. It encapsulates, in fact, some of the basic categories and paradoxes of his poetic, and leads in turn to the important notion of 'l'esprit' (as the poetic and conceptualizing mind; cf. below). The doctrine of the image is first enunciated in Nord-Sud in March 1918 (NS:73-75) and subsequently expanded and specified in Le gant de crin (GC:30-33)<sup>(7)</sup>.

Reverdy appears to view the nature and properties of the image entirely in terms of genuine artistic 'creation' (in the sense

indicated above). The image is not a comparison or simile, the description or elucidation of one thing in terms of another, but a novel entity and, from the point of view of the poet, the result of a creative act, the bringing together of two realities which are not normally thought of as belonging in the same sphere or as having anything in common. The point of such an apparently fortuitous or anomalous conjunction lies in the distant yet pertinent relation which exists between the terms of the image:

L'Image est une création pure de l'esprit.  
 Elle ne peut naître d'une comparaison mais du rapprochement de  
 deux réalités plus ou moins éloignées.  
 Plus les rapports des deux réalités rapprochées seront lointains  
 et justes, plus l'image sera forte - plus elle aura de puissance  
 émotive et de réalité poétique. (NS:73)

The paradoxical character of the image then consists in the fact that the common ground between its constituent elements is always tenuous and by no means immediately obvious, while nevertheless the poetic mind ('l'esprit') has perceived a significant relation between them (significant, naturally, in the context of the poem). The power of the image depends on the intensity of this paradox between the apparent unrelatedness of the elements and the unsuspected pertinence (the 'justesse') of their association. Where the poetic mind is unable to perceive any relation at all, or where the relation is too immediately obvious to the senses, no genuine poetic image results ("Deux réalités qui n'ont aucun rapport ne peuvent se rapprocher utilement. Il n'y a pas création d'image", NS:73; and "Si les sens approuvent totalement l'image, ils la tuent dans l'esprit", GC:32). For the reader, the artistic emotion derived from the perception of the image stands in direct proportion to the intensity of the paradox inherent in it, in the sense that a conscious effort is required on his part to recognize the pertinent common feature in two distant and seemingly unrelated elements (which bears out Jacob's remark that "plus l'activité du sujet sera grande, plus l'émotion donnée par l'objet augmentera", 1945b:22). The perception of the image as a poetic factor, then, lies in the recognition of an entirely implicit analogy, of a "ressemblance de rapports" (NS:74), or more properly an "existence de rapports" as the phrase subsequently came to read in Le gant de crin (GC:31).

The image, as Reverdy conceives it, invariably contains an element of catachresis (as a figure of rhetoric; cf. Genette 1966:249), i.e.

a metaphor, simile or association whose terms are drawn from widely different spheres. This aspect of the image, clearly, contributes to its autonomous status: the image is not inspired by an obvious visual resemblance, but it is contrived, the result of a creative conjunction, establishing rather than merely discovering unsuspected connections and analogies. It is precisely the apparently unmotivated character of the image which marks it as a purely poetic fact. Yet in spite of this aspect of the image as catachresis, as contrived and irreducible, Reverdy also sees it as presenting itself spontaneously to the poetic mind. In the comments in Le vant de crin (but not in the original definition in Nord-Sud) he states that

Le propre de l'image forte est d'être issue du rapprochement spontané de deux réalités très distantes dont l'esprit seul a saisi les rapports. (GC:32)

Il ne s'agit pas de faire une image, il faut qu'elle arrive sur ses propres ailes. (ibid.:33)

This does not imply however that the image is no more than a fortuitous association, the result of chance. In contrast with the Surrealists Reverdy insists on the selective control of the mind (but cf. below). The paradox of the image lies in the establishment of "un rapport arbitraire mais mystérieusement juste", he observes in Le livre de mon bord, and as a general rule "L'art commence où finit le hasard" (LB:93,94).

The image thus always means something novel, for the poet himself as well as for the reader. Where for the reader it presents an autonomous and self-justifying conjunction of realities, for the poet too this conjunction has the character of a revelation, since the image is profoundly non-mimetic. When Reverdy speaks of the image as one of the most essential constituents of a "poésie de création" (NS:75), the point may be taken in a double sense: the image, and by implication the poem as such, constitutes a new, distinct entity which did not previously exist and is not based on readily identifiable visual resemblances, and in addition image and poem alike are viewed and evaluated as constructs, verbal realities emanating from the poet - whether consciously contrived by him or arising spontaneously and then approved and grasped by the mind. In both cases it conforms to Jacob's observation in 1907 that the work of art is a "noyau de force" and something which "ajoute réellement au patrimoine cosmique" (1953:31). In this respect Reverdy's comments on the image converge with his conception of the poem as a whole:

since the image is a self-justifying conjunction of realities, the aesthetic emotion it engenders is 'pure' because based on the appreciation of an exclusively poetic reality (NS:74), that is to say "elle [i.e. l'émotion] est née en dehors de toute imitation, de toute évocation, de toute comparaison"(NS:74). The intensity of this emotion, as was just pointed out, relates to the recognition of the paradoxical nature of the image (its apparent lack of motivation, countered by the presence of a pertinent common feature perceptible to the mind). The element of paradox and catachresis in the image may be further emphasized - thus increasing its effectiveness - by its abrupt presentation, i.e. by drawing attention to the semantic displacement (in Shklovsky's sense) affecting its terms as well as to the very tenuity of the common ground between them<sup>(8)</sup>. In the above-mentioned definition of the image Reverdy points out that the image does not originate in a comparison but springs from a "rapprochement de deux réalités". In Self Defence he does not in fact reject the conventional simile or the use of "comme", but he adds nonetheless:

J'ai préféré rapprocher plus directement encore les éléments divers par leurs simples rapports et me passer de tout intermédiaire pour obtenir l'image. (NS:119)

thus opting for a more elliptical presentation, foregrounding the semantic conflict between the constituent terms of the image. In practice this will mean the use of juxtaposition and metaphor; similes are indeed rare in Reverdy's poems, as A. Rizzuto (1971:121) observes.

A final aspect of Reverdy's view of the image concerns its relation to reality. As was mentioned above, the conjunction taking place in the image underlines the autonomy of the language-world of the poem, in the same way as the use of paronomasia, the clash of stylistic registers and the exploitation of logical incompatibilities are used to this effect in Jacob's work. In later years however Reverdy also considers the image as a means to demonstrate the poet's subjugation of nature. "L'image," he writes in an essay on Braque in 1950, "c'est la nature subjuguée, apprivoisée, tenue en laisse" (NEP:61); twenty years earlier he had already claimed that in general "l'art est pour l'homme un des moyens les plus glorieux de satisfaire son inextinguible besoin de domination"(ibid.:13). It is in this respect that Reverdy comes closest perhaps to Apollinaire's simultanist conception, in that both appear to set great store by the power of the language-world (or the artistic world as such) to subsume

and conjoin realities at will; but where Apollinaire develops the point in terms of the establishment of a radically arbitrary semantic disparity and implicitly ubiquitous persona (cf. above, chapter 4, section 4), Reverdy remains within a consistently Cubist context in which conceptual coherence and semantic interrelationships - however tenuous - continue to be relevant. As such his notion of the construction of a separate artistic world with its own laws, to which external reality is made to conform, rather recalls Apollinaire's "trois vertus plastiques" (1908) which "maintiennent sous leurs pieds la nature terrassée", affirming the artist's "divinité" and displaying a 'purity' which "transforme cruellement en elle-même ce qu'elle atteint" (Apollinaire 1966, 4:15-16).

The whole of Reverdy's conception of the image, however, should also be considered in relation to Hulme's and especially Pound's pronouncements on the subject. Two salient points distinguish Reverdy from Hulme. For the latter the image is essentially a matter of visual analogies, while the objective is the creation of novel perceptions by means of the displacement of habitual perceptions; for Reverdy on the other hand the image is not necessarily based on a visual resemblance at all, but presents a sovereign poetic act, the conjunction of two realities as distinct and distant as possible yet stopping short of altogether eliminating the common ground between them (whence the relevance of 'l'esprit'). The implication of Hulme's view also means that for him habitual perception and the conventional use of language - irrespective of whether it is literary or non-literary language - are inextricably linked. The poetic effort to 'new-mint the speech' is thus an attempt to revitalize language as well as the common perception of reality, whereby the constant defamiliarization of the conventional moulds prevalent in both spheres is upheld as the appropriate technique to disrupt the patterns of habituation and to bring language closer to things, to avoid 'types' and 'counters' and to attain a 'solid vision of realities'. Reverdy's view is strangely at variance with that approach:

Quand une image, tout d'abord surprenante, est usée, c'est qu'elle s'est trop identifiée au réel qu'elle évoquait tout d'abord avec quelque précarité. Ainsi le langage poétique, pour garder sa vigueur et sa puissance comme facteur d'émotion, est-il constamment obligé de se renouveler et de conserver une certaine distance entre ses termes propres et les objets de la réalité. (NEP:89-90)

Like Hulme, he professes a concern for the process of habituation and the ensuing need for the renovation of poetic language, but unlike Hulme (and unlike Gourmont) he regards outworn images not as having become abstract 'counters' divorced from reality but on the contrary as too readily identifiable with reality and therefore liable to lose their appeal as catalysts for aesthetic emotion. This point in fact reveals the major difference in outlook: where Hulme sees poetic language as ideally a language "which would hand over sensations bodily"(1949:135), as coincident with reality rather than as a sign system, for Reverdy poetic language in particular should always posit and re-emphasize a sense of distance between itself and reality, the better to safeguard its own separate being, its 'écart', or, to use Jacob's term, its 'situation'.

In Pound's case the relation between the Image and the rest of the poem needs to be taken into account, since it is not the Image by itself but the complexity of the semantic and conceptual relations between the Image and the 'statement' in the more discursive part of the poem which brings into focus the emotional complex conveyed by the poem as a whole. The presentation and isolation of the Image, the discontinuity between it and the rest of the poem, highlight the complexity of the relation between both elements, in the same way as Reverdy concentrates on the foregrounding of the semantic conflict between the terms of the image to increase its effectiveness. Like Hulme, however, Pound exhibits a bias in favour of immediate visualization (as the development of the concept of phanopoeia shows), while the Imagist Image is also consistently seen in the context of the poem as transference of emotion (as his comments on the Metro Station poem indicate). In spite of the process of objectivation involved, the Imagist poem presents itself essentially as an 'equation' for a particular mood (Pound 1970a:92, 1953:14). To Reverdy, as was shown above, the idea of the poem as 'transference' and as an 'equation' for something else is anathema.

Pound's integration of Imagism into Vorticism, on the other hand, seems to bring him closer to Reverdy's general conception, due to the greater emphasis on what he then calls the "creative-inventive faculty" (1973:347) and on the establishment of 'planes in relation' (as opposed to the recognition and reproduction of existing resemblances;cf. 1970a:120-121). Already in The Spirit of Romance

Pound draws attention to the Aristotelian notion of metaphor as the swift perception of relations (1953:158), and in the Vorticist years this 'perception of relations' is interpreted in terms of the more creative act of the 'organization of forms' as such (1970a:92). The distinction between the Image as perceived and as conceived dates from this period, while a predictable preference is expressed for "conceiving instead of merely reflecting and observing" (ibid.:89). The role of the plastic arts (Picasso, Kandinsky, Gaudier, Lewis) in this shift of emphasis is obvious enough. The appreciation of 'form' in itself is concurrent with the rejection of mimeticism (whereby both are in turn transposed into the typically Vorticist categories of 'primary' and 'secondary' intensity), and in this respect Pound refers specifically to the Cubists and to Kandinsky who, as he puts it, were "getting extraneous matter out of their art" and "ousting literary values" (ibid.:85). Reverdy, entertaining equally close contacts with the artists (Picasso, Braque, Gris) employs a strikingly similar terminology when speaking of the elimination of anecdote, representation and the predominance of the object, observing in an essay of 1924 that Picasso "a su dépouiller [son art] de toute la littérature qui avait peu à peu envahi l'art de son époque" (NS:203). Just as Pound approves of Epstein's point on "form, not the form of anything" (1970a:98), Reverdy is anxious to emphasize the status of both image and poem as 'poetic realities', i.e. autonomous forms which are signs of themselves only and fundamentally non-representational. Just as Jacob's Art poétique states that "tout art se suffit à lui-même" (1922:15), Reverdy writes in Self Defence: "De quoi est-il question dans cette oeuvre; uniquement de l'oeuvre, tout y a été fait pour l'oeuvre" (NS:115).

There is also, finally, a close structural parallel between Reverdy's conception of the image and the notion of the ideogram. As was suggested above, Reverdy's image, based as it is on relations between its terms which are "lointains et justes", has an inherently paradoxical and dialectical structure: it contains obvious elements of mutual opposition and fusion, the opposition resulting from the semantic disparity between the terms, the fusion from the intervention of the poetic mind which has perceived pertinent common features and thus welds both parts together in the context of the poem. The terseness of presentation, a factor to which Pound also refers, contributes to its effect in highlighting the aspects of opposition,



fusion and artistic autonomy and irreducibility as well. These aspects are precisely the essence of Eisenstein's view of the structure of the ideogram - a view which was found to be directly relevant for Pound's and Fenollosa's ideas on the subject (cf. above, chapter 5, section 4). Like Reverdy, but more explicitly so, Eisenstein emphasizes the relation between collision and fusion in the ideogram, pointing out that its 'montage' principle is not a mere question of linkage but involves the merging of two separate 'hieroglyphic' elements into a new entity which is then "a value of another dimension"(Eisenstein 1951:29-30). It is this side of the poetic process which is also particularly in evidence in Reverdy's image, where two in themselves recognizable realities are joined together into a 'poetic reality', a "nouvel accord"(LB:94), in the same way as the various words and syntagms of the text forego their primarily referential character to take their place in the poetic structure.

## 4.

The basic paradox of the image, its accessibility to the poetic mind in spite of the apparent arbitrariness of the conjunction, is symptomatic of a more general paradox affecting the poem as a whole. While the poem is granted its separate status with regard to the poet as well as to external reality (as in Jacob's poetic), Reverdy also describes art as "une chose éminemment terrestre"(GC:16), referring to his own volume Les ardoises du toit as being "en contact direct avec la vie qui est sa seule source"(NS:88); Cubism is called "un art de grande réalité"(NS:20), and Picasso's work labelled "un art matérialiste"(NS:190). The relation between the poem and its author was mentioned above: while not a vehicle for the transference of emotion and sensibility, the poem is nevertheless 'personal' in that it results from a personal aesthetic (whereby 'aesthetic' is understood as "l'ensemble des moyens dont un auteur dispose pour créer", NS:89). There seems to be a certain evolution in Reverdy's theorizing in regard to these questions. Whereas the earlier essays ('Sur le cubisme', 'Essai d'esthétique littéraire') concentrate almost exclusively on the autonomy of the work as an artistic product in and for itself, in subsequent texts a more complex view comes to prevail, focusing more explicitly on the paradox between autonomy and the

relation between the artist (the poet) and the empirical world. The concepts of 'le réel' and 'l'esprit' are also introduced at this later stage, and their nature and function will now be considered in the context of these questions.

An approach to what exactly is meant by 'le réel' and the rôle Reverdy assigns to it may start with an examination of his recurrent use of the term "(se) dégager" in his accounts of the process of artistic creation. In his observations on Cubist painting, Reverdy, like other commentators before him, stresses the need to discard the 'incidental' appearance of a model in order to arrive, by means of conceptualization, at its more abstract, formal properties. In 'Sur le cubisme' he claims of the model that "Il ne s'agit pas d'en donner l'aspect, mais d'en dégager ce qui est éternel et constant", so as to obtain not an illusionist but a more 'real', more 'material' form of art (NS:19). An essay on Picasso in 1923 speaks of "cette nouveauté particulière d'une représentation essentiellement matérielle, dégagée de toute atmosphère factice"(NEP:200), in contrast with the use of conventional perspective which offers "une représentation irréaliste des objets dans l'espace" and "demandait à l'esprit de faire une concession indispensable à l'oeil"(ibid.:200-201; Gleizes and Metzinger had similarly pointed out that in Realist and Impressionist art "the retina predominates over the brain";cf. Herbert 1964:3); the essay goes on to state:

De l'objet, Picasso prétendit ne dégager par conséquent que ce qui est permanent et substantiel, ne prendre que la matière nette et écarter le sentiment qui la dénature et l'enveloppe.  
(NEP:201)

The discounting of accidental and contingent features, the ensuing reduction to 'primary characteristics' and the singling out of abstract, formal properties, is thus essentially seen as producing works which are more genuinely 'real' and 'material' than the technique of mimetic representation. The term "dégager" in this context has not only overtones of reduction, abstraction and conceptualization but also of the elimination of 'empathic' factors (sentimental, literary, anecdotal) which place the object in a particular constellation of time and place and thus create an atmosphere of 'vraisemblance'. This double sense of the term also holds for the poetic process. The poem, for Reverdy, does not allow identification with external reality, and discounts the poet's lyrical sensibility. As for the latter, he remarks that "C'est en se dégageant de ces sentiments que

l'art s'élève"(NS:56); and in more general terms:

Un élément ne devient pur que dégagé du sentiment que lui confère sa situation dans la vie. Il faut le dépouiller de ce sentiment pour que dans l'oeuvre il joue un rôle sans détrimment pour son ensemble. (NS:120)

It is in the emphasis on this disjunction between reality ("la vie") and the artistic structure that the third meaning of "dégager" becomes clear, namely that of detachment and separation (Jacob's 'situation'). Naturally all three meanings of the term are closely interrelated and complementary. When Reverdy declares that it is when "les mots se dégagent de leur signification littérale qu'ils prennent dans l'esprit une valeur poétique"(NS:107), he seems to have in mind a certain abstraction (in the sense of defamiliarization of referentiality) as well as the sense of detachment enveloping the poetic structure as a whole. The idea of abstraction and schematization, resulting however in a more genuinely 'real' artistic product, is already present in the conclusion to the essay 'Sur le cubisme', when Reverdy claims that "des oeuvres qui, en se détachant de la vie, y rentrent parce qu'elles ont une existence propre"(NS:20): the work is a genuine object in its own right because it is detached from reality, and it is detached because it is non-mimetic, i.e. it concentrates on more abstract and formal properties rather than on fleeting appearances, and its constituent parts are evaluated as constructive elements rather than as representations. The different senses of the term "dégager" are present in each of these qualifications.

The concept of 'le réel' presupposes this context. It may be useful to distinguish two meanings (which were left implicit in the paragraphs above) of the term itself, namely 'le réel' as a set of abstract and formal features ('primary characteristics') and as the 'material reality' of an object, in contrast with its visual appearance; this latter meaning underlies the description of Picasso's work as being "soucieux de la réalité des objets jusqu'à leur matière, en dehors () de toutes les illusions et apparences trompeuses de l'atmosphère"(NS:189-190). For the most part, however, the two meanings of the term appear to be concurrent. In the essay 'Poésie' of June 1924, Reverdy states that "parmi tous les phénomènes sensibles, le poète choisit ceux qui participent strictement du réel", which will mean in practice that he selects "toutes choses simples, profondes, constantes, que le temps n'apporte ni n'emporte"; the point is then further clarified with some examples:

Le nuage et la table sont, comme le soleil, la pluie et l'ombre des réalités; la forme particulière d'un vêtement est irréelle, la reminiscence livresque usitée en poésie reste dans l'irréalité.  
(MS:205-206)

In other words, where painting singles out permanent formal characteristics and purely 'material' aspects, in the poetic process this operation bears primarily on word choice and poetic structure. Elements not enveloped in an "atmosphère factice" and possessing an unspecific, general and timeless reality are introduced into the poem by means of simple, generic terms which resist integration into an illusionist 'vraisemblance' because of their lack of referential specificity and because the poetic structure in which they occur will avoid discursiveness and the establishment of a situational context, the equivalent - as Hulme also noticed - of conventional perspective. 'Vraisemblance' and 'le réel', then, are mutually exclusive (a point also made by Braque, who notes: "Il faut choisir: une chose ne peut être à la fois vraie et vraisemblable", 1952:20). A similar observation occurs in another essay, of December 1924. Here 'le réel' is equated with "la réalité profonde" and further explained as "ce que l'esprit seul est capable de saisir, de détacher, de modeler" and as "tout ce qui () évite, esquivé l'emprise trompeuse des sens" (MS:212). Le gant de crin repeats these remarks (GC:18-19) and adds in a later note:

L'esprit de l'artiste devra, pour pénétrer jusqu'au réel, faire abstraction des apparences fugitives.  
Il ne s'ensuit pas que son art devra être abstrait; au contraire, l'abstraction des accidents superficiels de l'apparence, qui est une garantie, doit amener à la production de faits plus substantiels, d'œuvres plus concrètes, d'une plus forte existence propre. (GC:47)

The notion of 'le réel' thus appears to be functional in two contexts, namely as the 'profound reality' which is accessible to the artistic and conceptualizing mind, and hence, in the process of artistic production itself, as the factor allowing the creation of works which are more 'substantial' and autonomous precisely because they deal with more durable and profound aspects of reality. The terms 'durable' and 'static' then apply equally to 'le réel' and to the work of art focused on it: "L'art n'est pas la réalité", Reverdy also states, "mais l'art statique négligeant l'apparent et l'accidentel ne se soucie que de réel"(GC:29). Art, it seems, becomes static and a-temporal by acting as the negation of the contingency of the empirical world.

In elaborating these categories of 'le réel', then, Reverdy comes remarkably close to adopting the terminology of Worringer's (and hence Hulme's and Gaudier's) philosophy of art. Although on the whole the assumptions and presuppositions of Worringer's approach play no real part in Reverdy's conception, in developing the notion of 'le réel' and its implications for the status of the work of art Reverdy (unconsciously) touches upon some of Worringer's key concepts relating to the nature of inorganic art, in particular the elimination of empathy ('Einfühlungsdrang') by means of the "Unterdrückung der Raumdarstellung" (Worringer 1918:29), the 'immanent' quality of inorganic art, and the rejection of (Naturalist) mimeticism as a superficial art form. Yet Reverdy's position remains distinct not only from Worringer's but also from that of his followers, Hulme and Gaudier. Hulme's interpretation of Worringer leads to the advocacy of an anti-humanist, explicitly geometric art and acquires philosophical, historical and social overtones alien to Reverdy. Gaudier on the other hand associates Worringer's conception with Vorticist principles in the idea of artistic modes of 'primary' and 'secondary' intensity, a dimension equally absent from Reverdy's approach. For Reverdy the preoccupation with 'le réel' and the ensuing notion of a static and durable art appears essentially in the context of the autonomous existence of the work of art as an object in itself, and this is a point which in his case is directly linked with the practice of the Cubist painters (whereby Reverdy, like Kahnweiler, regards geometricism as an accidental by-product and not as an essential feature), i.e. arising out of a purely artistic (pictorial) line of evolution and not (as Worringer sees it) the direct ~~cause~~ <sup>result</sup> of a philosophical disposition. The difference in context between the two approaches is further borne out by the fact that the qualities of stasis and durability are also seen by Reverdy as resulting from the work's formal equilibrium, which contributes precisely to its self-enclosed and self-sufficient nature as a separate entity within reality, not necessarily in opposition to it. Like Worringer however Reverdy eventually interprets the work of art which incorporates 'le réel' (and is in turn incorporated into it) as defying time and circumstance on account of its stasis and durability and its negation of contingency<sup>(9)</sup>.

The concept of 'le réel' and the idea of the formal equilibrium of the artistic structure in turn imply the notion of 'l'esprit'

(which has so far been rendered as the 'poetic' or the 'conceptualizing' mind). In the first few essays and notes in Nord-Sud the term is not used in any special sense. It then appears in 'L'émotion' (October 1917) where, in a discussion of how the traditional predominance of the subject-matter is to be replaced by a concern for "les moyens littéraires"(NS:55-56), Reverdy states that "Les moyens de l'esprit nous donnent le tact nécessaire au choix des matériaux à employer à l'exclusion de tous autres"(NS:57); since "ce tact est le talent même"(ibid.), the faculty referred to as 'l'esprit' occupies a central position in the artistic process, for the essence of a work lies precisely in the selection and organization of the material. Subsequent essays however attribute a still more fundamentally creative and discerning role to 'l'esprit'. As was pointed out already, the definition of the image assigns the poetic mind a vital part in the simple claim that "L'image est une création pure de l'esprit"(NS:73); the conjunction taking place in the image is an essentially creative act, and only 'l'esprit' is believed to be able to overcome the apparent incompatibility or arbitrariness of its terms and of grasping the pertinent relation between them.

In Self Defence 'l'esprit' is then also installed as a crucial factor in the poetic process. The whole collection is headed by the caption "ESPRIT"(NS:104), and an attempt is made to define its precise content and value in relation to other terms, first "intelligence" and "sensibilité", and then "rêve" and "pensée". Thus 'l'esprit' is not "l'intelligence qui se passe de sensibilité" and neither "la sensibilité qui passerait d'intelligence"(NS:104), but a more assimilative and discerning mode than either of these:

L'intelligence prend connaissance des réalités, la sensibilité s'en émeut; l'esprit les assimile et les admet. Il n'y a pas de réalité artistique sans esprit. (NS:105)

The 'mind', that is, is neither a purely cognitive and analytical, nor a purely emotive, but an essentially integrative faculty. "Pensée" and "rêve" on the other hand are modes which interlock with 'l'esprit'. They are its active and its passive manifestations respectively:

Le rêve est une forme spéciale de la pensée. La pensée c'est l'esprit qui pénètre, le rêve l'esprit qui se laisse pénétrer. Il est peut-être bon que l'esprit du poète se laisse pénétrer plus qu'il ne pénètre. (NS:106)

The point is further elaborated in the essay 'Le rêveur parmi les murailles' of 1924 (published, significantly, in La Révolution surréaliste). Here Reverdy claims that 'le rêve' is not an "inconscience

totale ou partielle" or a kind of coma, but, somewhat surprisingly, "l'état où la conscience est portée à son plus haut degré de perception"(NS:208). He repeats the earlier suggestion that 'le rêve' is not the opposite of 'la pensée' but "une forme plus libre, plus abandonnée" of it (*ibid.*). In Le gant de crin he states likewise that 'le rêve' proceeds effortlessly, being "l'imagination libre qui se laisse couler selon le penchant naturel du rêveur"(GC:24). 'Le rêve', he also observes, develops in images, linked by spontaneous association; 'la pensée' in contrast requires words and concepts to proceed, and builds up a strictly delineated, logical progression (NS:209).

These comments, in particular those on 'le rêve' as a modality of the mind, suggest that Reverdy's attitude towards Surrealism is more complex than has sometimes been assumed (cf. for example Greene 1967:43,48) and less clear-cut than Jacob's. The relation between Reverdy and the Surrealists is usually seen in terms of Reverdy's insistence on discipline and the artist's conscious control of his material. Even in 1924 Reverdy indeed writes that "En écrivant, le poète garde le contrôle de son être intérieur"(NS:205), which would seem to disqualify him as a Surrealist, just as Jacob's continual emphasis on judicious structuration compels him to reject the principle of automatic writing and random association. With respect to the image also Reverdy stipulates that there should always remain some common factor, however tenuous, linking its terms, some motivation for the mind to grasp. This view is irreconcilable with Breton's Manifesto, according to which "the most effective image is the one which has the highest degree of arbitrariness"(cf. Raymond 1970:264); and Breton declares specifically that "il est faux, selon moi, de prétendre que 'l'esprit a saisi les rapports' des deux réalités en présence"(cf. Etudes 1970:120). Reverdy clearly recognizes this basic difference of opinion between himself and Breton when he writes in a letter (to Breton) as early as January 1918: "Mais mes efforts, mes recherches ne vont pas dans le même sens que les vôtres et en ce disant je ne vous apprendis rien"(Etudes 1970:98). In spite of this obvious divergence however Reverdy's comments on 'le rêve' and 'l'esprit' in later years substantially narrow the gap between the Surrealist outlook and his own, and his awareness of this shows in a letter of October 1924, again to Breton, where, upon receiving a copy of the Surrealist Manifesto, he says:

J'ai reçu tout à l'heure votre livre. Au premier coup d'oeil jeté sur votre émouvante préface, je vois - je m'y attendais - que rien ne nous sépare radicalement. Je n'ai même jamais prétendu que les rapports perçus par l'esprit (quelle part de l'esprit? ni la raison ni la pensée) l'étaient consciemment.  
(Etudes 1970:112)

As the observations in the above-mentioned articles already suggested, 'l'esprit' here appears also to comprise subconscious modes of cognition, which brings Reverdy considerably closer to Breton's position. This impression is further enhanced by a passage in Le livre de mon bord where, without making any reference to 'l'esprit' or to the image, the conjunction of distant realities is said to result in a 'surreality' ("Par le rapprochement des choses par leurs rapports les plus lointains, en apparence même inexistants, on arrive à la surréalité", LB:112), while the artistic emotion thus provoked "échappe davantage à la confrontation au dehors - à tout contrôle" (ibid.). On the whole, then, the notion of 'l'esprit' and its function as an instance of conscious control appears to become more flexible as the discussion with Surrealism continues, but it is a flexibility which essentially inheres in the notion itself as early as the period of Self Defence.

The poetic mind, with its active and passive modalities, and considered as a creative and cognitive category, appears to assert itself in a further capacity still, as the crucial organizing faculty in the structuration of the artistic product. Where the integration of 'le réel' into the work implies notions of detachment and separation and thus offers a parallel with Jacob's 'situation', the view of 'l'esprit' as a structuring principle bears on what Jacob calls 'style'. Where Jacob remarks in a letter of 1917 that "la pensée donne la matière du style"(1953:134), Reverdy, taking up a point first made in the essay 'L'émotion' (October 1917), declares in Self Defence that "C'est l'esprit qui fournit les moyens. Les moyens différencient les oeuvres. L'esprit fait l'époque"(NS:104). The 'mind' determines the principles of construction of the artist's output, and furnishes the basic categories of the aesthetic which informs the poet's mode of writing. The crucial importance of these underlying principles is explicitly stated a few years later, in the essay 'L'esthétique et l'esprit'(1921):

L'esthétique est () partie de l'art. Elle est dans l'esprit et l'esprit c'est l'artiste lui-même. L'esthétique est une armature, l'esprit une mesure qui permet l'art, qui le soutient, qui le situe dans la vie au lieu de l'y laisser traîner.



J'ai reçu tout à l'heure votre livre. Au premier coup d'oeil jeté sur votre émouvante préface, je vois - je m'y attendais - que rien ne nous sépare radicalement. Je n'ai même jamais prétendu que les rapports perçus par l'esprit (quelle part de l'esprit? ni la raison ni la pensée) l'étaient consciemment. (Etudes 1970:112)

As the observations in the above-mentioned articles already suggested, 'l'esprit' here appears also to comprise subconscious modes of cognition, which brings Reverdy considerably closer to Breton's position. This impression is further enhanced by a passage in Le livre de mon bord where, without making any reference to 'l'esprit' or to the image, the conjunction of distant realities is said to result in a 'surreality' ("Par le rapprochement des choses par leurs rapports les plus lointains, en apparence même inexistantes, on arrive à la surréalité", LB:112), while the artistic emotion thus provoked "échappe davantage à la confrontation au dehors - à tout contrôle" (ibid.). On the whole, then, the notion of 'l'esprit' and its function as an instance of conscious control appears to become more flexible as the discussion with Surrealism continues, but it is a flexibility which essentially inheres in the notion itself as early as the period of Self Defence.

The poetic mind, with its active and passive modalities, and considered as a creative and cognitive category, appears to assert itself in a further capacity still, as the crucial organizing faculty in the structuration of the artistic product. Where the integration of 'le réel' into the work implies notions of detachment and separation and thus offers a parallel with Jacob's 'situation', the view of 'l'esprit' as a structuring principle bears on what Jacob calls 'style'. Where Jacob remarks in a letter of 1917 that "la pensée donne la matière du style"(1953:134), Reverdy, taking up a point first made in the essay 'L'émotion' (October 1917), declares in Self Defence that "C'est l'esprit qui fournit les moyens. Les moyens différencient les oeuvres. L'esprit fait l'époque"(NS:104). The 'mind' determines the principles of construction of the artist's output, and furnishes the basic categories of the aesthetic which informs the poet's mode of writing. The crucial importance of these underlying principles is explicitly stated a few years later, in the essay 'L'esthétique et l'esprit'(1921):

L'esthétique est () partie de l'art. Elle est dans l'esprit et l'esprit c'est l'artiste lui-même. L'esthétique est une armature, l'esprit une mesure qui permet l'art, qui le soutient, qui le situe dans la vie au lieu de l'y laisser traîner.

L'esprit, ai-je dit ailleurs, fait l'époque - les moyens différencient les oeuvres. (NS:174-175)

The significance of this statement becomes clear when the literary-historical context is taken into account, and in particular Reverdy's insistence that the new writing he propagates does not spring from a change in subject-matter but is based on a different principle of construction. As such the observation implies also a condemnation of Futurism along the same lines as Apollinaire's and the Vorticists' rejection of it, on the grounds that the Futurists lack an adequate aesthetic theory. Ultimately, the quest for 'le réel' and its integration into the autonomous work of art, the disjunctions between the work on the one hand and the artist and reality on the other, the autotelic, self-enclosed and self-sufficient nature of the artistic product, all are determined by a new structural insight ("une structure nouvelle d'où résulte une fin toute neuve", NS:108) - an insight which the poetic mind affords and which manifests itself primarily in a preoccupation with the artistic material as such, to the exclusion of 'expressive' or 'representational' concerns.

'L'esprit', as the organizing faculty in the poetic process, plays also a more particular part in the actual deployment of the artistic material, and in that sense it determines also the internal structuration of the work in establishing it as a formal equilibrium. In this respect two concurrent aspects need to be considered, namely that of the work as an interplay of contending elements, with an ensuing dialectic of conceptual fragmentation and cohesion (running parallel to the dialectic governing the image), and that of the work as a homogeneous and static entity (running parallel to the stasis which ensues from the incorporation of 'le réel' into the thematic structure). Reverdy's approach is here reminiscent of similar Cubist conceptions of artistic structure. Gris, it will be remembered, (cf. above, chapter 6, section 3), distinguishes between 'construction', which is the putting together of a heterogeneous amalgam, and 'architecture', the creation of an organic whole having unity, homogeneity and individuality (Gris 1974:34). For Braque, who adopts a different terminology, "Construire, c'est assembler des éléments homogènes; bâtir, c'est lier des éléments hétérogènes"(1952:16). Jacob criticizes what he regards as the structural incoherence of Rimbaud's poems, opposing to it the concept of the work as an organic unity, a living organism which calls for an overriding

"souci d'ensemble"(1922:50) on the poet's part, for a concern with "la composition de l'ensemble"(1945b:21) and the construction of "un ensemble orchestré"(cf. Cadou 1956:31), "une oeuvre équilibrée"(1922:15). But where Jacob tends in practice to focus attention on the purely verbal substructure and on formal interaction on the level of the signifier as such ("l'accord des mots, des images, leur appel mutuel et constant",1922:66), Reverdy appears to be interested mainly in the conceptual aspect of the poetic structure, its 'logic':

La logique d'une oeuvre d'art c'est sa structure. Du moment que cet ensemble s'équilibre et qu'il tient c'est qu'il est logique.  
(NS:108)

In later comments however this emphasis is complemented by more explicit descriptions of poetic structure in terms of a formal and dialectical interplay between the various constituents of the work, combining to form a balanced and tranquil whole which defies movement and time. Le gant de crin describes the work of art as "un équilibre de forces, de formes, de valeurs, d'idées, de lignes, d'images, de couleurs"(GC:46), and it is in statements like this that Reverdy again aligns himself with the Vorticist conception of the work as the still and ordered centre of a highly dynamic pattern of turmoil and commotion, and with Worringer's view of a static art overcoming and negating the flux of reality (albeit, as was already pointed out, that Worringer's philosophical premisses are alien to Reverdy). These parallels become even more evident when Reverdy defines the 'static' in art as "l'équilibre des forces"(NEP:19) and notes that "l'oeuvre d'art lutte contre le déséquilibre du mouvement"(GC:46). As the parallel with the Vorticist outlook on this point suggests, the example of the plastic arts, and especially that of Synthetic Cubism, is always a major factor in the ultimate provenance of these concepts. In Reverdy's case however, as in Jacob's, the firm belief in the radical 'otherness' of the artistic product appears to be substantially more pronounced than with either the Cubist painters or the Vorticists. It is this emphasis in particular that accounts for the Worringerian overtones of some of Reverdy's pronouncements, making his faith in the 'durable' and 'permanent' qualities of a 'classical' work of art sound strikingly like Hulme's approach. But where Hulme's interpretation of Worringer induces him to advocate geometricism as an expression of an anti-humanist, life-alien conception, Reverdy's and Jacob's Cubist aesthetic demands a constant preoccupation with formal harmony and internal structuration in order to establish the



characteristic lies, presumably, in its syntactically disjointed aspect: short disconnected phrases, mostly exceedingly simple syntactic constructions, unexpected shifts in verbal tenses and personal pronouns, the absence of explicit transitions (most noticeable in the sparsity of grammatical link-words: except for the relative clauses, the text contains virtually no conjunctions of subordination), all point to a Cubist-style discontinuity and juxtaposition as the major technical principles shaping the textual surface of the poem. In several instances a degree of grammatical indeterminacy prevails, compounded by the suppression of punctuation marks and by the typographical arrangement, and due to a continual uncertainty whether a particular syntagm or line complements a previous line or not and whether it in turn will be extended in the following line or lines. As a result the reading process is governed by a sense of unpredictability typical of the technique of juxtaposition (cf. J. Lotman's observations in this respect, chapter 4, note 11). Yet in contrast with for example the extreme semantic diversity of Apollinaire's simultanist poems, Reverdy's text as a whole keeps within limited thematic bounds, so that the degree of semantic unpredictability remains relatively restricted in scope. The reconstruction of the conceptual coherence of the poem then also implies the overcoming of the 'blank spaces' (in the sense of W. Iser's 'Leerstellen') in the text by means of the functional evaluation of an over-all isotopy, indicated by the title and continued through various repetitions of thematically significant elements and references to the encounter between past and present.

As was just mentioned, the syntagmatic discontinuity of the text, together with the absence of punctuation marks, makes for a degree of syntactic indeterminacy and ambiguity in places. This is the case in the opening lines of the poem, where line 2 could be read in conjunction with either lines 1 or 3, and line 4 could be coupled with either line 3 or 5. At the end of the first stanza line 9 ("Est-ce le même") may continue the previous line or be coupled with line 10. On a different level, the final lines also show a pattern of interlocking which is more directly reminiscent of Cubist techniques (cf. Rizzuto 1971:60). The lines "Et celui qui s'en va là-bas" and "Dans un pays lointain et noir", which appear to belong together, are separated by "Tes lèvres tremblent", a line which relates rather to "Un enfant qui courait ne te rappelle rien" and to the final line,

"Tu lui ressembles", although (as Rizzuto forgets to point out) the pronoun "lui" in this final line may refer to "celui qui s'en va..." as well as to "Un enfant...", so that both groups of lines are interwoven and what is happening is not merely a question of displacement of lines and sudden changes in point of view, but also the semantic interpenetration of two statements. This interpenetration and interweaving, and thus the double reference-value of the final line, has a further function if it is borne in mind that the whole poem revolves around the persona's encounter with the past (with his own past selves), so that, as indeed the title of the poem strongly suggests, the various figures and personal pronouns may all refer to one and the same persona (the "Enfant" as well as "celui qui s'en va..." are identical with the "tu" who, it may be assumed, is the same as the "je" of the first part). These semantic and grammatical interweavings, disjunctions and ambiguities, and the resulting multiplicity of potential and actual semantic relations, are wholly consistent with the Cubist practice of deconstruction, displacement and formal transparency, i.e. with what W. Judkins (1948:276) calls the "Iridescence of Form" and the "multiplicity of countenances" in Cubist paintings (cf. above, chapter 6, section 3). The typographical arrangement of the text, far from reflecting the persona's mental processing of disconnected memories and images from the past (which would be a mimetic interpretation of the poem as a semi-conscious automatic notation, but for one thing the judiciousness of the rhymes in the text militates against that reading) contributes to the over-all effect by emphasizing the structural discontinuity and non-discursiveness, while at the same time constantly de-automatizing the reading process by drawing attention to the visual impact of the poem on the page. The opposite movement, towards reconstruction and conceptual coherence, is then embodied in the over-all isotopy which runs through the text and which converges on the notions of recollection and confrontation with the past.

The poem 'Soleil' has a totally different thematic centre, but its formal structure displays the same basic characteristics as the previous poem:

Quelqu'un vient de partir  
 Dans la chambre  
                                   Il reste un soupir

La vie déserte

La rue  
 Et la fenêtr<sup>e</sup> ouverte  
 Un rayon de soleil  
 Sur la pelouse verte (PT:200)

As in 'Vue d'autrefois', but more conspicuously so, several rhymes occur, but not always at regular intervals; in that respect the poem deviates from both traditional rhyming patterns and from systematically unrhymed free verse, while the aspect of formal structuration in the text is foregrounded all the same. The sentence construction is again extremely simple, and most of the text indeed consists of nominal phrases, while grammatical conjunctions and punctuation marks are again lacking. The poem as a whole comprises two clearly distinguishable parts, an indoor and an outdoor scene. The key line appears to be the isolated "La vie déserte", which follows upon the statement of the departure in the opening line and in turn carries overtones of emptiness and loneliness over into the second part. As a result the emotional as well as the literal sense of "déserte" is fully in evidence. This activation of the double sense of the poem's key term is also symptomatic of the metonymic quality of the text as a whole: in the virtual absence of any deictic references and of an 'actant' (the only personal pronoun is the indefinite "quelqu'un" of line 1; the poetic persona remains implicit), the objective elements of the second part bear an emotional weight and intensity well in excess of their mere physical presence and of the economy of their presentation. The poem, in other words, suggests a much 'fuller' scene involving a "quelqu'un" and the implied persona, but these events (departure, even death, possibly) are passed over in silence, and only objective data are retained (in a particularly Poundian remark in 'Note éternelle du présent', Reverdy writes: "Opposer au sentimental mouvant l'émouvant éclat du sol, dur, clair et sec, dans l'air salubre des falaises", NEP:24). This then is also the structural pattern of the poem, where an essential discursive discontinuity, emphasized by the visual lay-out, is counterbalanced by a conceptual coherence based on contiguity relations which metonymically suggest rather than develop the wider thematic framework. This basic pattern, in fact, underlies the poetic structure of much of Reverdy's work, and may be considered in more general terms as well.

On the whole, the simplicity of Reverdy's poetic vocabulary cannot but attract attention. This 'verbal sobriety', like the austere appearance of Nord-Sud itself, contains (as was mentioned

above, note 6) an unmistakable element of what was in the previous chapter called anti-stylization (Bakhtin). In a letter of 1918 (i.e. around the time of the publication of Les ardoises du toit), Reverdy observes:

Je crois que la profondeur poétique exige les mots simples (éléments) familiers à l'auteur parce qu'ils sont sa vie verbale indivisible de sa vie propre (les mots sont maîtres de l'art). Le beau langage et les mots précieux, les belles tournures sont des jeux raffinés et superficiels. (NRF 1976:48)

The comment highlights not only the polemical aspect of Reverdy's preference for simple words, the rejection of "le beau langage et les mots précieux" and what he calls elsewhere conventional stylistic "alambiquage" (NS:39), but also their relation to the principles of depersonalization and of 'le réel'. Later in the same letter he remarks that "Les mots sont à tout le monde" (ibid.), and it is with this point in mind that Reverdy can conceive of the poem as imbued with its author's 'personality' while yet, on the strength of the very simplicity and commonness of its material, remaining 'depersonalized' in that it consists in the creation of objective constellations (still-lives, so to speak, the most 'materialist' form of art in Reverdy's opinion, cf. NEP:32ff) whose emotional appeal results from the particular way the elements are grouped rather than from a lyrical, anecdotal or situational context - which the poems manifestly refuse to construct. Reverdy's basic vocabulary, coupled with the virtual absence of deictic references and with the discontinuous structure of the poems, furthermore, avoids the establishment of a context of 'vraisemblance' and hence the possibility of identification with particular states of affairs. His words, rather, become conceptual realities indicated by common nouns which retain their referential core (and are not transformed into complex connotative ciphers, as happens in Trakl's work) but whose 'reality' and applicability remains highly unspecific and determined entirely by the constellation of each individual poem, i.e. by an exclusive 'poetic reality' (10).

Clearly, the rejection of preciosity and exoticism in matters of vocabulary is closely correlated with the abandonment of syntactic complexity. This also means, by implication, the abandonment of Mallarméan syntax; the motivation for such a handling of syntax is in any case precluded by the concepts of a 'materialist' art and of the autotelic and self-signifying nature of the artistic product



(cf. above, note 8). Reverdy shows himself to be fully aware of the polemical and anti-conventional character of his treatment of syntax when he remarks in Nord-Sud that "Aujourd'hui il semble que, pour nos habituels critiques, syntaxe doit supposer immanquablement complication et alambiquage"(NS:81); the new syntax, he then claims, follows from the adoption of new artistic principles: "Pour un art nouveau une syntaxe nouvelle était à prévoir; elle devait fatalement venir mettre dans le nouvel ordre les mots dont nous devons nous servir"(ibid.)<sup>(11)</sup>. The new principles of construction themselves, then, are based upon a continual dialectic of structural discontinuity on the one hand and, on the other, relations of contiguity, in line with the statement that the poet is one who "pense en pièces détachées" and who "juxtapose et rive"(LB:132); another aphorism in Le livre de mon bord states that "Le poète est maçon, il ajuste des pierres, le prosateur cimentier, il coule du béton"(ibid.:91). In this sense the poem as a whole adopts ultimately the structure of the image, emphasizing heterogeneity in its formal, syntactic and visual fragmentation, yet counterbalancing this by imposing an over-all conceptual unity, an isotopic common ground (even if there is no thematic development in the conventional sense, because, as Reverdy observes: "Il n'y a pas, il ne peut pas y avoir aujourd'hui d'histoire dans un poème",LB:221). It is also, clearly, the presence of this isotopic common ground which both necessitates and justifies a reading of the poem along metonymic lines.

The 'new syntax' should obviously be considered together with the new typography and the suppression of punctuation. Reverdy himself links the changed function of the syntactic component with the adoption of a new typography, pointing out that both are essentially "une disposition de mots"(NS:82); he defends his deletion of punctuation marks on the same grounds, arguing that the new poetic structure has made conventional punctuation superfluous (NS:62,122). He also declares however that in the new structure "Chaque chose est à sa place et aucune confusion n'est possible qui exigerait l'emploi d'un signe quelconque pour la dissiper"(NS:62), and it thus follows that the creation of syntactic indeterminacy and ambiguity which was observed in the poems must be seen as intentional, as part, firstly, of what W. Judkins called the "Studied Multiplicity of Readings" (1948:276) characteristic of much Cubist (pictorial) work, and on another level, of the de-construction of a situational or mimetic

context. The major difference between Reverdy's and Trakl's practice in this respect, it may be added, lies precisely in the fact that in Trakl's case polyvalence operates on the level of the semantic load of particular key terms throughout the work, so that on the strength of the inconclusiveness and open-endedness of the paradigmatic pattern underlying each term a basic conceptual indeterminacy, with overtones of total disorientation, affects a thematically coherent poetic production. For Reverdy on the other hand syntactic ambiguity and a lack of situational specificity serve the express aim of an objective and autotelic work whose irreducibility is enhanced by undermining the possibility of identifying it with external reality. Where Trakl's poems present a desperate and ultimately hopeless attempt ("Man kann sich überhaupt nicht mitteilen") to create a language-space in which it would be possible to speak of utter disorientation and loss, every one of Reverdy's poems testifies to a belief in the power of language to create such an artistic space - not in order to communicate disorientation, let alone to hold it at bay, but as proof of the artist's ability to build a language-world which is sufficiently itself to stand on its own feet, in harmony with whatever is stable and permanent (with 'le réel') in the world of phenomena.

It may be useful, finally, to consider some of Reverdy's own comments about the poems of Les ardoises du toit. In a letter of July 1918 to Breton he declares his disagreement with Aragon's view (in a review of the Ardoises, published in Sic, May 1918 and reprinted in Mercure de France 1962:23-25) that his technique is essentially one of 'notation', of the registration of aspects of reality; he writes:

Ce ne sont pas des notations, on ne note pas. Mais au lieu de créer au moyen de l'explication d'une émotion (on expliquait pour essayer de faire sentir la même chose = Il pleure sur mon cœur comme il pleut sur la ville, par exemple), on ne prend plus que le résultat de cette émotion qui est élément, matière d'art. Ainsi on présente une œuvre, au lieu de représenter une anecdote de quelque ordre soit-elle. Je trouve que c'est le summum de la création poétique. (Etudes 1970:103)

This explanation echoes the earlier comments on the reconsideration of the 'object' in Cubist painting as a constructive element, and on the rejection of the poem as a vehicle for the transference of the poet's lyrical sensibility in favour of the 'presentation' of an autonomous work. The latter two points both figure in other pronouncements on the Ardoises as well. In a letter to Albert-Birot, Reverdy observes:

Je crois les Ardoises plus dégagées, plus conformes à mon esthétique de réalité poétique et...moins intimes... Je crois ces poèmes plus dégagés de ma personne...et je les crois aussi pareillement entachés de ma personnalité. (cf. Rizzuto 1971:9)

The "esthétique de réalité poétique", clearly, concerns the poem as an entity signifying only itself, and implies the ambivalent consequence of a poetry which discounts subjective expression and bears the poet's imprint solely in the selection and arrangement of basic, objective data. The essential point remains however that 'presentation' takes precedence over 'representation', whether the latter assumes the shape of lyrical expression, description or anecdote. Only 'presentation' guarantees the 'purity' and self-sufficiency of the 'poetic reality'. In a pseudonymous note on the Ardoises in his own Nord-Sud (May 1918), Reverdy makes precisely this point:

La caractéristique de la poésie de M. Pierre Reverdy c'est la pureté. Elle vient de la pureté et de la simplicité des moyens employés. Chaque poème est ici un fait poétique présenté au lieu d'être une anecdote représentée. L'art de M. Reverdy est un art simple de présentation, de création - qui n'existait pas avant lui - (NS:87-88)

And in a series of notes in Sic a few months later (October 1918) he writes in the same manner, but more generally:

Une oeuvre d'art ne peut se contenter d'être une représentation; elle doit être une présentation. On présente un enfant qui naît, il ne représente rien. (NS:133)

The remarkable similarity between this view of the "oeuvre présentative" (NS:134) and Pound's "presentative method" was already pointed out above and need not be restated. It is important, however, to bear in mind that while Pound's Vorticist position, influenced as it is by the example of the plastic arts, correlates with Reverdy's conception of non-mimetic, self-signifying form, Pound's earlier comments on poetic technique, including the original reference to the 'presentative method', have a different orientation and context. Pound's 'presentative method' itself namely purports to be a poetic equivalent to Flaubert's prose style, and in the same way his 'method of Luminous Detail', his insistence on 'clarity and intensity', on 'constatation of fact' and on the 'hyper-scientific precision' of Dante's writing, together with the aversion from 'rhetorical din' and 'emotional slither' (cf. above, chapter 5, section 1), all are concerned in the first place with questions of style, of rendering - even if the consequences of these principles, under the added impulse of various factors, prove to be wide-ranging. In Reverdy's case the

notion of "l'oeuvre représentative" follows from a basic structural (and not in the first place a stylistic) insight and from the view of the work as being its own subject and as affirming its individuality as a self-reflexive sign. In contrast with Pound's intentions (in the pre-Vorticist stages), the essence of Reverdy's approach does not lie, therefore, in the poem's 'closeness to things' but in notions of detachment and conceptualization, in the de-construction of 'vraisemblance' and the construction of a purely artistic reality, an artistic 'fact'.

## NOTES

- (1) Reverdy, it will be seen, holds the same view on this point. As for the relation between Dermée's essay (which constitutes a kind of manifesto in this first issue of Nord-Sud) and Reverdy's conception, R.W. Greene (1967:23) notes:

The fact that Dermée should have so accurately anticipated Reverdy's principal aesthetic preoccupations is not surprising if one bears in mind that the manifesto's author had among his contemporaries the reputation of being Reverdy's untalented imitator and secretary rather than a full-fledged collaborator on Nord-Sud.

- (2) The following abbreviations figure in this chapter:

|                      |                 |  |
|----------------------|-----------------|--|
| <u>NS</u> :          | Pierre Reverdy: | <u>Nord-Sud, Self Defence et autres écrits sur l'art et la poésie (1917-1926)</u> , Paris, Flammarion, 1975.                           |
| <u>GC</u> :          | " "             | : <u>Le gant de crin. Notes</u> . Paris, Flammarion, 1968 (first publ. 1926).  |
| <u>LB</u> :          | " "             | : <u>Le livre de mon bord. Notes 1930-1936</u> . Paris, Mercure de France, 1948.   |
| <u>NEP</u> :         | " "             | : <u>Note éternelle du présent. Ecrits sur l'art (1923-1960)</u> . Paris, Flammarion, 1973.  |
| <u>PT</u> :          | " "             | : <u>Plupart du temps, I (1915-1922)</u> . Paris, Gallimard, 1969 (first publ. 1945).  |
| <u>Etudes 1970</u> : | " "             | : "Trente-deux lettres inédites à André Breton, 1917-1924" (ed. by L. Somville), <u>Etudes littéraires</u> , iii,1, April 1970:97-120. |
| <u>NRF 1976</u> :    | " "             | : "[Lettres inédites] à Jean Paulhan", <u>Nouvelle Revue Française</u> , 286, October 1976: 46-51.                                     |

- (3) Cf. above, chapter 4, section 5. In a scathing personal comment on Jacob and Apollinaire in a letter of 1918, Reverdy also writes:

Max Jacob vit, toujours plus heureux, dans l'inconscience complète du danger et de tout ce qui se passe depuis quatre ans. Si le paradis existe, il s'ouvrira pour lui, à condition toutefois qu'il soit bien épuré au purgatoire. Il paraît qu'il verse en ce moment le vin et l'enceps à G. Apollinaire qu'on me dit en train de se faire adorer à partir de six heures dans les restaurants de Montmartre. Le soleil couchant doit dorer son uniforme et c'est aux pieds de ce nouveau-d'or que Jacob sert la messe. (NRF 1976:47)

- (4) "Ce qui différencie le cubisme de l'ancienne peinture, c'est qu'il n'est pas un art d'imitation, mais un art de conception qui tend à s'élever jusqu'à la création", Apollinaire writes in Les peintres cubistes (1966:4,24). Apollinaire however draws a distinction (which later reveals itself as evaluative) between the use of "la réalité-conçue" and of "la réalité-crée". For him the new art tends to 'purity', and this tendency he interprets as being related to the use of material derived from "la réalité de connaissance" (in what he calls 'scientific Cubism') and the use of elements "entièrement créées par l'artiste" (in 'Orphic Cubism', later Orphism: the work of Delaunay).

Apollinaire, that is, finds a tendency to total (non-figurative) abstraction, which he then equates with 'purity'. No such distinction appears in Reverdy's essays, which on the whole opt for a more functional approach. For Reverdy the aim of the new art is the creation of an autonomous work where every element exists solely in function of the whole, i.e. of the new 'creation'. Visual distortion ("déformation") and conceptualization are, in Reverdy's view, the direct result of this 'functional' treatment of elements derived from the empirical world. Non-figurative abstraction as such, in other words, does not really figure in his conception.

- (5) In a later, revised version of the article, dating from 1925 (and first published in NS in 1975), it becomes even clearer that Reverdy is indeed thinking of poetry as well as painting. In the revised text the first sentence of the quotation reads:

Nous sommes à une époque de création artistique où l'on ne s'efforce plus de raconter des histoires plus ou moins évocatrices ou tristement émouvantes, pas plus qu'on ne veut imiter ou interpréter des sujets donnés en peinture, mais où l'on veut créer des oeuvres qui, en se détachant de la vie, y rentrent(...) (NS:243)

- (6) This aspect of Reverdy's vocabulary also relates, of course, to the simplicity which marks his choice of subject-matter (cf. Rizzuto 1971:16ff.). This simplicity is functional in that, as in the case of Cubist still-lives, it directs attention to the artistic arrangement of the material rather than to the thematic subject as such. Another aspect of this simplicity bears on literary-historical relations: as was suggested in connection with Hulme's choice of subjects (cf. above, chapter 2, section 3), the deliberate restriction in scope, the seeming banality even, constitutes in itself a critique of the sophistication and exoticism characteristic of the thematic structure of much Symbolist-inspired writing. F. Vodička observes in this respect:

Jedes Werk, welches Gegenstand einer Wertung wird, stösst () auf die Gewohnheiten und konventionellen Vorstellungen des wahrnehmenden Kollektivs, so dass auf ihrem Hintergrund die zeitgegebene Konkretisation des Werkes stattfindet, mag die Wirkung nun positiv oder negativ sein. Ein Werk mit einem ungewöhnlichen und von der literarischen und gesellschaftlichen Tradition nicht gestützten Thema wird ebenso als Normbruch aufgefasst wie die neue künstlerische Bewältigung einer normkonformen Thematik. (1942; in Warning 1975:77)

- (7) Reverdy's conception of the image, as is well known, obtained wider currency in particular through Breton's reference to it in the first Surrealist Manifesto (1924). E.-A. Hubert has pointed out that as far as the origin of the notion is concerned, Reverdy was no doubt aware of Marinetti's remarks on poetic images and the "rapports vastes" that should exist between their members (cf. also Greene 1967:17-18), and especially of Georges Duhamel's observations (in a review of Apollinaire's Alcools and in the article 'La connaissance poétique', both in Mercure de France, 1913) on the image as the "brusque contact" of two distant realities which are however

for the poet "liées par un fil secret et ténu"(cf. NS:281-283). In his essay 'Quand le symbolisme fut mort...' in the first issue of Nord-Sud, Paul Dermée also speaks of the new technique of bringing together "les éléments les plus divers et en apparence les plus disparates"(cf. Greene 1967:24; but cf. above, note 1, on the probable relation of Dermée's views to Reverdy's).

- (8) It is essential, with respect to this 'minimalization' of the common ground between the terms of the image, to bear in mind the literary-historical context as well. Discussing the relativity of the combinatory potential of the metaphor in modern poetry, J. Lotman speaks of the "Zusammenhang () zwischen dem poetischen Wert der Metapher und einem möglichst minimalen Umfang der Durchschnittsmenge"(1972b:137), pointing out that there is in the evolution of poetry from medieval to modern times a continuing process of reduction in the limitations imposed on the combinatory potential of metaphors. Lotman then continues however:

Der Widerspruch, der sich daraus ergibt, dass die poetische Metapher zu einer Minimalisierung der Durchschnittsmenge der Differentialmerkmale ihrer Glieder tendiert, und andererseits die Tendenz besteht, diese Durchschnittsmenge weiter zu verkleinern, ist indessen nur ein scheinbarer: der Begriff der 'minimalen' Durchschnittsmenge als solcher erhält sein Gewicht und seinen Sinn ja nur durch den Bezug auf die jeweilige Summe der Verbote und Erlaubnisse, die der jeweiligen Struktur als ganzer eigen sind. (1972b:138)

Thus, considering the immediate literary-historical environment of Reverdy's position, it will be obvious that he is building directly on the extension of the combinatory potential affecting image-formation (i.e. the reduction of the common ground between the terms of the image) effected by the nineteenth-century avant-garde (Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and in particular Rimbaud; cf. NS:142ff.). His conception of the image is then not a revolutionary new departure but a reorientation, with as its main characteristic the elimination of the concept of correspondences and the ensuing penetration into the realm of the metaphysical which dominates the Symbolist view. The autotelic and self-signifying nature of the poem as Reverdy sees it, and his notion of 'le reel' (which will allow him to call the Cubist approach - including his own - a 'materialist' conception; cf. below) clearly militate against the central tenets of the Symbolist aesthetic. As for the image, naturally enough, the Surrealists will in turn go beyond Reverdy.

- (9) In later years, it must be added, Worringerian overtones become more pronounced (although there is no evidence that Reverdy was aware of Worringer's work), but Reverdy always retains his characteristic emphasis on formal harmony rather than geometric rigidity when describing the 'otherness' of the artistic product:

Prise en bloc, la vie est une symphonie inextricable, à quoi nous ne comprenons rien. La symphonie étant l'amalgame d'éléments divers qui se confondent et se perdent en

s'unissant dans un ensemble. Aussi est-ce dans l'art que l'homme est allé satisfaire son irrépressible besoin d'harmonie, et c'est seulement là qu'il se sent maître et dieu. Et, l'harmonie naissant uniquement de la rencontre de choses qui s'unissent et s'accordent tout en restant elles-mêmes, il n'y a que là qu'il ait jamais pu la maintenir. (1950 NEP:94-95)

- (10) As was pointed out in the previous section, the notion of 'le réel' calls for conceptualization and the elimination of 'vraisemblance', but Reverdy is anxious at the same time to emphasize the 'material' quality of the reality to which the notion of 'le réel' refers, as well as its relation to the object-character of the poem as a sign of itself. This also implies that symbolic interpretations of Reverdy's poems are highly suspect (cf. Husson 1968:28), and in this sense A. Rizzuto's readings (1971) are mostly unconvincing. Considering for example the poem 'Minute' (Les ardoises du toit, PT:192):

Il n'est pas encore revenu  
Mais qui dans la nuit est entré  
La pendule les bras en croix  
S'est arrêtée

Rizzuto comments:

The metaphor of the pendulum as a crucifix concentrates into one image the themes of time, death, and the agony of Christ. There is a fear of death and the hope for salvation and immortality symbolized by Christ - unless Christ himself is meant to be a victim of death visualized in "qui dans la nuit est entré". Whatever interpretation one chooses, there is the fact that Reverdy makes the imaginative leap from an insignificant event, a clock stopping, to a consideration of personal and universal destiny, through the metaphor of the crucifix. (1971:112)

The identification of "Il" with Christ, though not per se inadmissible, is nevertheless extremely speculative (based on the association of the third line with the crucifixion), but, more importantly, the very implication that the poem is primarily a disguised symbolic statement is incompatible with Reverdy's fundamental conception of the autotelic poem and with the function of situational indeterminacy as a principle of construction in his work.

- (11) The simplification of the syntactic apparatus and the reduction of syntactic constraints, coupled with the foregrounding of structural discontinuity and the rejection of traditional verse forms - characteristics which mark not only Reverdy's poetic practice but that of the whole Modernist movement - thus imply an increased structural unpredictability and a reduced "Gebundenheit" (as J. Lotman calls it) of words and syntagms in the poetic text. As Lotman also observes, the relation between this phenomenon and the prevailing traditional 'code' is an essential factor in the appreciation of the new structure:



Selbstverständlich ist die 'Gebundenheit' des Wortes im literarischen Text nicht irgendeine absolute Grösse. Die für die Rezeption eines Textes als poetischen charakteristische Präsump<sup>ti</sup>on der Gebundenheit macht auch eine 'Minus-Gebundenheit' (Nicht-Gebundenheit) zu einem strukturell aktiven Element. Zugleich existiert der Text vor dem Hintergrund zahlreicher extratextueller Bezüge (z.B. ästhetischer Voraussetzungen). Daher kann eine strukturelle Einfachheit (niedrige Gebundenheit) vor dem Hintergrund einer komplizierten Struktur extratextueller Beziehungen erscheinen und so eine besondere Sinnfülle erwerben (). Nur beim Fehlen komplizierter extratextueller Bezüge verwandelt sich eine Schwächung der textimmanenten Strukturrelationen in ein Merkmal der Primitivität und nicht der Schlichtheit. (Lotman 1972b:247)

Clearly, the structural discontinuity and syntactic simplification and fragmentation in Reverdy's poems and in the work of his fellow Modernists acquires its full significance against the background of Mallarmé's paradigm in particular. It is extremely important however to realize the motivation which informed Mallarmé's syntax and its relation to the transcendental orientation of his poetic, and the abandonment of this motivation in the Modernist poetic.

## Chapter 9

Dada: Arp, Ball

This final chapter deals with two of the leading figures of the original Dadaist circle in Zurich (1916-18). As in previous chapters, the emphasis is mainly on theoretical aspects and, in the discussion of the poems, on the structural principles informing the text. In comparison with most of the other poets treated so far, these principles will on the whole evince a process of considerable radicalization in matters of poetic (de-)structuration. The first three sections concern the work of Hans Arp: section 1 reconstructs the general outline of his aesthetic theory, while sections 2 and 3 discuss his poetic production between, roughly, 1911 and 1918. Sections 4 to 6 are devoted to Hugo Ball, the founder of Dadaism: his Expressionist background (section 4), his involvement with Dada (section 5) and finally his views on language and his experiments with phonetic poetry (section 6).

## 1.

Arp's involvement with the Dadaist circle does not seem to have altered the course of his artistic and poetic development in any fundamental way, even if particular aspects of his practice (the reliance on chance, for example) receive more explicit emphasis at this time. The main principles underlying his production as a plastic artist and as a poet appear to be well established by about 1915, i.e. before Dada. As it is, Arp's formative years as an artist virtually coincide with the emergence of Cubism (1907-08) and of non-figurative art (1910-12). In the collection of essays On My Way (1948) he declares to have made the first attempts "pour venir à bout des formes d'art conventionnelles acquises et des préjugés hérités de la tradition" in the years 1908 to 1910 (JE:327)<sup>(1)</sup>. His first experiments with non-figurative art date apparently from 1910 and 1911, although he later claims to have destroyed these first works (JE:444); the periodical Der Sturm at any rate still contains reproductions of conventional, stylized drawings of human heads and

figures by Arp as late as April and May 1913. From about 1908 onwards he entertains regular contacts with the Cubist painters, and in 1912 he meets Kandinsky in Munich and Delaunay (as well as Apollinaire and Jacob) in Paris (JE:444,369). In 1914 he begins to experiment with collage - though he is anxious to stress the difference between his own technique and Cubist collage<sup>(2)</sup> - and with the use of coloured strips of paper forming "des constructions statiques, symétriques" (JE:420). Arp's first 'concrete' works (in his sense of the term; cf. below) to have been preserved date from 1915 (JE:327). In the same year he begins, often in collaboration with Sophie Täuber, to produce non-figurative compositions which he characterizes as "des collages, des tableaux géométriques et statiques" and as "des constructions rigoureuses et impersonnelles"(JE:327). In Unsern täglichen Traum (1955) he describes these activities as follows:

Einzel und gemeinsam stickten, woben, malten, klebten wir geometrische, statische Bilder. Unpersönliche, strenge Bauten aus Flächen und Farben entstanden. Keine Flecken, keine Risse, keine Fasern, keine Ungenauigkeiten sollten die Klarheit unserer Arbeit stören. Für unsere Papierbilder wurde sogar die Schere, mit der wir zuerst diese Arbeiten ausschneiden, verworfen, da sie zu leicht das persönliche durch die Hand verriet. Wir bedienten uns fortan der Papierschneidemaschine.

(in Doehl 1967:54)

This 'impersonal' technique is subsequently developed further into a method which attempts to exploit randomness and chance in order to reduce the artist's conscious control in the process of shaping the material at hand:

Ich entwickelte die Klebearbeit weiter, indem ich die Anordnung willenlos, automatisch ausführte. Ich nannte dies 'nach dem Gesetz des Zufalls' arbeiten. Das 'Gesetz des Zufalls' welche alle Gesetze in sich begreift und uns unfasslich ist wie der Urgrund, aus dem alles Leben steigt, kann nur unter volliger Hingabe an das Unbewusste erlebt werden. Ich behauptete, wer dieses Gesetz befolge, erschaffe reines Leben.

(ibid.)

Pronouncements like this, though, should be seen in the context of Arp's general conception of artistic production. Since this conception also bears directly on his poetic work, it may here be reconstructed in brief outline. On the whole, artistic and non-artistic considerations go hand in hand in Arp's views on art. His rejection of anthropocentrism and of the supremacy of 'reason' and 'rationalism' are concurrent with an aversion from iconic representation and anthropomorphism in art, and in this respect his starting-point is remarkably similar to T.E. Hulme's (cf. above, chapter 2, section 1).

Like Hulme, Arp regards the Renaissance as the heyday of the anthropocentric conception of the world, but unlike Hulme he relates his comments on rationalism and its ensuing evils not to a general humanist (as opposed to a religious) attitude or to all-embracing ontological principles of continuity and discontinuity, but to the reality of the War. Several of the shorter texts in On My Way refer precisely to this connection. In 'La mesure de toutes choses' Arp writes:

L'homme se comporte comme s'il avait créé le monde et comme s'il pouvait jouer avec lui. Presque au début de son glorieux développement il forgea cette phrase que l'homme est la mesure de toutes choses. ( ) Avec la mesure de toutes choses, avec lui-même, il a donné la mesure de la démesure. Il a taillé dans la beauté, et ( ) le magasin de confection est devenu une présentation des modèles de la folie. Désordre, confusion, inquiétude, non-sens, démence, mélancolie, démonomanie dominant le monde. (JE:303)

The rejection of rationalism and of the values commonly associated with the Renaissance as perverse and destructive follows a similar pattern:

La Renaissance a appris aux hommes l'exaltation orgueilleuse de leur raison. Les temps nouveaux avec leurs sciences et leurs techniques les ont voués à la mégalomanie. La confusion de notre époque est le résultat de cette surestimation de la raison. (JE:306)

The forms of conventional art, then, are seen from this angle as thoroughly compromised and discredited as well. In an argument closely resembling Worringer's views on anthropomorphic art (although it is uncertain whether Arp was aware of this), Arp describes the traditional modes and subjects of art as hopelessly entangled in the 'monstrous vanity' of an anthropocentric conception which derives comfort and pleasure from the production of 'empathic' works (to use Worringer's term) in which man recognizes and glorifies himself:

Depuis le temps des cavernes, l'homme peint des natures mortes, des paysages, des nus. Depuis le temps des cavernes l'homme se glorifie, se divinise et cause par sa monstrueuse vanité les catastrophes humaines. L'art a collaboré à ce faux développement. Je trouve écoeurant cette conception d'art qui a soutenu la vanité de l'homme. (JE:315)

In addition, the creation of mimetic representations of particular models is regarded as yielding derivative and therefore inferior products - a point on which also the Vorticists (Gaudier, Pound) as well as the Cubists (Jacob, Reverdy) strongly insist. "J'aime la nature, mais non ses succédanés", Arp observes in 'L'art est un fruit', and "L'art naturaliste, illusionniste est un succédané de la

nature"(JE:317).

Given this basic conception, the configuration of Arp's aesthetic theory may be described in terms of two complementary angles of vision, one purely artistic, the other essentially more ideological in nature. In his essay on 'Art concret' Arp summarizes the evolution of modern art as leading from "la peinture traditionnelle vers l'art concret, à partir de Cézanne en passant par les cubistes"(JE:184). 'Concrete' art, in Arp's usage, is a non-figurative mode, and as such it distinguishes itself not only from conventional iconic forms but also from what Arp calls 'abstract' art, namely those forms of artistic representation which imply a certain degree of abstraction or distortion of a model, as in Cubism. 'Concrete' art on the contrary (although it too was at first called 'abstract' art, JE:288) precludes abstraction of this type: instead it aims at what Arp calls 'direct creation', and presents a further step in the evolution from iconic to abstract in that it dispenses with models altogether:

Je comprends qu'on nomme abstrait un tableau cubiste, car des parties ont été soustraites à l'objet qui a servi de modèle à ce tableau. Mais je trouve qu'un tableau ou une sculpture qui n'ont pas eu d'objet pour modèle, sont tout aussi concrets et sensuels qu'une feuille ou une pierre. (JE:316)

Arp dates the transition from 'abstract' to 'concrete' art around 1912, naming Delaunay, Magnelli, Léger and above all Kandinsky as the first practitioners of the new mode (JE:184,369). In an essay of 1952 he speaks of "le grand changement de l'art de la figuration (Abbildung) en celui de la configuration (Bildung)"(JE:380). While wholeheartedly aligning himself with this latter tendency, he also explores other, purposefully unorthodox ways and means to escape from the categories of the conventional aesthetic canon and to arrive at 'objects' which purport to be "dépouillés de tout élément conventionnel"(JE:184). Two new departures stand out in this search: the use of new materials, and the reliance on elementary forms. Collaborating with Sophie Täuber in 1915, he later recalls, "Nous recherchions des matériaux neufs, qui ne fussent pas déjà grevés par une tradition" (JE:327), and these experiments eventually result in works incorporating paper strips, pieces of wood and cloth, bits of string, pebbles and such like. At the same time the basic formal qualities of the new work are continually reconsidered and reduced in complexity, partly as an exercise in purely formal de-construction (in the same way as Kandinsky analyses the properties of basic forms and colours in the

second part of Ueber das Geistige in der Kunst), partly as a reaction against the more complex forms of conventional iconic art. Like Gaudier-Brzeska, Arp opposes the use of elementary 'geometric' forms to the 'caressable' shapes (Gaudier) of mimetic and anthropomorphic art: "Les lignes droites et les couleurs franches l'exaspèrent surtout (). C'est pourquoi l'homme s'accroche désespérément à toute guirlande gracieuse et se fait spécialiste en valeurs"(JE:316). Consequently, in 1915 Arp and Täuber concentrate on exploring the possibilities of "[les] formes les plus simples en peinture, en broderie et en papiers collés"; and Arp adds: "Nous rejetions tout ce qui était copie ou description pour laisser l'Elémentaire et le Spontané réagir en pleine liberté"(JE:306-307).

As the use of capitals for "l'Elémentaire" and "le Spontané" suggests, these terms stand for fundamental notions in Arp's aesthetic. Apart from the anti-conventional stance they imply, they also incorporate an ideological component in that 'concrete' art, with its radical principles of simplicity and spontaneity, readily inscribes itself in the political and moral protest of the Dadaist circle. Given that the norms of traditional art are seen as inextricably tied up with the dominant ideologies of rationalism and anthropocentrism, Arp appears to regard the practice of a radically anti-conventional art as a gesture of protest in itself:

A Zurich, désintéressés des abattoirs de la guerre mondiale, nous nous adonnions aux Beaux-Arts. Tandis que grondait dans le lointain le tonnerre des batteries, nous collions, nous récitons, nous versifions, nous chantions de toute notre âme. Nous cherchions un art élémentaire qui devait, pensions-nous, sauver les hommes de la folie furieuse de ces temps. () Cet art devint rapidement un sujet de réprobation générale. Rien d'étonnant à ce que les 'bandits' n'aient pu nous comprendre. Leur puérile manie d'autoritarisme veut que l'art lui-même serve à l'abrutissement des hommes. (JE:306)

In the essay on 'Art concret' he makes roughly the same point, observing that 'concrete' art "veut sauver l'homme de la folie la plus dangereuse: la vanité"(JE:184). Dada, not surprisingly, reveals itself as "l'avant-garde combative et enthousiaste de la poésie concrète"(JE:369), but in spite of this Arp recognizes in later years that the anti-bourgeois provocations of the Cabaret Voltaire and his own hope that 'concrete' art might have repercussions outside the sphere of art represent "une tentative naïve, car le bourgeois est moins doué d'imagination qu'un verre de terre"(JE:313). As a gesture of revolt, that is, the Dadaist activities and Arp's own

artistic practice remain ineffective in the non-aesthetic field, but all the same Arp continues his artistic production, radicalizing its anti-conventional principles at the time of the Dadaist performances in Zurich, and apparently considering his work in the arts as a permanent paradigm of the only possible form of protest in a society dominated by an expansive and all-pervasive ideology in which his own artistic pursuit is condemned - and knows itself - to be marginal. Arp, then, does not directly take part in the more overtly political demonstrations of Dada (the customary distinction between the so-called Dada radicals, or constructive Dadaists, the group including Arp, Janco, Eggeling, and the more aggressive, apparently more 'nihilistic' faction around Hülsebeck, Tzara and Serner, rests also upon the less or more pronounced predominance of the factor of ideological protest; cf. Prosenc 1967:110ff., Richter 1965:18-28). On the other hand the notion of 'nature' as Arp develops it in his writings both on art and poetry carries persistently ideological overtones, in that it is used in Arp's alternative aesthetic as the functional opposite of both 'bourgeois' rationalism and the restrictive norms of the traditional aesthetic code. In the same way as Reverdy claims that the non-mimetic Cubist canvasses are "des oeuvres qui, en se détachant de la vie, y rentrent parce qu'elles ont une existence propre"(Reverdy 1975:20), Arp holds that his own artistic products, being non-figurative, exist in the way natural phenomena exist, and consequently "Mes reliefs et mes sculptures s'intègrent naturellement à la nature"(JE:322). The qualification 'natural' however applies not only to the status of the finished work, but also to the practice of art itself, which is described as a 'natural' process, essentially spontaneous and unmotivated. For Arp this implies that this kind of 'natural growth' is also necessarily non-imitative; in 'Art concret' he observes: "Nous ne voulons pas reproduire, nous voulons produire. Nous voulons produire comme une plante qui produit un fruit et ne pas reproduire"(JE:183). The reliance on chance, and hence the suspension of the artist's conscious control over the shaping process, is similarly justified in terms of the parallel with natural growth. The production of the work is seen in this context as an 'impersonal' process, governed by chance and by patterns of association which the artist makes no conscious attempt to control or direct:

Je me laisse mener par l'oeuvre en train de naître, je lui fais confiance. Je ne réfléchis pas. Les formes viennent avenantes ou étranges, hostiles, inexplicables, muettes ou ensommeillées. Elles naissent d'elles-mêmes. Il me semble que je ne fais, pour moi, que déplacer mes mains. Ces clartés, ces ombres que le 'hasard' nous envoie, nous devrions les accueillir avec étonnement et reconnaissance. ( )

L'art doit se perdre dans la nature, il faut même qu'on le confonde avec elle. Seulement, ce n'est pas par l'imitation qu'il faut essayer d'y parvenir, mais par le contraire même de la reproduction naturaliste des formes sur la toile ou dans la pierre. Ce faisant, l'art se débarrasse toujours plus du narcissisme, de la virtuosité, du ridicule. (JE:435)

Since the internal organization of this type of work

...ne [semblait] dépendre que du hasard, je déclarais que ces oeuvres étaient ordonnées 'selon la loi du hasard' tel que dans l'ordre de la nature, le hasard n'étant pour moi qu'une partie restreinte d'une raison d'être insaisissable, d'un ordre inaccessible dans leur ensemble. (JE:307)

Both Arp's notions of 'chance' and 'impersonality', it should be pointed out, stand here in marked contrast not only with conventional Realist representation, but also with the highly structured Mallarméan aesthetic. Where Mallarmé's 'impersonality' is a necessary category in the strategy for the elimination of chance and in order to leave room for the autonomous operations of Structure and Transposition (which transform the text into "un lieu abstrait, supérieur, nulle part situé", Mallarmé 1945:307), Arp's - and subsequently Dada's - notion of 'impersonality' is a function of the reliance on chance and of the exclusion of all designs aimed at conscious 'artistic' structuration. As J. Mukařovský acutely observes: "Die dadaistische Entpersönlichung ist natürlich eine andere als die symbolistische: die Symbolisten schliessen den Zufall im Namen der Ordnung aus, die Dadaisten die Ordnung im Namen des Zufalls"(1974: 321).

The ideological aspect of Arp's use of these 'natural' parallels, then, lies clearly in the 'irrational' qualities (he speaks of "déraison" and "déraisonnable") which he can thus introduce into the process of artistic production. The gratuitous, associative and 'natural' creation of works which are regarded as requiring neither justification nor explanation comes to be seen in obvious opposition to the conventional and 'rational' patterns and values prevailing in the aesthetic and in the non-aesthetic sphere alike. In On My Way Arp observes:

De plus en plus je m'éloignais de l'esthétique. Je voulais trouver un autre ordre, une autre valeur de l'homme dans la nature. Il ne devait plus être la mesure de toute chose,



ni tout rapporter à sa mesure, mais au contraire toutes choses et l'homme devaient être comme la nature, sans mesure. (JE:311)

Another essay in the same collection makes the same point in connection with the collective poems (a technique consistent with Arp's advocacy of "un art anonyme et collectif" which would be "un reniement de l'égotisme des hommes", JE:306) which Arp writes in collaboration with Tzara and Serner at the time of Dada in Zurich and which he subsequently identifies with Surrealist automatic poetry. The parallel with 'natural' processes of creation is here again used to highlight the liberation from the norms, conventions and values of traditional aesthetics:

La poésie automatique sort en droite ligne des entrailles du poète ou de tout autre de ses organes qui a emmagasiné des réserves. Ni le Postillon de Longjumeau, ni l'alexandrin, ni la grammaire, ni l'esthétique, ni Bouddha, ni le Sixième Commandement ne sauraient le gêner. Il cocoriqué, jure, gémit, bredouille, yodle comme ça lui chante. Ses poèmes sont comme la nature: ils puent, rient, riment comme la nature. La niaiserie, ou du moins ce que les hommes appellent ainsi, lui est aussi précieuse qu'une rhétorique sublime, car, dans la nature, une brindille cassée vaut en beauté et en importance, les étoiles, et ce sont les hommes qui décrètent de la beauté ou de la laideur. (JE:309)

This characterization also accounts for the enthusiasm with which Dada enlists and further explores the potential inherent in Arp's equation of 'natural' processes and an uninhibited, spontaneous mode of artistic production. Works built on these principles, being in the first place "des réalités en soi, sans signification ni intention cérébrale" (JE:288), effectuate a virtually limitless expansion of the sphere of what is conventionally regarded as 'the aesthetic'. In doing so however they also mark a dissociation between this immensely expanded sphere of art and what the Dadists consider to be the ideological presuppositions of society. It is, in other words, through the continual denigration of the conventional aesthetic norm by means of an alternative practice whose essence consists precisely in its radically anti-normative character, coupled with the awareness that the sphere of art will ultimately be able to accommodate both these modes of artistic production and thus cease to be normative, that Dada reveals the rigidity of ideological norms in the non-aesthetic sphere and thus establishes the practice of art (in its expanded sense) as a paradigm of radical ideological protest - and this, Arp recognizes, must be the only way in which Dada, operating as it does in the sphere of art, can hope to be effective also in a broader context. Apart from its gesture of sheer

provocation, then, this appears to be the type of ideological critique for which Dada's non-sense (Arp speaks of "sans-sens", or "Ohne-Sinn") is aiming:

Dada voulait détruire les supercheries raisonnables des hommes et retrouver l'ordre naturel et déraisonnable. Dada voulait remplacer le non-sens logique des hommes d'aujourd'hui par le sans-sens illogique. ( ) Dada est pour le sans-sens ce qui ne signifie pas le non-sens. Dada est sans sens comme la nature. Dada est pour la nature et contre l'art. Dada est direct comme la nature. Dada est pour le sens infini et les moyens définis.  
(JE:312)

2.

Arp's earliest surviving poems date from 1903 and 1904 (AGG:8-11), and inscribe themselves entirely in the context of the conventional (neo-)romantic style which also marks Heym's and Trakl's first poetic attempts. They need not be further discussed here: formally as well as thematically they are in line with the prevailing literary canon, as unassuming instances of a "lyrische Selbstaussprache des romantischen Autors"(Doehl 1967:103), employing accepted poetic personifications, metaphors and similes, organizing themselves around key words like "Traum", "Stern", "Unendlichkeit", and outlining their imaginative progression step by step. The first text, then, which appears to be based on principles of construction characteristic of Arp's subsequent production is the prose piece 'Von Zeichnungen aus der Kokoschka-Mappe', first published in Der Sturm in December 1913 (no poems from the years between 1904 and 1913 seem to have been preserved other than those in the volumes der vogel selbdritt and chair de rêve, which were written between 1911 and 1915; cf. below). In spite of its title, Arp indicates in a later note in the Gesammelte Gedichte that the link between the text and Kokoschka's drawings is "sehr lose"(AGG:14) and that the piece is mainly based on a performance by one Archie Goodale in a Berlin variety theatre. Although this factual information may lead one to expect a predominantly descriptive piece, the formal organization of the text follows quite different principles of association, as approximately the first half of the text may show:

Aus den Sternen wachsen blühende Zweige voll leuchtender Ampeln. Aus den Traufen der Sterne fließt Wein in Strömen. Herr Archie A. Goodale wandelt mit dem Kopf in der Tiefe hängend an den Sternen. Manchmal schwankt er nachdenklich wie eine schwere Traube.

Der Umfang des Blutes mit seinen dunkeln Flüssigkeiten des

Mordes Wahnsinnes und Traumes. Die durchsichtige Haut des Menschen mit seinem Uhrwerk seinen Gerüsten und Kanälen. Die roten gelben und blauen Schnüre darum. Die Anatomie aus Kompliziertheit primitiv wie die Gewandfalten der alten Heiligen.

Irisierende Schädel.

Blonde Bälge gefüllt mit Haaren tierischen Früchten und Nadeln. Helme von bunten Wollhaaren vor schwarzen Papierschirmen. Aus Moos und Flaum schimmern tauige Faune und klassische Laster. Die Ewigkeit raucht aus uns wie aus Pfeifen. In einigen Augen ist das Dunkel der Logen mit ihren kleinen erotischen Notbehelfen. Der Gesang der Kreissenden. In den Hintergründen wetterleuchten die ausschaukelnden blitzend vernickelten Trapeze. () (AGG:12)

An approach in terms of the referential value of individual clauses and sentences would obviously be inadequate: as the text proceeds, the descriptive substructure which still seems to underly the first paragraph becomes less and less clear, and the momentum carrying the discourse forward has to be attributed to various associative chains and to parallel series of words and images. Especially in the fourth paragraph (of which only one third is quoted here) the semantic disparities become more conspicuous and more extreme, and are highlighted by sudden transitions between predominantly transitive sentences and nominal clauses. The first two paragraphs contain several correlated constructions: both end with a clear visual simile (though one springs from an ironic description while the other does not), and both begin with two sentences built upon an identical pattern ("Aus den Sternen..." and "Aus den Traufen der Sterne..."; "Der Umfang des Blutes mit..." and "Die durchsichtige Haut des Menschen mit..."). Whereas the first paragraph has only simple transitive sentences, the second one has only nominal clauses, with conspicuous threefold repetitions.

More important however are the patterns of phonetic and semantic association running through the text. The most obvious phonetic pattern is based on '-au-' sounds ("Aus/Traufen/Traube/Traum/Haut/Flaum/tauige Faune/Augen/ausschaukelnd"). In the first paragraph, where the word "Stern" occurs up to three times, and allows association both with "leuchtende Ampeln" and with "Traube", a parallel may be established between the "blühende Zweige" and their "leuchtende Ampeln" on the one hand, and on the other the "Traufen der Sterne" from which wine is flowing. The final word "Traube", which refers in the first place to Archie Goodale, associates itself also with the notion of 'wine' and with the "blühende Zweige" and their "leuchtende Ampeln",

thus linking semantic features from all three preceding sentences but in each case on a different level. The central associative cluster "blühende Zweige/Traufen der Sterne/Wein/Traube" is then extended into the second paragraph through association with "Blut" and "dunkle Flüssigkeiten", which in turn give rise to the more 'abstract' group of nouns "Mord/Wahnsinn/Traum" and to the more 'physical' detail of "Haut/Anatomie/Schädel", whereby the latter group is itself continued in the apparently metaphorical series "Uhrwerk/Gerüste/Kanäle", which in its anatomical complexion contrasts with the "Mord/Wahnsinn/Traum" series.

Although visually the opening paragraphs overlap to an extent in being based, presumably, on Archie Goodale's acrobatic performance, the transitions from one image cluster to the next and from one semantic level to another become more complex and abrupt as the text proceeds. The long final paragraph occasionally returns to terms like "Logen", "Trapeze", "Balustrade", "Pirouetten", "Dämmerzirkusse", which can be grouped under the heading 'circus' or 'variety theatre', but a referentially coherent or consistently metaphorical reading is systematically thwarted by highly unpredictable digressions into disparate semantic spheres. The text as a whole, then, while reminding the reader now and again of what may be called its thematic undercurrent, is obviously no longer interpretable in terms of description or even of imaginative distortion, but appears rather to form continually changing constellations dominated by an essentially metonymic principle (in Jakobson's sense), by self-generating clusters and patterns of phonic and semantic association. In that sense the text derives its momentum from its purely linguistic component rather than from any representational concern. As R. Doehl points out, the piece does not appear to aim at an "interpretierbare Aussage" but primarily at the constitution of a "Textwirklichkeit" as such:

Zwar treten die Wortkonstellationen zu der traditionellen syntaktischen Fügung des Satzes zusammen, aber sie bilden keine interpretierbaren Sinneinheiten mehr. An die Stelle eines Sinnzusammenhangs, einer zusammenhängenden Aussage, ist ein assoziativ bestimmtes Bedeutungsgeflecht getreten, das in sich unsinnig ist. Und vielleicht könnte man sogar sagen, dass ein Text wie der vorliegende keine interpretierbare Aussage mehr enthalten soll, dass er keine Wirklichkeit (wie auch immer) abbilden will, dass er stattdessen seine eigene Wirklichkeit, eine Textwirklichkeit vorstellt; und dass diese Textwirklichkeit abhängig ist von der assoziativen Konstellation von Wörtern, die ihrerseits zu einem Bedeutungsgeflecht zusammentreten können, bei allerdings in sich unsinnigen Konnexen. (Doehl 1967:110)

The impression that the text builds in the first place an autonomous 'textual reality', sacrificing referential meaning to self-generating associative principles which disregard semantic compatibility, is further enhanced by the second, extended version of the text, which Arp claims to have written on the basis of accidental errors, misprints and interpolations in the original publication of the piece in Der Sturm (cf. AGG:14). This second version, called 'Wintergarten' (and dated 1913 in the Gesammelte Gedichte, but this is almost certainly incorrect; cf. Doehl 1967:227), is twice as long as the original text, and introduces extensive further interpolations into the first version, preserving the original word order but breaking up its sequences at random to form new sentences - which do no more however than elaborate the imaginative and associative potential of the first version, increasing its fantastic quality and semantic incoherence, at the expense of conventional interpretability.

In the years 1911 to 1915, then, Arp writes the poems collected in the volume der vogel selbdritt (1920), where he creates the fairy-tale atmosphere characteristic of much of his subsequent work. A characteristic poem in the volume is 'die nachtvögel...', which was also read at the Cabaret Voltaire in 1916:

die nachtvögel tragen brennende laternen im gebälk  
 ihrer augen. sie lenken zarte gespenster und fahren  
 auf zartadrigen wagen.  
 der schwarze wagen ist vor den berg gespannt.  
 die schwarze glocke ist vor den berg gespannt.  
 das schwarze schaukelpferd is vor den berg gespannt.  
 die toten tragen sägen und stämme zur mole herbei.  
 aus den kröpfen der vogel stürzen die ernten auf die  
 tennen aus eisen.  
 die engel landen in korben aus luft.  
 die fische ergreifen den wanderstab und rollen in sternenn  
 dem ausgang zu. (AGG:34)

Like the previous text, the poem leaves the impression that it consists of a series of highly anomalous and heterogeneous, if not utterly nonsensical statements. The anomalies, clearly, result from the combination of semantically incongruous elements within one sentence and from one line to the next. In contrast with the 'Zeichnungen aus der Kokoschka-Mappe', though, the sentence structure is here quite uniform, employing mainly transitive paratactic constructions, and virtually no inversions or conjunctions (apart from "und"). Only common, concrete nouns are used, and most of the verbs (all in the present tense) denote some form of action or motion. The

absence of capital letters enhances the uniformity of the whole and increases the sense of ceaseless but incoherent and directionless movement and activity.

Considering the construction of individual sentences somewhat more closely, it appears that what was called the fairy-tale atmosphere of the text is in fact the result of pseudo-metaphorical or utterly nonsensical combinations in fairly normal-looking syntactic structures. In linguistic terms it may be said that the framework of the sentence construction itself, the syntagmatic axis, is correct, but that the sentences are consistently deviant on the axis of selection, i.e. on the paradigmatic axis. In other words, the text calls up fantastic mental pictures because, strictly speaking, items with unwarranted semantic and syntactic features are slotted into particular syntagms, whereby it should be borne in mind that the 'transgressions' occur (in Chomsky's usage) on the level of selectional and not of subcategorization rules (the difference between this type of poem and for example Tzara's cut-up method or Arp's later automatic, collective and collage-poems lies largely in the 'level' of the syntactic deviations). In his discussion of 'degrees of grammaticalness', Chomsky lists the following examples of sentences which fail to observe selectional rules:

- (i) colorless green ideas sleep furiously
- (ii) golf plays John
- (iii) the boy may frighten sincerity
- (iv) misery loves company
- (v) they perform their leisure with diligence (Chomsky 1965:149)

About these deviant constructions, he observes:

Sentences that break selectional rules can often be interpreted metaphorically () or allusively in one way or another, if an appropriate context of greater or less complexity is supplied. That is, these sentences are apparently interpreted by a direct analogy to well-formed sentences that observe the selectional rules in question. (*ibid.*)

The sentences in Arp's poem are all structurally similar to Chomsky's examples, and could be rewritten by replacing the anomalous terms by words which comply with the selectional requirements of their immediate environment to produce well-formed sentences. Thus lines like

das schwarze schaukelpferd ist vor den berg gespannt.  
die toten tragen sagen und stämme zur mole herbei.

might be rewritten as

- \* das schwarze pferd ist vor den wagen gespannt.

- das schwarze schaukelpferd ist vor den berg gestellt.
- die männer tragen sägen und stämme zur mole herbei.

and so on. In that sense indeed the text appears, formally, to be close to traditional metaphorical writing ("...every transgression of a selectional rule constitutes a potential metaphor, though not always an interesting or attractive one", Pettit 1975:102)<sup>(3)</sup>. An attempt at a consistently metaphorical reading of the whole poem however soon proves futile, precisely because the text manifestly fails to provide "an appropriate context of greater or less complexity" (Chomsky) in the form of an over-all semantic focus of a sufficiently elaborate isotopy. Yet, as was the case in the 'Kokoschka-Mappe' poem, various patterns of semantic association can be traced, the major one being the series of terms relating to farming and wood ("gebälk/wagen/sägen/ernten/tennen"). But although these may hint at a thematic or metaphorical undercurrent and thus at an isotopic structure, they are clearly not sufficient to combine into a coherent meaningful whole. The actual selection of terms appears on the contrary to be based to a large extent on accidental association and either random or deliberately nonsensical substitution: the step from a hypothetical correct sentence like "das schwarze pferd ist vor den wagen gespannt" to "das schwarze schaukelpferd ist vor den berg gespannt" and even inversely to "der schwarze wagen ist vor den berg gespannt"(line 2) may be accounted for in terms of conscious defamiliarization and substitution, but lines like "die schwarze glocke ist vor den berg gespannt" do not appear to follow such a pattern, and the poem as a whole is conceptually too disjointed to allow the emergence of other discernible patterns to impose a common denominator on the various substitutions. Similarly, the frequency of active verbs in the poem might lead one to expect a certain narrative thread or progression (to be linked with the farming and wood isotopy, presumably), but in this respect too the reader's expectations remain unfulfilled, as the various activities and images are for the most part entirely unrelated, in themselves absurd, and interspersed with so many discordant and apparently gratuitous elements that again the reader is left puzzled. Arp's own French translation of the poem in le siège de l'air(JE:222), moreover, divides the text into two stanzas (in such a way that each stanza could also be seen as a separate poem or stanza in a sequel of fourteen largely unrelated poems or stanzas), while one line in the

- das schwarze schaukelpferd ist vor den berg gestellt.
- die männer tragen sägen und stämme zur mole herbei.

and so on. In that sense indeed the text appears, formally, to be close to traditional metaphorical writing ("...every transgression of a selectional rule constitutes a potential metaphor, though not always an interesting or attractive one", Pettit 1975:102)<sup>(3)</sup>. An attempt at a consistently metaphorical reading of the whole poem however soon proves futile, precisely because the text manifestly fails to provide "an appropriate context of greater or less complexity" (Chomsky) in the form of an over-all semantic focus of a sufficiently elaborate isotopy. Yet, as was the case in the 'Kokoschka-Mappe' poem, various patterns of semantic association can be traced, the major one being the series of terms relating to farming and wood ("gebälk/wagen/sägen/ernten/tennen"). But although these may hint at a thematic or metaphorical undercurrent and thus at an isotopic structure, they are clearly not sufficient to combine into a coherent meaningful whole. The actual selection of terms appears on the contrary to be based to a large extent on accidental association and either random or deliberately nonsensical substitution: the step from a hypothetical correct sentence like "das schwarze pferd ist vor den wagen gespannt" to "das schwarze schaukelpferd ist vor den berg gespannt" and even inversely to "der schwarze wagen ist vor den berg gespannt"(line 2) may be accounted for in terms of conscious defamiliarization and substitution, but lines like "die schwarze glocke ist vor den berg gespannt" do not appear to follow such a pattern, and the poem as a whole is conceptually too disjointed to allow the emergence of other discernible patterns to impose a common denominator on the various substitutions. Similarly, the frequency of active verbs in the poem might lead one to expect a certain narrative thread or progression (to be linked with the farming and wood isotopy, presumably), but in this respect too the reader's expectations remain unfulfilled, as the various activities and images are for the most part entirely unrelated, in themselves absurd, and interspersed with so many discordant and apparently gratuitous elements that again the reader is left puzzled. Arp's own French translation of the poem in le siège de l'air(JE:222), moreover, divides the text into two stanzas (in such a way that each stanza could also be seen as a separate poem or stanza in a sequel of fourteen largely unrelated poems or stanzas), while one line in the



original (line 4) has been deleted, although this deletion does not appear to affect the text at all.

The poem seems to present, then, a series of semantic anomalies which at one level offer themselves as instances of a type of extreme metaphorical writing - but emptied of meaning, since the concatenation of mutually unrelated absurdities and fantastic constructs does not allow the imposition of a coherent context or mental picture to overcome the heterogeneities and discordances in the poem. The text, in other words, displays in its basic syntactic structure all the makings of a conventional technique (metaphor), but this to an absurd, nonsensical degree, in an entirely open-ended way. It thus creates in its very structure the basis for parody and pastiche, providing a kind of ironic 'false motivation'<sup>(4)</sup> in raising conventional expectations of metaphor and narrative, but giving instead only a disjointed series of fantastic and absurd images.

It may be useful at this point to consider briefly another poem from the same volume, to see if the provisional observations above can be granted wider validity:

schwarze winde hängen wie ketten von den stern<sup>en</sup>.  
 enterhaken greifen schwarze lackwände an.  
 die pläne der städte glühen.  
 die häuser laufen auf sieben rubinen oder drehen sich  
 auf diamanten wie kreisel.  
 donner rollen durch die weiten höfe und die königinnen  
 stürzen von ihren melkschemeln.  
 aus den halsen der erde steigen die mieter und  
 aftermieter mit ihren galvanisierten spinne<sup>n</sup>.  
 aus den leimen kommen die glasgeripplein und läuten  
 wie das chaos.  
 wer trägt unser särglein vorüber unter dem kühlen morgen-  
 stern. (AGG:32)

The formal characteristics of the text are here largely similar to those in the previous poem. The syntactic constructions are again exceedingly simple; the use of parataxis, concrete common nouns and mainly transitive verbs in the present tense lends the text a certain undifferentiated, a-temporal flatness, with a high degree of directionless dynamism and activity as a result of the juxtaposition of apparently unrelated and disparate images. Several sentences however invite a reading in visual or metaphorical terms. The opening lines for example may suggest the description of a whirlwind or cyclone, and can be related further in the poem to terms denoting thunder, chaos and disruption, with possible overtones of Doomsday and the resurrection of the dead. As in the previous poem, additional

fields of meaning may be traced (such as the various terms associated with 'shining': "sterne/lackwände/glühen/rubinen/diamanten/galvanisiert/glas-"), but in the text as a whole these suggestions of a certain isotopic consistency soon prove deceptive. They are, moreover, continually counteracted by the insertion of absurd and discordant elements (like the image in "die häuser laufen auf sieben rubinen", the clash of registers in the combination of "königinnen" and "melkschemel", the ironic diminutives "geripplein" and "särglein", etc.) which appear to be deliberately unmotivated substitutions and associations, presented in such rapid and uniform succession that the reader is given no opportunity to absorb the semantic discrepancies or to contemplate their possible interrelations.

The display of heterogeneous, verbal extravagance, then, appears to have a purely formal and playful as well as an ironic character: it is generated, one might say, for the sake of sheer fantasy and unrestrained association as much as for the sake of parody and the ironic subversion of conventional patterns of expectancy. The actual referential quality of the text is, clearly, reduced to an absolute minimum. The poem as a whole, that is, has ceased to act as the embodiment or vehicle for the communication of some extra-textual truth or mood or substance, and in that sense it seems to correspond to Arp's notion of 'concrete' art as essentially non-iconic, whose nature consists in the use of artistic material for its own sake and irrespective of its representational value (i.e. as 'Bildung', not as 'Abbildung'). Where the plastic work distinguishes itself in the abolition of mimetic reproduction and bans even the concept of a 'model' in order to concentrate instead on the 'autonomous composition' of two-dimensional 'realities', the poems of der vogel selbdritt avoid notions of expression and representation by building heterogeneous, disparate constructs on the basis of consistent transgressions of selectional rules, in a context where paratactic uniformity and the use of concrete nouns and present tenses reduce the poem to a dynamic but highly discordant textual reality which discards all discernible links with the empirical world.

3.

The poem 'l'âge l'éclair la main et la feuille' probably dates from 1917 or shortly after. It represents a further stage in the evolution of Arp's poetic writing, and foreshadows the series of 'Configurations' which he begins in 1918. The text as it is given here closely resembles a poem with an identical title (probably the second version; cf. below) which was published in 1938 (JE:126):

l'âge a des mains de flèches.  
 l'âge est une plante  
 qui parle comme une feuille nue  
 et tend des pièges de lumière blanche.

l'éclair pousse sur une main nue.  
 l'éclair parle de l'âge sans cloche  
 et salue l'espace nu  
 qui vient de la lumière muette.

la main est blanche comme une plume de plante.  
 la main est blanche comme une feuille de flèche.  
 la main porte une cloche dormante  
 par l'espace muet  
 et se pose sur un éclair endormi.

la feuille est une main muette.  
 la feuille oublie qu'elle dort.  
 elle parle comme une cloche nue  
 et réveille l'espace blanc  
 qui tombe dans un piège muet.  
 les feuilles échangent des espaces dormants. (JE:228)

Generally speaking the formal characteristics concerning word choice and syntactic structure are identical with those in the previous two poems. This text clearly differs however from the poems in der vogel selbdritt in that it consists of continually changing syntagmatic combinations of a very limited number of items, whereby the semantic aspect, insofar as it is operative at all, remains entirely secondary. Leaving the verbs out of account for the moment, it appears that the substantives and adjectives (always used in the singular, except for the last line) together number no more than about 15 different items. Each adjective is coupled once with three to four different substantives. Only one substantive ("plume") occurs just once, and the last stanza does not contain a single substantive or adjective that has not already been used in one of the preceding stanzas. As a result the whole poem offers itself as a series of purely formal permutations, arrangements and rearrangements, and largely devoid of any referential (extra-textual) sense. Yet the semantic dimension is not entirely disregarded, as becomes evident in the common connotations of the

various adjectival forms ("nu/blanc/muet/dormant/endormi"). Although the text contains not only 'combinatory' but also 'logical' anomalies (as in the line "la feuille oublie qu'elle dort"; cf. T. Todorov, 'Die semantischen Anomalien', in *Ihwe* 1971:358-383), the attention paid to the semantic aspect shows in the use of variants ("dormant/endormi/qu'elle dort") but especially in such lines as

la main est blanche comme une plume de plante.  
la main est blanche comme une feuille de flèche.

where the choice and placing of "plume de plante" and "feuille de flèche", apparently dictated by the alliteration (which is itself extended in the phrases "cloche dormante" and "éclair endormi") forms a cross-combination - ironically underlined by the chiastic placing, in a classical figure of style - of "feuille de plante" and "plume de flèche", which in this instance at least produces a more acceptable conjunction.

Several clauses in the poem again seem to be open to a visual or metaphorical reading (as in the line "la feuille est une main muette"), and occasionally the verbal forms conform to the requirements of particular nouns ("piège" for example is combined with "tend" and "tombe"). When the poem is considered in its totality however, these clues invariably reveal themselves as ironic or misleading, and the result of accidental combination rather than of any discernible communicative or meaning-oriented intent. The semantic dimension of the text is at times ironically exploited, occasionally hinted at or suggested, but generally ignored; it could be hazarded that, paradoxically, that is precisely the 'emptiness' and 'uncommunicativeness' to which the adjectival forms jointly refer. Taken as a whole, the poem appears as formally enveloped in its own structural principle of permutation and cross-combination of given parameters, irrespective of their semantic value. That this principle of permutation does indeed represent the determining factor in the structuration of the text is also borne out by the second version of the poem, where the formal and syntactic patterns of the first version are strictly preserved, although three new substantives ("oiseau/yeux/coeur") and one new adjective ("vide") are introduced<sup>(5)</sup>. That irony and occasional semantic considerations play their limited part is clear from the fact that the newly introduced terms in this version fit the categories of those used in the first version, and also from the observation that the earlier chiastic combination "plume de plante/

feuille de flèche" now reads:

la main est blanche comme une plume de plante  
 la main est blanche comme une feuille d'oiseau (JE:126)

so that both the semantic anomaly and the stylistic irony are retained, at the expense even of the alliteration. In both versions however the semantic dimension of the text is assigned little or no function beyond the occasional creation of a deceptive (and therefore ironic) impression of coherence and meaning. Although semantic data are explored in places, conceptual meaning as such has become peripheral and fortuitous, the accidental result of largely random permutations of a given number of paradigmatic elements on an elementary syntagmatic axis.

This system of permutations, then, is further elaborated in a series of longer 'Configurations', the first two of which ('Wunderhornkonfiguration' and 'Kunigundulakonfiguration') date back to 1918 (AGS:190-193, 194-195; the latter poem is dated 1932, but as Doehl 1967:240 points out, it was written in 1918). The basic principle of the technique employed in these poems is shown with exemplary clarity in the later 'Konfiguration I' (dated 'Davos 1930', AGS:196-199), where a limited number of words and simple clauses is used in constantly varying but elementary syntagmatic structures until at the end of the poem all the items are listed in isolation.

As was already suggested above, the 'Configuration' poems obviously relate to Arp's observations on "Le grand changement de l'art de la figuration (Abbildung) en celui de la configuration (Bildung)" (JE:380). In other words, they inscribe themselves with the term 'Configuration' in the set of concepts which Arp uses to define his artistic practice in general ('non-figurative' versus 'figurative'; 'production' versus 'reproduction'; 'concrete' versus 'iconic' or 'abstract'; 'natural' versus 'rational'). The 'Configurations' indeed show, in a more systematic way than do the poems of der vogel selbdrift, that the principle underlying Arp's mode of writing largely discards the dimension of the signified and hence the relation between the poem and external reality: "les mots et les phrases ont enfin coupé les amarres qui les retenaient au réel", as J. Bersani (1968:22-23) puts it. The result of Arp's technique is then a series of startling mental pictures which correspond to no conceivable state of affairs in the external world, a language-universe in which conceptual acceptability and semantic compatibility have ceased to be relevant criteria.

A further characteristic of these 'Configurations' lies in their potential for expansion, in the form of inclusion or extension. The two versions of 'l'âge l'éclair la main et la feuille' already suggest how the introduction of new items leads to more variety in the permutations and how the length of the poem is thus variable, although its structural pattern remains intact. Something similar happens on a wider scale in the later 'Configurations'. Also, since the structure of the poems precludes any thematic or discursive development, the precise order of stanzas, lines, sentences or clauses is mostly immaterial, and as Arp rewrites and translates his own work considerable alterations occur in this respect, while particular lines or entire stanzas may be inserted in other constellations. Thus the poem 'die edelfrau pumpt feierlich wolken...' from der vogel selbdritt (AGG:33) becomes the fourth and last stanza of the 'Kunigundulakonfiguration', and practically the whole Configuration is built on the vocabulary of the earlier poem. Similarly, the poem 'verschlungene knaben blasen das wunderhorn...', also from der vogel selbdritt (AGG:37) becomes the first stanza of the 'Wunderhornkonfiguration', the third stanza of which consists of a systematic elaboration of one line from its first stanza. The occasional insertion of literary allusions (the title of the 'Wunderhornkonfiguration' obviously alludes to Brentano; the 'Kunigundulakonfiguration' makes reference to the Hansel and Gretel fairy-tale) evinces the ironic potential of the text, without affecting its essential structure.

The practice of expansion and elaboration is by no means limited to the 'Configurations'. The prose text 'Von Zeichnungen aus der Kokoschka-Mappe' is later considerably expanded as well (cf. above). The short collage text 'Weltwunder' of 1917 (AGG:47) is extended almost thirty years later by means of a similar type of substantial interpolation to a text about six times longer than the original version (AGG:48-53). French translations of several (though not all) poems of der vogel selbdritt go into the series chair de rêve of 1915 (JE:221-224); the last line of the first stanza (or poem?) of this series reads "des gouttières des étoiles coulent des flots de vin", which is a translation of "Aus den Traufen der Sterne fließt Wein in Strömen" first encountered in the 'Kokoschka-Mappe' poem. In this respect too there is no fundamental difference between Arp's poetic technique and his work in the plastic arts. In On My Way he observes:

Souvent, un détail d'une de mes sculptures, un galbe, un contraste me séduit et devient le germe d'une nouvelle sculpture. J'accentue ce galbe, ce contraste, et cela entraîne la naissance de nouvelles formes. ( ) Je les laisse pousser jusqu'à ce que les formes originelles soient devenues accessoires et presque indifférentes. (JE:323)

In the same way the verbal material in the poems appears to possess a self-perpetuating quality which reduces the production of meaning to a parody of meaning and all but eliminates the poet's conscious control over the process of structuration. What these permutations, interpolations and extensions ultimately amount to, in a wider context, is a radical and ironic de-construction of the traditional idea of the poem as a unique and carefully contrived product intensely charged with meaning, a demystification of conventional poetic practice ~~by~~ by means of the establishment of an alternative system which practically denies the word the status of a signifier. Arp's poetic technique, that is, empties common notions of 'content' and 'structure' of their meaning and situates itself at the opposite extreme, thereby going far beyond practices like Apollinaire's integrative simultanism or Jacob's calculated paronomasia.

The consistency of this gesture of de-construction and demystification appears in a number of other ways as well. Often manifesto-like texts and essays are printed in verse form; the first poem of die wolkenpumpe (1920, but written in 1917) contains personal publicity and copyright indications alike. Constant textual alterations are concurrent with a blurring of the distinction between prose and poetry. For Arp's best-known poem, 'Kaspar ist tot', five published versions can be listed (three of which are quoted in Doehl 1967:115-120, the other two in AGG:25-27): the first in unpunctuated prose, first published in Dada in 1919; the second in verse form in a poem of five sections (the first two of which are the text of the original 'Kaspar') in the Dada Almanach in 1920; the third in der vogel selbdritt, in a slightly different verse arrangement but in one piece; the fourth in On Mv Way (1948) and the fifth in wortträume und schwarze sterne (1953), both again slightly different from each other and from previous versions. Similarly, the poem 'die flüsse springen wie böcke...' from der vogel selbdritt (AGG:41) first appeared in prose (cf. Doehl 1967: 133) and subsequently in two different French versions (JE:71,223), though in each of these the original first line is omitted.

Apart from this confusing world of textual variability, though

not unconnected with it, there are also Arp's more familiar Dadaist experiments with 'unorthodox' modes of writing. Starting from the poetic technique of der vogel selbdritt, it could be argued that roughly two lines of evolution are explored, one leading to the more restricted and pseudo-systematic practice of permutation in the 'Configuration'-type poems, the other going in search of other, more radical and deliberately uncontrolled means to produce texts. The use of random concatenation of words in a-syntactic patterns, of collage and automatic writing, then, forms part of this search. Characteristic of this approach, as is well known, is the unpremeditated and unstructured handling of the language-material. In that sense Arp's Dadaist poems are a logical, though clearly more radical, continuation of his previous associative practice. The element of radicalization however is unmistakable, to the extent that the text is reduced to a 'verbal spasm', as Arp himself calls it (JE:437). At the same time the experiment also constitutes a necessarily ephemeral and provocative gesture, as Arp indeed recognizes:

Das Leben ist ein rätselhafter Hauch, und die Folge daraus kann nicht mehr als ein rätselhafter Hauch sein. Ich schrieb mehrere 'Arpaden', die aber, wie es sich für sie gehört, schnell verhauchten, verschwanden. Wir meinten durch die Dinge hindurch in das Wesen des Lebens zu sehen, und darum ergriff uns ein Satz aus einer Tageszeitung wenigstens so sehr wie der eines Dichturfürsten. (AGG:46)

Most of the poems in die wolkenpumpe appear to be combinations of collage, chance entries, and automatic writing. In many cases the principle on which the text is based is the immediate association of phonic and rhythmical elements, irrespective of grammatical rules, as in this poem:

eitel ist sein scheidel und sinn trägt berge und glanz darin  
am morgenroten am kanonenbooten muss er sterben samt seinem  
kern und chor und einzelvox und klopft mit den stimgabeln  
an die dürrn stollen seiner leiber nachtzitzen und münzt  
in kleinen kesseln sein blut und bespritzt mit sternern die  
eckige nacht ja wachsgarderobe wettergargengeläute und wenn  
einer nicht will ist einer da der will und muss und wieder  
kann und möchte und die gläser bis zum rande vollstreicht  
und lacht und den anderen weder fühlt noch riecht darum  
bewegen sich die wiegen im galopp (AGG:74)

A semantic dimension enters this system only in so far as it is solicited by association (as with "chor/einzelvox/stimgabel"); on the whole however, random concatenation and assonance seem to determine the progression of the text. Where in previous cases the syntactic structure retained at least its basic framework and only



selectional rules were broken, here the poem is no more than an 'assemblage' of words and phrases which flow into one another regardless of grammatical restrictions, so that only indeterminate and fragmentary images and mental pictures are allowed to appear and disappear. The general tenor of the technique also points to the adoption of a passive and receptive attitude on the part of the author: where the work is not pure collage ("Ofters bestimmte ich auch mit geschlossenen Augen Wörter und Sätze in den Zeitungen, indem ich sie mit Bleistift anstrich", AGG:46), the verbal associations appear to surface on their own account and are registered as such by the poet, in the same way as in the paintings and bas-reliefs the work in progress dictates its own course. Automatic execution and random structuration coincide to a large extent, and both imply a wilful suspension of the artist's (self-)conscious intellect, in that he declines to interfere in or direct the creative process. In a later comment on the poems in die wolkenpumpe Arp indeed indicates their affinity with Surrealist automatic writing, pointing out that

...ils ont été transcrits directement, sans réflexion ni reprises. Tournures dialectales, sonorités archaisantes, latin de cuisine, onomatopoeïes déroutants, spasmes verbaux, y sont particulièrement frappants. Mais ces 'pompes à nuages' ne sont pas seulement des écritures automatiques, elles préparent déjà mes papiers déchirés, dans lesquels j'ai laissé jouer librement la 'réalité' et le 'hasard'. (JE:437)

Surveying Arp's Dadaist and pre-Dadaist poetic practice in general, then, it may be possible to describe his approach in terms of two complementary operations, one of ironic deconstruction and one of the establishment of the poem as a 'textual reality'.

The moment of deconstruction, which is continually in evidence, consists mainly in the progressive dismantling of semantic coherence by means of an increasingly radical process of random juxtaposition and concatenation. The basic unit with which Arp operates has become the word as a purely formal item: combinations of words in syntagmatic chains no longer build a coherent mental construct, but at most what R. Doehl (1967:110) aptly calls a mere "Bedeutungsgeflecht" (as opposed to "Sinnzusammenhang"). Concurrent with this process is the complete abandonment of the notion of the poet as the subjective centre determining the structuration of the text. The poem is radically de-centred in that the concept of the author as the controlling instance is constantly undermined by the almost mechanical,

automatic procedures which, given a random starting-point and a random selection of terms, can generate, combine and transform virtually any number of lines and poems. The poem's potential for continual expansion, inclusion and interpolation appears likewise as a function of the deliberate degradation of the poet's centrality, in the sense that the author no longer constructs a balanced and finished product, but only a number of malleable, permanently provisional pieces governed by chance and association. Since the text seems to write and transform itself, the role of the poet is limited to exploiting the occasional quibble or irony. The same type of 'impersonality' also pervades the world of the poems as such: the human element is reduced to simply another item of the language-material; whereas personifications of animals and inanimate matter abound in Arp's poetic universe, the human presence is reduced to the status of a word, a linguistic object. The result of the whole drive towards deconstruction, then, appears to be a radical and highly ironic demystification of the conventional notion of poetry, in particular the destruction of what has been called the 'aura' (Benjamin 1970:219ff) of the work - and it is highly significant in this context that Benjamin, in the essay in question ('The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' 1936), refers to Mallarmé as the major exponent of this 'theology' of art which in the late nineteenth century attempts to restore the 'aura' of the artistic product.

The moment of reconstruction, finally, of the establishment of the poem as a textual reality, implies a substantially altered relation, within the work itself, between the signifier and the signified, in that the poetic text becomes an autonomous entity whose semantic component is either ignored or consigned to the periphery. The impact of this is twofold. In a literary-historical context, the autonomy of the signifier and the foregrounding of semantic anomalies acquires the value of provocation and parody, directed against the 'established' avant-garde as well as, obviously, against the prevailing literary norms, whether Symbolist or Realist. At the same time, as notions of expression and communication are discarded, the poetic structure revolves entirely upon itself, its own material, its own discordant universe, without attempting to build or even suggest a conceptual 'hinterland'. Hence the poem as such aims exclusively at the construction of a language-world, and exists solely in its impermanent and elusive textual totality - not, as was the case in

Jacob's or Reverdy's work, on account of a finely balanced formal organization or, as in Apollinaire's simultanism, because the poem posits in its semantic disparity an all-encompassing poetic persona, but because the text, in its apparent irrationality and open-endedness, in its de-centredness and lack of conceptual structuration, asserts itself as a separate, self-sufficient locus on which the conjunctions of the empirical world can lay no claim.

4.

Hugo Ball's position is substantially different from Arp's in that throughout his career as a writer art and literature are directly and firmly placed in a social, political and ideological context. In March 1916, a month after the opening of the Cabaret Voltaire, he notes in his diary: "Um den Menschen geht es, nicht um die Kunst. Wenigstens nich in erster Linie um die Kunst"(FZ:76). Ball's writings in his Expressionist years as well as his subsequent Dadaist activities and experiments are closely and explicitly linked with extra-literary concerns, and acquire their proper significance only when considered in connection with his radical and revolutionary preoccupations outside the aesthetic sphere. Generally speaking, Ball's major preoccupations between 1910 (when he abandons a university career to devote himself to the theatre) and 1920 (the year of his conversion to Catholicism, and his virtual withdrawal from public life) may be divided into an aesthetic and a political phase (cf. Steinke 1967:227). Ball's Dadaism then presents the final stage of his aesthetic revolt, and the political activities after his departure from Zurich (his work for the Freie Zeitung and the writing of the Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz) result to a large extent from his fundamental doubts about the effectiveness of aesthetic protest and the form it was taking with Dada (cf. below).

For a fuller understanding of Ball's involvement with Dada and the poetic experiments which spring from it, however, it is essential to consider briefly some aspects of his work and thought before 1916. On the whole, Ball's background appears to be solidly Expressionist, marked on the one hand by the presence of Nietzsche and, on the other by contacts - via theatrical circles in Berlin, Plauen and Munich - with the more politically committed wing of the Expressionist movement (cf. Steinke 1967:56ff). His poems from the years 1913-14,

as P.U. Hohendahl (in Rothe 1969:741) notes, are in line with the products of early Expressionism, and show affinities with the work of van Hoddiss, Lichtenstein and Heym. It is, clearly, the possibility of a parallel with Heym's outlook which is of particular interest in the present context. In that respect the poem 'Das ist die Zeit', written at the end of 1914 or early in 1915, opens various perspectives:

Das ist die Zeit, in der der Behemoth  
Die Nase hebt aus den gesalznen Fluten.  
Die Menschen springen von den brennenden Schuten  
In grünen Schlamm, den Feuer überloht.

Die Seelen sind verkauft in Trödelbuden  
Um weniges Entgelt und ohne Not,  
Die Herzen ausgelaugt, die Geister tot.  
Gestraubte Engel gehen um mit Ruten.

Sie dringen würgend in die Häuser ein,  
Und ihrem Grimme widersteht kein Riegel,  
Sie schwirren ums Gesims der Sakristien

Und reißen mit sich Lattenwerk und Ziegel,  
Ihr Atem dampft. Ein schwarzer Sonnenschein  
Hängt wie Salpeter überm Höllentigel. (BGG:20) (6)

The poem consists of three parts: a scene at sea, with the devil Behemoth surfacing from the waves; a more general metaphorical statement in lines 5 to 7; and a scene in which "Gestraubte Engel" wreak havoc among the population and desecrate churches. Judging from the final line these 'angels' would appear to be demonic elements as well: this would be in line with Ball's Nietzschean view of Christianity, and in another poem, published in the first issue of Ball's short-lived periodical Revolution (October 1913) he indeed refers to "der Christenheit Götzenplunder", describing angels who descend on earth bringing "Finsternis" and "Qual" (cf. Steinke 1967: 77). The poem 'Das ist die Zeit' remains ambivalent on this point, though, in that the destruction of the vestries (stanza 3) does seem to denote the desecration of something holy and sacred.

The poem as a whole carries strong overtones of violence, fright, degradation, destruction and sacrilege. Heym's presence in the text is unmistakable, and manifests itself on several levels. The general apocalyptic atmosphere of the poem certainly corresponds to Ball's view of Heym's work; in a letter of 1924 Ball draws a comparison between Heym and Baudelaire, and he writes:

Bei Heym ist die Trauer noch unheimlicher als bei den grossen Franzosen. Bei Heym ist die Trauer von der Sinnlosigkeit begleitet. Baudelaire glaubt an die Kunst, an die Symmetrie,

an die eiserne Form, die von den Würmern ohne Aug und Ohr nicht zernagt wird. Heym glaubt nicht einmal daran. ( ) Seine Verse sind geschrieben, als triebe er schon unterm Eise.

(cf. Heym 1968:170)

More important however is the fact that Ball's poem contains direct reminiscences from Heym's 'demonic' city poems (more particularly 'Die Dämonen der Städte' and 'Der Gott der Stadt'), not only in the use of a 'bold metaphor' (Weinrich) like "schwarzer Sonnenschein" (line 13) which recalls similar devices in Heym's and Trakl's work as well as the sense of darkness which dominates Heym's city poems, but most conspicuously in the literal echo in line 4 ("In grünen Schlamm, den Feuer überloht"): Heym's poem 'Der Gott der Stadt' (December 1910), namely, ends with the stanza:

Doch die Dämonen wachsen riesengross.  
Ihr Schläfenhorn zerreisst den Himmel rot.  
Erdbeben donnert durch der Städte Schoss  
Um ihren Huf, den Feuer überloht. (Heym 1971:16)

Although Ball's poem refers to a scene at sea and not in a city, the atmosphere in his text and in Heym's poem is the same, and centres on a massive demonic figure causing panic (in Heym's 'Der Gott der Stadt' and here in stanza 1) and on sundry demonic forces roaming through a city (in Heym's 'Die Dämonen der Städte' and here in stanzas 3 and 4). Where Ball speaks of Behemoth, Heym's gigantic city god is identified as Baal. The appearance of the demonic shape in the first stanza of Ball's poem is also similar to stanza 6 of Heym's 'Dämonen':

Sie lehnen schwer auf einer Brückenwand  
Und stecken ihre Hände in den Schwarm  
Der Menschen aus, wie Faune, die am Rand  
Der Sümpfe bohren in den Schlamm den Arm. (Heym 1971:15)

Two points however distinguish Ball from Heym. The insertion of a more general statement on the degradation of spiritual values (in stanza 2), while in accordance with Expressionist practice as such, does not form part of Heym's usual technique, which tends to focus on precise, visual descriptions of visionary scenes. And the idea of sacrilege which is suggested in the second part of Ball's poem is also mostly absent from Heym's work, which concentrates rather on visions of brutal oppression and violence, or, in later poems, on images of emptiness and forlornness. In both these respects, incidentally, Ball's outlook seems to lean more towards Trakl's early Expressionist poems than to Heym's work (although, clearly, it is most unlikely that Ball was aware of Trakl's poetry; his

acquaintance with Heym's poems on the contrary is well substantiated).

The historical (extra-literary) context of 'Das ist die Zeit' also has its relevance. In Heym's case the atmosphere of doom, destruction and fright bears on an urban and industrial environment (as was shown in the origin of the city-god image in a crane, in the poem 'Ophelia'; cf. above, chapter 3, section 4) and on a Nietzschean sense of the loss of moral and other certainties. His work thus points to sociological and philosophical categories, but, as both Heym's diary and his poems suggest, his sense of disorientation and rebelliousness remains vague and unspecific. While in his diary he rarely speculates on more than the crudest possible causes for his general discontent, the city poems, significantly, present only unmotivated and blind forces of destruction, greeted with ambivalent feelings of horror and exultation. The solutions he occasionally envisages are equally vague, immature and utopian. It is highly ironic in this respect that Heym's hankering after barricades, revolt and even war (cf. Heym 1960:139,164) should at first find an echo also in Ball's pre-war writings (cf. Sheppard 1976:363-364) - up to the point, precisely, where Ball's brief but shattering experience at the front in November 1914 causes him to abandon his former "typically Expressionist hope in ecstatic rebirth out of cataclysmic destruction" (Sheppard: *ibid.*). The poem 'Das ist die Zeit', written after Ball's war experience, then acquires an additional dimension of meaning quite outside the sphere suggested by its echoes from Heym's city poems, and points instead to the historical circumstances which also determine to a large extent the Dadaist phenomenon. These circumstances lend further weight to the coincidence in the poem of violence and desecration on the one hand and spiritual disintegration on the other (their interrelation is not spelled out in the text, but may be assumed), as also the final line of the sonnet 'Ich liebte nicht' (1915) suggests

Man stirbt nicht nur durch Minen und durch Flinten.

Man wird nicht von Granaten nur zerrissen.  
In meine Nächte drangen Ungeheuer,  
Die mich die Hölle wohl empfinden liessen. (BGG:18)

Lines like these however should be seen in conjunction with the more overtly satirical tone of still later poems like 'Totentanz' (February 1916; cf. Briefe:51, FZ:72), which opens with the stanza:

So sterben wir, so sterben wir,  
 Wir sterben alle Tage,  
 Weil es so gemütlich sich sterben lässt.  
 Morgens noch in Schlaf und Traum  
 Mittags schon dahin.  
 Abends schon zu unterst im Grabe drin. (BGG:21)

Here the pathos of the Expressionist phase, which still sounds in 'Das ist die Zeit', has made room for a cynicism and satire running parallel with the increasing radicalization and bitterness commonly associated with Dada and, in its parodic character, pointing the way to the ultimate consequences which Ball draws from this awareness on the level of language and poetic expression itself.

In his diary Heym repeatedly returns to the point that his existence appears to him as suffocating, as "langweilig" and "inhaltlos", as "dunkel, auseinander, zerstreut" (1960:164,131,138, 168). Trakl's letters also speak of "de[r] Druck, der auf den Menschen für gewöhnlich lastet, und das Treibende des Schicksals", and of "ein Gefühl wilder Verzweiflung und des Grauens über dieses chaotische Dasein"(1969:472,504). Ball's articles and diary entries from the pre-Dada years strike a very similar note, although they distinguish themselves by continually offering more general social and philosophical considerations and explanations, and by a belief in the redeeming potential of a Nietzschean type of Dionysian art. Ball begins his diary (Die Flucht aus der Zeit) with the observation: "So stellten sich 1913 Welt und Gesellschaft dar: das Leben ist völlig verstrickt und gekettet"(FZ:3). In the summer of 1913 he notes: "Es fehlt eine Rangordnung der individuellen und der gesellschaftlichen Werte. () Die Nivellierung ist das Ende der Welt" (FZ:4), adding soon afterwards that "Bis in die letzte Grundveste alles ins Wanken geraten [ist]"(FZ:14). In February 1914 he describes his age as "Eine destruktive, entwertende, schändende Zeit", and a few months later he concludes: "Alle Welt ist inzwischen dämonisch geworden"(FZ:8,16). Not surprisingly, the notion of 'Zerrissenheit' (together with an associated number of verbal forms incorporating the prefix 'zer-'), which was found to be of central significance for Heym and Trakl (cf. above, chapter 7, section 5), also occurs repeatedly in Ball's prose and poetry. In March 1917, at the time of the Galerie Dada, he remarks: "Die neuere Kunst ist mir sympathisch, weil sie in einer Zeit der totalen Zerrissenheit den Willen zum Bilde bewahrt hat"(FZ:145). In May of the same year he states, in his lecture on Kandinsky at the Galerie Dada:

Die Künstler dieser Zeit sind nach innen gerichtet. Ihr Leben ist ein Kampf mit dem Irrsinn. Sie sind zerrissen, zerstückt, zerhackt, falls es ihnen nicht glückt, für einen Moment in ihrem Werke das Gleichgewicht, die Balance, die Notwendigkeit und Harmonie zu finden. (in Steinke 1967:213)

This sense of fragmentation and entanglement also manifests itself on a more personal level, in an awareness of a split personality or a feeling of continual inner contradiction. "Mein Denken bewegt sich im Gegensatz", he notes in June 1915 (FZ:28), and in March 1917, observing that his artistic and his political activities are becoming increasingly irreconcilable, he concludes: "Ich leide an einer Wesensspaltung, von der ich zwar immer noch glaube, dass sie ein einziger Blitz verschmelzen kann"(FZ:142). It is hardly accidental that some of his poems from the Dada years are grouped as a sequel under the heading 'Sieben schizophrene Sonetten'(EGG:34-40); in one of them he introduces himself as "Ein Opfer der Zerstückung" in whom the audience however may recognize themselves (*ibid.*:37). Ball's interest throughout these years in the figure of the Baudelairean dandy and of the dilettante appears to spring from the same sense of alienation and inner fragmentation, as does presumably his preoccupation with paradox and deliberate exaggeration (the two are often linked: "Der Dandysmus ist eine Schule der Paradoxie (und der Paradoxologie)", he notes in April 1916, FZ:92). Ball himself displays similar paradoxes and dissonances, developing on the one hand notions of dandyism, the mask, wilful distortion and exaggeration, and on the other a belief in freeing the subconscious, dreams, man's innermost being. In his diary he characterizes Dada as "Zeitkritik" and "Zeitempfinden" at the same time (FZ:81). In his Expressionist years his attitude towards anarchism is singularly ambivalent. Anarchism is seen as an antidote to rationalism, and anarchist theories, he claims, have at least revealed the "formalistisch verkappte Entartung unserer Zeit"(FZ:27). Yet he discards anarchism on the grounds that he could never bid chaos welcome (FZ:26). And since all political activity is, at this stage, regarded as essentially rationalist, he claims to immunize himself by concentrating on aesthetic concerns (FZ:15,33). Ball's intellectual homelessness and his search for stability, starting from aesthetic and political revolt and ending in a strictly orthodox Catholicism, may both be equally symptomatic of a more fundamental sense of disorientation and bewilderment.



Heym's diary and Trakl's letters offer, on the whole, expressions of highly subjective experiences, and very few attempts are made to probe further into social or philosophical questions to account for the sense of fragmentation and loss to which they feel subject. Ball however gives evidence of strong political and ideological commitments, combined with an enduring reformist zeal. Perhaps the most conspicuous factor in this respect is his radical rejection of rationalism and materialism and what he, like Arp, considers to be the practical outgrowths of these two basic evils. "Der Glaube an die Materie ist ein Glaube an den Tod", he notes in the opening sections of his diary, rejecting the machine as a symbol of the victory of materialism and as the 'quintessence' of rationalism (FZ:4,27). Christianity has become a science, and the Church is hopelessly compromised (FZ:35,64). The state is "die Hauptstütze der Vernunft", and all politics are rationalist and utilitarian (FZ:15). In short, "Kunst, Philosophie, Musik, Religion: alle höheren Bestrebungen sind intellektualisiert, vernünftig geworden"(FZ:61), and "Das ganze Diesseits hat man intellektualisiert"(FZ:65).

Ball's reaction to this state of affairs takes its bearings from Nietzsche, more particularly from Nietzsche's concept of Dionysian art. In Der Wille zur Macht Nietzsche opts for art as a means of protest and liberation alike: "Unsre Religion, Moral und Philosophie sind decadence-Formen des Menschen. - Die Gegenbewegung: die Kunst" (Nietzsche 1964:533), and: "Kunst als Freiheit von der moralischen Verengung und Winkel-Optik; oder als Spott über sie"(ibid.:554). The types of art envisaged then are distinguished as 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian'. In The Birth of Tragedy the Dionysian force is presented as erupting directly from the subconscious, and thus as "the shattering of the principium individuationis for which Apollo stands"(Spears 1970: 36), as rapture, extravagance and contradiction (ibid.). In Der Wille zur Macht the two principles are compared as follows:

Apollinisch - dionysisch. - Es gibt zwei Zustände, in denen die Kunst selbst wie eine Naturgewalt im Menschen auftritt, über ihn verfügend, ob er will oder nicht: einmal als Zwang zur Vision, andererseits als Zwang zum Orgiasmus. Beide Zustände sind auch im normalen Leben vorgespielt, nur schwächer: im Traum und im Rausch.

Aber derselbe Gegensatz besteht noch zwischen Traum und Rausch: beide entfesseln in uns künstlerische Gewalten, jede aber verschieden: der Traum die des Sehens, Verknüpfens, Dichtens; der Rausch die der Gebärde, der Leidenschaft, des Gesangs, des Tanzes.

Das Verlangen nach Zerstörung, Wechsel, Werden kann der Ausdruck der übervollen, zukunftsschwangern Kraft sein (mein Terminus dafür ist, wie man weiss, das Wort 'dionysisch'); es kann aber auch der Hass des Missratnen, Entbehrenden, Schlechtweggekommenen sein, der Zerstört, zerstören muss, weil ihn das Bestenende, ja alles Bestehen, alles Sein selbst, empört und aufreizt.

(Nietzsche 1964:534,568)

Ball, it seems, follows closely in Nietzsche's footsteps. Dismissing conventional art and literature, in a gesture similar to Arp's, as no more than a "Sicherheitsventil", and observing that "Die Akademie die Rechenmaschine des mechanistischen Zeitalters [ist]"(FZ:3,67), he calls instead (in his unpublished and unfinished dissertation on Nietzsche, written 1909-10) for a regeneration of the Dionysian element, as opposed to 'Socratic' rationalism:

Luft und Raum schaffen dem Dionysischen, weil der Sokratismus zur Verknöcherung, zum Ende, zur Dekandenz führe, das Dionysische aber zur Herrlichkeit.

Ein Zeitalter der Kunst entfaltet aus der Vernichtung alles dessen, was diesem Ideale im Wege steht; die Befreiung der Leidenschaften, des Triebens, der Natur, dazu eine entsprechend grossartige Bändigung durch die Kunst. (In Steinke 1967:49,50)

In a series of aphorisms in 1913 he states likewise that art should strive to redeem the world "durch Rausch und Brand"(cf. Sheppard 1976:364). Nietzsche's 'orgiastic' Dionysian mode also rings in the opening pages of Ball's diary, where he opts for the "Orgiastische Hingabe an den Gegensatz alles dessen, was brauchbar und nutzbar ist" (FZ:3).

The regeneration, then, is expected to result from such a "Hingabe" to the anti-rationalist and anti-utilitarian impulse. The new art forms - Ball mentions Futurism, Kandinsky, Picasso - are welcomed as harbingers of rebirth. Thus he describes Kandinsky and Picasso as "Propheten der Wiedergeburt"(FZ:8), and in an enthusiastic review of a Futurist art exhibition in 1913 he notes: "Man versteht diese Bilder nicht. Gott sei dank. () Diese Bilder bringen das Absolut Verrückte in Erscheinung"(in Steinke 1967:86-87). The new pictorial principles, he claims, offer 'new life' because they operate "ohne den Umweg durch den Intellekt"(FZ:5-6) - an observation which sounds involuntarily ironic in its application to the systematic and 'classical' conception held by the Cubist painters and commentators themselves. For Ball however the new art springs only from the "freie und Fessellose Imagination", and "Alle lebendige Kunst () wird irrational, primitiv und komplexhaft sein"(FZ:70). In the years before the war, Ball envisages a theatrical career for himself, and his

pronouncements on the theatre are entirely in line with those on the plastic arts. In March 1914 he writes:

Das Theater allein ist imstande, die neue Gesellschaft zu formen. Man muss nur die Hintergründe, die Farben, Worte und Töne so aus dem Unterbewussten lebendig machen, dass sie den Alltag mitsamt seinem Elend verschlingen. (FZ:11)

His essays in the Expressionist periodical Phobus in April and June 1914 sound a similar note. Expressionist theatre is that art form which "mit wahnsinniger Wollust die eigene Persönlichkeit wiederfindet und deren Diktatur ausruft in hintergründigster Selbstschöpfung", and the playwright should produce works which reveal "den Geburtsgrund alles dramatischen Lebens", and burst forth "aus den Wurzeln heraus zugleich in Tanz, Farbe, Mimik, Musik und Wort"(in Sheppard 1976: 364-365).

In Ball's view, it appears, art and especially the theatre serve an essentially dual purpose, as protest and as liberation. The key terms of his artistic conception are "Hingabe", "Selbstschöpfung" and "Entladung" ("Den Schwerpunkt legte man auf das Wort 'Entladung'", ibid.), while at the same time a further political and ideological effect is expected from the practice based upon these principles. With its reliance on the subconscious and the Dionysian, the production of art stands at the far end of political activism, but in the final analysis the two are felt to be concurrent all the same, even if, as was pointed out above, their basic incompatibility eventually gives rise to considerable tensions and contortions. Ball's Dadaism seems to inscribe itself in this constellation as the last phase of his aesthetic protest, presenting also its most exacerbated form. As R. Sheppard observes in his discussion of the theme of the formal garden in late Romanticism and Expressionism (1972b), the 'demonic' forces unleashed by the Dionysian principle appear as both liberating and destructive to the Expressionist poet; this ambivalence was also noted in Heym's 'demonic' city poems, where violence and upheaval are loaded with both positive and negative connotations (cf. above). In Ball's case his experience at the front marks the beginning of a similar ambivalence, subsequently coupled with growing doubt concerning the relevance of aesthetic protest and of the whole Dionysian principle which he seems to see at work in Dada. As early as April 1915 he notes in his diary:

Noch immer beschäftigt mich das Theater, und es hat alles doch keinen Sinn mehr. Wer mag jetzt noch Theater spielen, oder auch nur spielen sehen? (FZ:21)

In later years he speaks of the "Barbarismen des Kabarets" (meaning the Cabaret Voltaire, FZ:143), arguing in general that the "Phantastik" of contemporary art springs from its radical 'sceptis', and hence "sie selber ist dämonisch" and "Ihre Antithese ist eine Täuschung" (FZ:83,102). On the other hand, Dada will derive its satirical stridency and cynicism precisely from an awareness of the ineffectiveness of its own protest (as Ball indeed acutely realizes; cf. FZ:76), but this awareness can only accelerate the dynamic of its programme of provocation and formal experimentation. In that atmosphere art is not so much liberation as "ein Beschwörungsprozess" (FZ:148), and in its rebellious stance Dada is necessarily a brief, radical and provocative gesture followed by dissolution. "Es ist mir daran gelegen, das Kabarett zu behaupten und es dann aufzugeben" Ball notes in April 1916, barely three months after its foundation (FZ:88). In August of the same year he adds, appropriately, that his manifesto at the first public Dada event (not at the Cabaret) amounted in fact to "eine kaum verhüllte Absage an die Freunde" (FZ:103).

On the whole, then, Ball's sphere of thought seems to be determined by a number of oppositions which become progressively more complex, acute and paradoxical in the years of his involvement with Dada, due to an internal logic of radicalization and to the impact of various external factors. These oppositions might be described in terms of rationalism and utilitarianism versus the revaluation of the powers of the subconscious; materialism versus the 'unfettered imagination', the primitive, the childlike; authoritarianism, church and state versus anarchism and the Dionysian principle; the machine versus the work of art. Projecting these oppositions on a historical level, Baudelaire and Rimbaud are pitted against Voltaire (FZ:58,60), the Marquis de Sade against Rousseau (FZ:17,30), Nietzsche against Kant (FZ:61). "Wer das Leben befreien will, muss die Träume befreien", Ball notes in November 1915, but another entry for the same day reads "Zwischen Traum und Erfahrung liegen die Wunden, an denen die Menschen sterben" (FZ:61) - which is undoubtedly meant as a programmatic statement on the need to revitalize the potential dormant in the subconscious, but reflects also on Ball's exasperation when this programme is put into practice and fails to yield the expected results.

5.

Ball's actual involvement with Dada is limited to two periods of about six months each. He arrives in Zurich in May 1915, and the Cabaret Voltaire opens its doors at the beginning of February 1916. In April plans are discussed for a periodical, to be called Dada, and in July Ball recites his phonetic poems. In a letter of 2 July 1916 however he admits having already lost interest in the Cabaret and its activities (Briefe:57), and he leaves Zurich at the end of the month. In several letters to Tzara in September 1916 he condemns Dada on predominantly political grounds ("Ich erkläre hiermit, dass aller Expressionismus, Dadaismus und andere Mismen schlimmste Bourgeoisie sind. Alles Bourgeoisie, alles Bourgeoisie. Uebel, übel, übel"; and: "Das 'Cabaret Voltaire' ist nichtsnutzig, schlecht, dekadent, militaristisch, was weiss ich noch", Briefe:62-63). Yet in November he returns to Zurich to help with the organization of art exhibitions at the Galerie Dada, which he hopes will be less 'barbaric' than the Cabaret Voltaire (FZ:143). In April 1917 he gives a final summary of his views on art in a lecture on Kandinsky (FZ:148, Steinke 1967: 207-214), but following a nervous breakdown a month later he leaves Zurich and the Dadaist circle again, and this time definitively.

Originally set up with the avowed aim "einen Mittelpunkt für die künstlerische Unterhaltung zu schaffen" (FZ:71), the Cabaret soon develops into a forum for radical ideological critique and artistic experimentation. "Die Bildungs- und Kunstideale als Variétéprogramm -: das ist unsere Art von 'Candide' gegen die Zeit", Ball notes in June 1916 (FZ:94). The earlier emphasis on the subconscious, dreams and the 'irrational' in general is by no means abandoned, in spite of Ball's growing misgivings on the subject (cf. above); indeed they will still play a crucial part in his experiment with phonetic poetry (cf. below). The major new ingredient however is the element of provocation and aggression, which soon generates its own momentum of radicalization. As early as March 1916 Ball notes: "Es ist mit den Erwartungen des Publikums ein Wettlauf, der alle Kräfte der Erfindung und der Debatte in Anspruch nimmt" (FZ:75). Deliberate exaggeration and the cultivation of the absurd as well as satire and parody - including self-parody - are thus part of a theatrical act directed against the audience, and aimed at the unmasking and dismantling of habitual assumptions and expectations among the public. The use of masks is also seen as functional in this context; where, in the years

before Dada, Ball describes the masks of the Expressionist stage as a means to call up "Urbilder" and to stir the subconscious (FZ:12), in a remark of May 1916 he credits the technique with a more polemical function:

Was an den Masken uns allesamt fasziniert, dass sie nicht menschliche, sondern überlebensgrosse Charaktere und Leiden-schaften verkörpern. Das Grauen dieser Zeit, der paralysierende Hintergrund der Dinge is sichtbar gemacht. (FZ:90-91).

In Ball's general characterizations of Dada at the time of the Cabaret, the notions of the deliberately provocative stance and of the consciously absurd gesture recur again and again, in terms like "Buffonade", "Totenmesse", "Geste", "Narrenspiel", "Gladiatorengeste", "Hinrichtung", "Blague", "blutige Pose". The relevant passages may be quoted in full:

Was wir zelebrieren, ist eine Buffonade und eine Totenmesse zugleich. (FZ:78)

Unser Kabarett ist eine Geste. Jedes Wort, das hier gesprochen und gesungen wird, besagt wenigstens das eine, dass es dieser erniedrigenden Zeit nicht gelungen ist, uns Respekt abzunötigen. () Unsere freiwillige Torheit, unsere Begeisterung für die Illusion wird sie zuschanden machen. (FZ:85)

Was wir Dada nennen, ist ein Narrenspiel aus dem Nichts, in das alle höheren Fragen verwickelt sind; eine Gladiatorengeste; ein Spiel mit den schabigen Ueberbleibseln; eine Hinrichtung der posierten Moralität und Fülle.

Der Dadaist liebt das Aussergewöhnliche, ja das Absurde. Er weiss, dass sich im Widerspruche das Leben behauptet und dass seine Zeit wie keine vorher auf die Vernichtung des Generösen abzielt. Jede Art Maske ist ihm darum willkommen. Jedes Versteckspiel, dem eine duperende Kraft innewohnt. Das Direkte und Primitive erscheint ihm inmitten enormer Unnatur als das Unglaubliche selbst.

Da der Bankrott der Ideen das Menschenbild bis in die innersten Schichten zerblättert hat, treten in pathologischer Weise die Triebe und Hintergründe hervor. Da keinerlei Kunst, Politik oder Bekenntnis diesem Dammbbruch gewachsen scheinen, bleibt nur die Blague und die blutige Pose. (FZ:91-92)

The fundamental dualities in Ball's view of Dada, and in Dada as such, revolve, clearly, around on the one hand the opposition between the absurd if not infantile pose and the seriousness of the ideological critique behind it (Dada as "ein Narrenspiel (), in das alle höheren Fragen verwickelt sind"), and, on the other, around the opposition between the use of masks but also of "das Direkte und Primitive", both employed as means to voice ideological critique and, continuing

the line of Ball's Expressionist activities, to give free rein to the forces of the subconscious. Transposing this second duality to the sphere of literature, Ball's phonetic poems will equally serve a double end, first as the ultimate disruption of the logical-communicative structure of a language in which Ball sees only a thoroughly discredited instrument and a reflection of the conventional, rationalist and authoritarian world order, and secondly as a practice by means of which the principle of pure, uninhibited association may be fully explicit; both these aspects, it will be remembered, were also present in Arp's approach. As for the first opposition, Ball's comment on the dual nature of comedy may clarify what is implied;

Der Komödiendichter empfindet das Leben zwiefach: als Utopie und als Wirklichkeit, als Hintergrund und als Figur. Der Abstand zwischen beiden erscheint ihm als Zerrbild, und um so mehr, je mehr er auf seiten des Ideals steht. Ein solcher Dichter ist immer kritisch beanlagt. Er leidet an seiner Zeit und Umgebung. (FZ:85)

The comic and the absurd, in other words, are not fortuitous modes, but present a 'distorted image' ("Zerrbild") which results from a critical insight, the irreconcilable duality of ideal and reality, of utopia and experience. The image which the comic author projects will be the more grotesque and distorted as the incompatibilities which engender it are more sharply felt. Applied to Dada and its historical position, a self-propelling logic of exasperation and radicalization is set in motion from the beginning, leading inevitably to further paradoxes and ultimately to self-abolition.

The mask is one element which is enveloped in progressively more contorted paradoxes. In one sense it has its function in the strategy of exaggeration and provocation, and is thus part of the apparatus of ideological critique, presenting disproportionate and wildly magnified images to demonstrate the face of reality. A deliberate distortion, the mask nevertheless presents a 'truthful' picture: in a note of November 1915 Ball already points to this paradox when he remarks that reality amounts to no more than

...ein verhängnisvoller Ablauf optischer Täuschungen, worin der bewusste Irrtum und die gefasste Lüge am ehesten noch eine Art von Sinn und Halt, eine Perspektive aufrechterhalten. (FZ:66)

At the same time however masks are still held to project "Urbilder" (cf. above), and it is no coincidence that Ball recites his phonetic poems, with their 'magical' cadence, dressed in a 'cubist' costume of his own design, including a "Schamanenhut" (FZ:99-100). But, as

Ball's characterization of Dada indicates, the mask also allows the actor's performance to become a "Versteckspiel", and in that sense the mask forms the counterpart to the abstract work of art which Ball described as being not only an emanation from the subconscious, but also, given the nature of the external circumstances, a "Beschwörung", a means of exorcism and defence. The actor's mask, his whole act, dissimulates and 'masks' his painful experience of the world, and permits a certain distance and anonymity. The visual, theatrical mask of Dada, in other words, its "Spiel", is in essence no different from the formal mask which Heym's writing adopts in the deliberate 'squareness' of its verse forms and its 'robust' style - a style "der mich wie eine Festung umschantzt", as Heym himself puts it (1960:135). This same sense of distance is also implied in Ball's concept of the dilettante ("Ich bin Zuschauer, ich dilettiere nur", FZ:31) and the dandy ("der Typus der modernen Literatur", FZ:108). The inevitable paradox which, as Ball sees it, ensues from this position lies in the fact that, in the circumstances, this type of play-acting and calculated provocation can only be a brief sequence, a demonstration and an experiment which cannot hope to yield results outside the sphere from which it draws its material. As an outsider the dandy disqualifies himself as a social and ideological critic, and his flight into artfulness and provocation excludes permanent commitment and, in Ball's opinion, the production of anything 'definitive'. "Die Leistung ist unendlich wichtiger als das Experiment", he notes in June 1916, and he continues, with a scepticism characteristic of his whole attitude towards the Dadaist enterprise:

Widerstände zu sehen, dazu bedarf es nur eines scharfen Auges. Sie zu durchdringen und aufzulösen, setzt ausserdem eine gestaltende Kraft voraus. Das eigentlich Schwierige und Besondere einer Frage erhebt sich erst dort, wo das Definitive verlangt wird. Dem Dandy ist alles Definitive verhasst. Er sucht den Entscheidungen auszuweichen. (FZ:98)

Dada's laughter and apparent cynicism are enmeshed in similar paradoxes and duplicities. Its consciously absurd discourse functions on different levels simultaneously, as dissimulation ("Versteckspiel"), as therapy and "Beschwörung", and as polemic ("Bildungs- und Kunstideale als Variétéprogramm"), in an artistic as well as a non-artistic sphere, and constantly attempting to place itself both inside and outside the existing patterns of both these spheres. The resulting dissonances and contradictions, as Ball recognizes, impose an unbearable strain



on the group. The question of the effectiveness of the Dadaist activities as protest and critique is a crucial element in this respect, as it brings in its wake a process of increasingly radical experimentation, leading, as was already pointed out, to self-parody and self-abolition. Concerning the effect of the Dadaist spectacle on the audience and the laughter it elicits, Ball notes in March 1916:

Der Künstler als das Organ des Unerhörten bedroht und beschwichtigt zugleich. Die Bedrohung erregt eine Abwehr. Da sie sich aber als harmlos herausstellt, beginnt der Beschauer sich selber ob seiner Furcht zu verlachen. (FZ:76)

Dada thus provokes a relieved, therapeutic laughter, springing from the realization that the apparent threat is only a theatrical event, that it belongs to the sphere of art and literature and not to that of the socio-political world. From the point of view of the Dadaist however, for whom (in Ball's conception at least) the two spheres interlink, the ineffectiveness of the provocation can only induce a more exacerbated stance, bedevilled moreover by the disturbing knowledge that the experience and the recognition of absurdity can neither resolve nor dissolve the existing anomalies. "Auch ist mit dem Empfinden der Absurdität keineswegs auch der Widerspruch selbst schon beseitigt und auskuriert", Ball observes in October 1916 (FZ: 118).

Dada's relation to the artistic context within which and against which it operates, is equally double-edged. Its programme of ridicule, parody and satire, precisely because it establishes a direct, if negative and ironic, relationship between itself and conventional literary and artistic codes, is received and evaluated in relation to these, and thus remains within an aesthetic context. The process, as Reverdy points out in a totally different argument (cf. above, chapter 8, section 1), bears on the relativity of the aesthetic norm, not on 'the aesthetic' as such. J. Lotman argues likewise that generally speaking a negative attitude towards the aesthetic norm and the inclusion of 'non-artistic' elements in a work may destroy "das gewohnte System", but it does not affect "das Prinzip der Systemhaftigkeit" (Lotman 1972a:191-192). In Ball's opinion however Dada's strategy in regard to the aesthetic norm does create for the Dadaist himself a sufficiently peripheral position (enhanced by a social, political and ideological marginality) to allow further experimentation in an atmosphere of total scepticism and rejection. It is in turn this radical and destructive scepticism which creates the 'total chaos' which

Ball sees as a necessary precondition for renewal:

Die vollendete Skepsis ermöglicht auch die vollendete Freiheit.  
 () Man kann fast sagen, dass, wenn der Glaube an ein Ding oder an eine Sache fällt, dieses Ding und diese Sache ins Chaos zurückkehren, Freigut werden. Vielleicht aber ist das resolut und mit allen Kräften erwirkte Chaos und also die vollendete Entziehung des Glaubens notwendig, ehe ein gründlicher Neuaufbau auf veränderter Glaubensbasis erfolgen kann. Das Elementare, Dämonische springt dann zunächst hervor, die alten Namen und Worte fallen. Denn der Glaube ist der Mass der Dinge, vermittels des Wortes und der Benennung. (FZ:83)

In coming to terms with total chaos and total freedom, then, the groundwork is laid for that liberation which Ball already advocates in the years before Dada, for an art of the subconscious, of discovery and of the childlike, based on intuition and spontaneity ("Entladung", "Hingabe", "Selbstschöpfung") and whose major principle of construction is uninhibited association<sup>(7)</sup>. The childlike, in this context, stands for directness and fantasy and in opposition to the adult world ("Die Kindheit als eine neue Welt, und alles kindlich Phantastische, alles kindlich Direkte, kindlich Figürliche gegen die Senilitäten, gegen die Welt der Erwachsenen", FZ:101), but in its association with the embattled Dadaist position it too acquires paradoxical overtones of alienation and derangement:

Die Kindlichkeit, die ich meine, grenzt an das Infantile, an die Demenz, an die Paranoia. () Die Revolutionäre, die ich meine, sind eher dort, als in der heutigen mechanisierten Literatur und Politik zu suchen. Im unbedacht Infantilen, im Irrsinn, wo die Hemmungen zerstört sind, treten die von der Logik und vom Apparat unberührten, unerreichten Ur-Schichten hervor, eine Welt mit eigenen Gesetzen und eigener Figur, die neue Rätsel und neue Aufgaben stellt, ebenso wie ein neuentdeckter Weltteil.  
 (FZ:104)

With this observation Ball's argument has in a sense come full circle: the exploration of the "Ur-Schichten" as "ein neuentdeckter Weltteil" implies a return to his Expressionist programme, and the motivation for further experimentation. The essential difference however between the earlier and the later conception lies obviously in the aspect of provocation and aggression: where in the earlier view the world of fantasy is upheld as a way to liberation, in the later view it asserts itself primarily as a paradigm of opposition and protest - but more than ever trapped in the duality between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic, and thus continually obliged to reconsider and to radicalize its own procedures under the impact of internal and external pressures.

6.

In considering Ball's literary production at the time of the Dadaist evenings in Zurich, one's attention is drawn particularly by the experiments with phonetic poetry. However, as these constitute only the final stages of a process of reflection on language and on poetic writing, it is essential to reconstruct the basic outline of this reflection if the function and significance of the subsequent experiments are to be understood.

Ball's observations on language insert themselves at first in the context of the general outlook on art and society which he develops in his Expressionist years. The dismissal of conventional literature as no more than a 'safety valve' (FZ:3) is accompanied by an equally sceptical attitude towards language as such. Three main factors appear to determine Ball's initial view. First, conventional language usage has thoroughly discredited and degraded language as an instrument of communication. "Das Wort ist zur Ware geworden", he notes in July 1915, and "Das Wort hat jede Würde verloren" (FZ:36). Secondly, Ball perceives a direct connection between the constraints of syntax, as the 'logical' ordering of the sentence, and a rationalist, utilitarian mode of thought. He speaks of "[der] logisch gebaute, verstandes-mässige Satz", and sees in the "logisch geordnete Syntax" an expression of a rationalist world vision: the "Satzrahmen" by itself expresses a particular "Weltbild" (FZ:95), and hence a critique of one must necessarily imply a critique of the other. Thirdly, in the same way as he opts for a Dionysian type of art and for a theatre of "Selbstschöpfung" and "Entladung", he also advocates a mode of expression based on association and on impulses stemming directly from the subconscious. "Dem Instinkte mehr als der Absicht folgen", he remarks in a general way in November 1914 (FZ:15), and in July 1915 this principle is applied to linguistic expression:

Schon der sprachbildende Prozess wäre sich selbst zu überlassen. Die Verstandeskritik müsste fallen, Behauptungen wären vom Uebel; ebenso jede bewusste Verteilung der Akzente. Die Symmetrie würde voraussichtlich unterbleiben, die Harmonisierung vom Impuls abhängen. Keinerlei Tradition und Gesetz dürften gelten.  
(FZ:31)

Around this time also, Ball mentions several works which seem wholly or in part to confirm his own observations, and help to orientate their further elaboration in the direction of a de-construction of the syntactic apparatus of language - and eventually of the word

itself - in order to create a communicative system which would defy logic and grammar alike. In the same diary entry as the passage just quoted, he refers to Proudhon ("der Vater des Anarchismus") who, he says, was the first to draw the 'stylistic consequences' of his political theories; he goes on to say:

Hat man nämlich einmal erkannt, dass das Wort die erste Regierung war, so führt dies zu einem fluktuierenden Stil, der die Dingworte vermeidet und der Konzentration ausweicht. Die einzelnen Satzteile, ja die einzelnen Vokabeln und Laute erhalten ihre Autonomie zurück. (FZ:31) (8)

This view is in line with Ball's objections against what he regards as the 'logical' ordering of linguistic elements in the syntactic structure; the pattern of expression which would correspond to a consistently anarchist conception in linguistic matters is then essentially de-centred (de-centralized), and hence 'fluctuating'. Three days later Ball discusses a book on the worship of Siva which, he says, corroborates and reinforces his own 'fantastic tendencies'. The uncontrolled and ecstatic expression in Siva worship takes the form of a "Sprache der Abschnitte" which intensifies "zu einer atemlosen Trunkenheit wilder Hyperbeln, die völlig aus dem Gleichgewichte sinngemässen Denkens und Anschauens geworfen ist" (FZ:32). The confirmation which Ball finds, clearly, relates in this case to his Dionysian principle of releasing normally repressed psychic energies, without channelling their expression through the established and supposedly 'rational' categories of syntax. As in the previous case, but on different grounds, it is in the first place the syntactic structure of language to which Ball directs his attention, and in both cases the alternative mode tends towards a fragmented, impulsive and unrestrained expression. In a third entry, a week later, Ball reports having received a publication containing samples of the Futurist technique of 'words in freedom', which appears to go a step beyond the deconstruction of syntactic structures, and affects even individual words:

Marinetti schickt mir 'Parole in liberta' von ihm selbst, Canguillo, Buzzi und Govoni. Es sind die reinen Buchstabenplakate; man kann so ein Gedicht aufrollen wie eine Landkarte. Die Syntax ist aus den Fugen gegangen. Die Lettern sind zersprengt und nur notdürftig wieder gesammelt (). Auflösung bis in den innersten Schöpfungsprozess. (FZ:35)

In an afterthought, however, he adds:

Die Nachfolge Flauberts kultivierte den Satz ohne Mitleid für die Magie der Vokabel. Man darf aber auch umgekehrt des Guten nicht zuviel tun. (ibid.)

The reservation is characteristic of this stage of Ball's venture; it will take almost exactly one year, and Dada's process of radicalization on the level of experimentation with (anti-)poetic forms as well as on the level of ideological critique, to bring Ball to the point where he decides on the exploration of the "Magie der Vokabel", with total disregard for syntagmatic structuration. A fourth impulse opening the way to the development of phonetic poetry, finally, appears to lie in abstract and non-figurative art. In a note of March 1916 which may relate to Futurist, Cubist and (semi-abstract as well as non-figurative) Expressionist art, he draws a parallel between painting and poetry in the following terms:

Dass das Bild des Menschen in der Malerei dieser Zeit mehr und mehr verschwindet und alle Dinge nur noch in der Zersetzung vorhanden sind, das ist ein Beweis mehr, wie hässlich und abgegriffen das menschliche Antlitz, und wie verabscheuenswert jeder einzelne Gegenstand unserer Umgebung geworden ist. Der Entschluss der Poesie, aus ähnlichen Gründen die Sprache fallen zu lassen, steht nahe bevor. Das sind Dinge, die es vielleicht noch niemals gegeben hat. (FZ:76-77)

The parallel relates only obliquely to the way Arp treats the connection between 'concrete' art and poetry. In Ball's case the point bears on the view that for him, as was mentioned above, a particular vision of the world is expressed in the syntactic structure of language itself. Hence, in the same way as modern art discards conventional representation and offers highly distorted and fragmented images or totally non-figurative constellations, poetry may forsake its 'representational' character by eliminating not only the whole syntactic apparatus of language but also, presumably, its semantic component in so far as the latter can be located on the syntactic and lexical level (it must be assumed that Ball means both these levels when he speaks of "Sprache" in general).

Ball's argument here rests on the belief that representational art contains basically anthropomorphic and anthropocentric elements (as in Worringer's conception). But in modern times the image of man has become hateful and fragmented: hateful because of the prevailing political and ideological structures, fragmented because of the three factors he later outlines in his lecture on Kandinsky: "Die von der Philosophie vollzogene Entgötterung der Welt, die Auflösung des Atoms in der Wissenschaft und die Massenschichtung der Bevölkerung im heutigen Europa" (in Steinke 1967:212). In the pictorial distortion and fragmentation of semi-abstract art Ball then sees primarily

a reflection of the fragmentation and disintegration of the spiritual and material world. Non-figurative art, like Kandinsky's, presents in Ball's interpretation a search for a new unity, not based on representation but on the dictates of the "innere Notwendigkeit" to which Kandinsky (1912) constantly refers and in which Ball finds a ready equivalent of his own advocacy of the liberation of the subconscious (including the associated categories of "Entladung", "Hingabe", "Selbstschöpfung"). A second aspect of this type of art however consists in its opposition to the empirical world, first in the sense that non-figurative techniques refuse the inclusion of representational or 'material' elements as impure or discredited (Kandinsky's contribution, Ball claims, lies in the fact "dass er als der erste und radikaler als die Kubisten alles Gegenständliche als unrein ablehnt", in Steinke 1967:213), and secondly in the sense that the creation of a work of art on the basis of non-figurative principles means the constitution of a new reality, irreducible to the empirical world - an inference which Ball is indeed not the first to draw. The lecture on Kandinsky explains that the new artists have become

...Schöpfer neuer Naturwesen, die kein Gleichnis haben in der bekannten Welt. Sie schaffen Bilder, die keine Naturnachahmungen mehr sind, sondern eine Vermehrung der Natur um neue, bisher unbekannte Erscheinungsformen und Geheimnisse. (in Steinke 1967: 208)

The parallel with Reverdy which this passage suggests has however only limited validity. For Reverdy, who never opts for a completely non-figurative art, the artist still derives his material from the empirical world. In his conception, the work of art is irreducible because of the artistic arrangement of the elements (which are evaluated and treated as constructive elements rather than as iconic 'signs') and because the artist has recourse only to what pertains to 'le réel', the durable conceptual and 'material' essence of reality. The poem, in turn, demonstrates its irreducibility in its discontinuous structure or, on another level, in the autonomous conjunction of elements which is the image. For Ball on the other hand the 'purest' art form, as he sees it exemplified in Kandinsky, is 'non-objective' in the sense that all recognizable objects as such are excluded. In his phonetic poems he will, accordingly, largely eliminate lexical meaning, as well as all syntactic organization of the text.

A second issue raised by Ball's comments on non-figurative art concerns the echoes from the Symbolist aesthetic which they may seem

to call forth. The exclusion of "das Gegenständliche" as impure and the search for unity, which Ball sees in non-figurative art are both reminiscent of the Symbolist approach. Ball's objections against conventional language as an instrument thoroughly discredited by its identification with empirical and socio-political realities equally recall Mallarmé's observations on this subject. In Ball's case however the artist's search for unity is not at all projected into a transcendental/metaphysical realm, and any concept of correspondences is inconceivable in his approach. The situation as he sees it is too extreme and fragmented to allow such projections (whence the importance of his Nietzschean sense of 'Entgötterung'), and the reliance on 'inner necessities' is only the other side of a desperate struggle against the fragmentation of the metaphysical as well as the material world. Instead of an artistic structure which purports to be emblematic in essence, an intimation of transcendental harmony, the modern artist, he claims, presents structures which contain an element of exorcism ("Beschwörung") and appear to align themselves rather with Worringer's 'life-alien' forms. Ball indeed notes:

Die stärkste Verwandtschaft haben [diese] Werke noch mit den Angstmasken der primitiven Urvölker, den Pest- und Schreckensmasken der Peruaner, Australier und Neger... (in Steinke 1967:213)

Also, on the level of language and poetic writing, Ball's motivation for the elimination of syntactic constraints follows, firstly, from the rejection of what he sees as the 'rational' and 'utilitarian' character of language, secondly from his advocacy of an ecstatic, uninhibited ('transrational') expression, thirdly from his observation that the hierarchical structure of the sentence is incompatible with the spiritual "Nivellierung" and fragmentation of modern times and with a consistently anarchist outlook, and fourthly from the view that conventional expression has hopelessly compromised itself by being too closely identified with the realities of the world. Only this fourth consideration really figures in Mallarmé's conception, but without leading to a suppression of syntax. On the contrary, syntax remains the 'pivot' and 'guarantee' of intelligibility, as Mallarmé puts it in 'Quant au Livre'(1945:385-386). The basic difference between Ball and Mallarmé lies much deeper however: where Ball, at least in his Expressionist and Dadaist years, never abandons his fundamentally reformist stance and his ideological commitment, Mallarmé's metaphysical postulates and projections stem from a

resolute and complete withdrawal from external reality into an art oriented towards 'Transposition'. This orientation requires the de-construction of referentiality but certainly not the abolition of 'Structure' - of which syntax is one of the main components. The exploitation of connotation in the Symbolist poem, consequently, goes with a high degree of syntactic structuration, which is the impersonal and carefully constructed space, so to speak, where the 'virtuality' of the word can come into being and 'chance' may be eliminated. It is no coincidence that Stefan George's 'neology', the sonorous private language of his own invention, is indeed conceived of as a full-fledged linguistic system, however esoteric, with a grammar of its own.

Arp's poetic practice, as was indicated above, is also closely related to the emergence of non-figurative painting. Arp's technique however bears mostly on various levels of the syntactic component. His pre-Dada poems achieve a radical semantic disorientation by consistently disregarding selectional rules. This makes for 'fantastic' images and combinations, but the more essential syntactic rules (those of subcategorization) are not violated. It is only in poems which introduce chance and automatic writing that all syntactic patterns seem to be abandoned and the poetic text is reduced to a concatenation of loose words and syntagms. Ball however proceeds to dismantly even the morphological structure of individual words as such. The only semantic component left will then be 'paragrammatic' and 'transrational', based on what he calls the "Magie der Vokabel" (FZ:35), an elementary phonic expressiveness and suggestiveness communicated orally via rhythm, pitch and intonation, although individual items will often retain a semantic core because they may be onomatopoeia or forms alluding to existing words<sup>(9)</sup>.

On the whole, the example of non-representational painting leads to much more radical poetic forms and linguistic experiments with both Arp and Ball than in the case of the Vorticists, although Pound for example also regards his (Vorticist) practice as being on a par with Kandinsky's art. In contrast to Ball, Pound, like Reverdy, appears to see the constitution of a work of art as a self-justifying activity, largely unrelated to social or ideological considerations. Reverdy's Cubist essays make no reference to a social context; Pound's Imagist and pre-Imagist insistence on the importance of accuracy and succinctness of expression for the 'fabric of society' becomes entirely



secondary in his Vorticist writings. Where Pound and Reverdy explain the non-representational character of the work of art in terms of its self-sufficiency (the work is its own subject, a sign of itself), Ball interprets the "Ungegenständlichkeit" of Kandinsky's paintings in a more Worryingean sense, as a necessary reaction against a demonic and chaotic world. This is essentially the interpretation which Klee also assigns to the 'abstraction' of his own work: during the war Klee notes in his diary:

Je schreckensvoller diese Welt (wie gerade heute), desto abstrakter die Kunst, während eine glückliche Welt eine diesseitige Kunst hervorbringt. (1915; Klee 1957:318)

For Ball, Kandinsky's elimination of "alles Gegenständliche" as 'impure' is concurrent with the withdrawal "auf die innere Form, den Klang der Dinge, ihre Essenz, ihre Wesenskurve"(in Steinke 1967:214). Kandinsky's Ueber das Geistige in der Kunst justifies Ball's reading by and large. In the introduction of his book Kandinsky speaks of "der ganze Alpdruck der materialistischen Anschauungen, welche aus dem Leben des Weltalls ein böses zweckloses Spiel gemacht haben" (1912:4), subsequently equating positivism with naturalism in art (ibid.: 19-20). In opposition to the 'naturalistic' approach Kandinsky constantly stresses the role of the artist's 'inner necessity', stating in the chapter on 'Theory' that as far as contemporary art is concerned "ihre Emanzipation von der direkten Abhängigkeit von der 'Natur' ist im allerersten Anfange"(ibid.:97). In an interesting comment on Picasso, he observes that the latter arrives at the

...Vernichtung des Materiellen, nicht aber durch Auflösung desselben, sondern durch eine Art Zerstückelung der einzelnen Teile und konstruktive Zerstreuung dieser Teile auf dem Bild. Dabei scheint er aber merkwürdigerweise den Schein des Materiellen beibehalten zu wollen. (ibid.:35)

It is, clearly, the retention of this 'materiality' which Reverdy describes as the extraction of 'le réel' (cf. above, chapter 8, section 4), while Kandinsky, and Ball with him, concentrate on the total abolition or dissolution of materiality and of the object.

Pound's Vorticist interpretation of all this, it will be remembered, revolves essentially around the irrelevance of iconicity and the existence of the work as an objective reality. From the point of view of the recipient, this appears to a large extent to be a question of how the work is perceived: the painting is not primarily Trotty Veg, but an arrangement in colour (1970a:85). For the artist the order of priorities is such that he should concentrate on the organization of

the work in terms of its material, not in terms of a model, and for that purpose distortion or non-figurativeness may or may not be necessary - a point Kandinsky in fact also makes in the essay 'Ueber die Formfrage' (1912), where he holds that, given the absolute priority of the 'inner necessity', iconicity is properly irrelevant (cf. Chipp 1968:164). It is, then, the abandonment of the priority of iconicity in modern art to which Pound refers when he says that the Cubists and Kandinsky are "ousting literary values" (1970a:85) in order to concentrate on form and design as such, on the primary pigments of pictorial art. In the sphere of poetry this means the centrality of the image and the relegation of discursiveness to a subordinate level. Just as the plastic arts are judged in terms of 'planes in relation', so poetry operates with 'images in relation', irrespective of questions of isomorphism with external reality. This also appears to be the inference to be drawn from the reported comment by one reader that the poem 'Heather' wants "to give people new eyes, not to make them see new things" (*ibid.*). Where Pound, then, sees no need to distinguish fundamentally between Picasso and Kandinsky, Ball does draw a clear distinction and elaborates it in terms of Kandinsky's own comment on the difference between his own approach and Picasso's in the question of the retention of 'materiality'. Finally, where Kandinsky analyses his material (lines, colours) in its simplest and most basic form and in relation to the dictate of 'inner necessity', Ball, adapting the principle to language, and given the radical character of his critique of conventional language as an inherently inadequate and ideologically degraded medium, penetrates to the smallest linguistic unit, the phoneme. These phonemes he will then freely combine into new 'words', which remain however outside the established lexicon (and thus the 'phonemes' cease to be phonemes, since they are no longer functional in regard to semantic differentiation), so that the new 'text' he presents is properly non-representational, semantically and syntagmatically unstructured, and organized only in accordance with unstable patterns of sound-association (although, as will be seen, the de-construction of the semantic component remains incomplete).

In June 1916, then, Ball produces his 'phonetic poems'. The diary entries on the subject at this time again highlight the various aspects of the experiment which were outlined above. The phonetic poem is evidently not Ball's exclusive invention. On 15 June he observes:

"Die Verwendung von 'Sigeln', von magisch erfüllten fliegenden Worten und Klangfiguren kennzeichnet unsere gemeinsame Art zu dichten"(FZ:94); three days later he refers to "der emphatische Schwung unseres Zirkels" (FZ:95), which in continual confrontation and debate carries every idea through to its ultimate conclusion. The more provocative impulses deriving from anarchist theory and from Dada's general world view in terms of utter fragmentation and disorientation concur with Marinetti's dislocation of syntax and with Ball's own emphasis on the potential inherent in the 'magic' of sheer suggestive sound. Given "die besonderen Umstände dieser Zeit, die eine Begabung von Rang weder ruhen noch reifen lässt"(FZ:95), the 'plasticity of the word' is then explored beyond the stage reached by Marinetti:

Wir andern gingen noch einen Schritt weiter. Wir suchten der isolierten Vokabel die Fülle einer Beschwörung, die Glut eines Gestirns zu verleihen. Und seltsam: die magisch erfüllte Vokabel beschwor und gear einen neuen Satz, der von keinerlei konventionellem Sinn bedingt und gebunden war. An hundert Gedanken zugleich anstreifend, ohne sie namhaft zu machen, liess dieser Satz das urtümlich spielende, aber versunkene, irrationale Wesen des Hörers erklingen; weckte und bestärkte er die untersten Schichten der Erinnerung. (FZ:95-96)

The phonetic poem thus aims at an entirely new, unconventional mode of signification, a type of communication which purports to do away with words as semantic units by dissolving their morphological and phonological structure. At the same time however, as was the case with Arp's practice, the purely polemical character of the experiment, its aspect of rejection and parody, should not be overlooked. The preoccupation with the 'plasticity' of the word and its 'inner alchemy' means not only an exploration of a largely unstructured mode of signification and expression, but also a parody of conventional poetic writing (whereby the parodic element consists in the absurdly intensive foregrounding of euphony and rhythm at the expense of all other textual components), and, more overtly, a demonstrative dismissal of a medium felt to be debased and abused by ideological duplicities. The fact that Ball's recitation of his phonetic poems at the Cabaret was preceded by a programmatic introduction draws attention precisely to this aspect of provocation. The day after the reading he notes in his diary:

Man verzichte mit dieser Art Klanggedichte in Bausch und Bogen auf die durch den Journalismus verdorbene und unmöglich gewordene Sprache. Man ziehe sich in die innerste Alchimie des Wortes zurück, man gebe auch das Wort noch preis, und bewahre so der Dichtung ihren letzten heiligsten Bezirk. Man verzichte

darauf, aus zweiter Hand zu dichten: nämlich Worte zu übernehmen (von Sätzen ganz zu schweigen) die man nicht funkelnelneu für den eigenen Gebrauch erfunden habe. Man wolle den poetischen Effekt nicht länger durch Massnahmen erzielen, die schliesslich nichts weiter seien als reflektierte Eingebungen oder Arrangements verstoßen angebotener Geist-, nein Bildreichkeiten. (FZ:100)

The second part of this passage in fact echoes an observation Ball had made some months earlier in connection with the process of reduction and simplification in Arp's plastic work:

Er möchte die Imagination reinigen und alle Anspannung auf das Erschliessen nicht so sehr ihres Bilderschatzes als dessen richten, was diese Bilder konstituiert. Seine Voraussetzung dabei ist, dass die Bilder der Imagination bereits Zusammensetzungen sind. Der Künstler, der aus der freischaltenden Imagination heraus arbeitet, erliegt in puncto Ursprünglichkeit einer Täuschung. Er benutzt ein Material, das bereits gestaltet ist, und nimmt also Klitterungen vor. (FZ:74)

What Ball describes here as Arp's procedure of regression to the smallest possible constituents of pictorial images, appears in the context of the phonetic poem as a principle of poetic writing which operates at the level of the smallest possible linguistic element (i.e. essentially at the level of the phoneme), in such a way that the units (the 'words') which are formed are not conventional lexical and semantic entities but carry instead a purely private meaning - which may then be communicated by means of suggestive rhythms or by appealing to archetypal and collective representations in the audience (hence Ball's adoption of "die uralte Kadenz der priesterlichen Lamentation" during the reading of one of the poems, "bald am einen, bald am anderen Notenständer zelebrierend", FZ:99,100).

Ball's Gesammelte Gedichte contain six phonetic poems, dated 1916. Their titles are: 'Wolken', 'Katzen und Pfauen', 'Totenklage', 'Gadji beri bimba', 'Karawane' and 'Seepferdchen und Flugfische' (BGG:24-33), which means that in all cases except one the title indicates a certain semantic field to which the listener or reader will relate the phonetic sequence constituting the 'text' of the poem. The one poem with a non-referential title ('Gadji beri bimba') appears to exist in two versions. In his diary report of the reading, Ball gives the following extract from the poem (the opening lines):

gadji beri bimba  
glandridi lauli lonni cadori  
gadjama bim beri glassala  
glandridi glassala tuffm i zimbrabim  
blassa galassassa tuffm i zimbrabim... (FZ:99)

In the Collected Poems however the first two stanzas of the poem read:

gadji beri bimba glandridi laula lonni cadori  
 gadjama gramma berida bimbala glandri galassassa laulitalomini  
 gadji beri bin blassa glassala laula lonni cadorsu sassala bim  
 gadjama tuffm i zimzalla binban gligla wowolimai bin beri ban  
 o katalominai rhinozerossola hopsamen laulitalomini hoooo  
 gadjama rhinozerossola hopsamen  
 bluku terullala blaulala loooo

zimzim urullala zimzim urullala zimzim zanzibar zimzalla zam  
 elifantolim brussala bulomen brussala bulomen tromtata  
 velo da bang bang affalo purzamai affalo purzamai lengado tor  
 gadjama bimbalo glandridi glassala zingtata pimpalo ogrogoooo  
 viola laxato viola zimbrabim viola uli paluji malooo

(BGG:27)

These different readings may be explained in terms of the largely unorganized character of the phonetic poem. Announcing the new mode in his diary Ball remarks that these are poems "in denen das Balance-ment der Vokale nur nach dem Werte der Ansatzreihe erwogen und ausgeteilt wird" (FZ:98). The poem thus builds upon and develops an initial sound sequence, but in the absence of combinatory (syntactic) rules no determined order need prevail, and the pattern of association and variation may differ from one performance to the next. More important however is the fact that the poem is by no means completely meaningless in a referential sense. J. Lotman observes in regard to the Russian Futurists and Cubo-Futurists that their 'transrational' speech still functions essentially as a set of signifiers - but without a corresponding set of signifieds: it represents "den absurden Fall eines Ausdrucks ohne Inhalt, eines Bezeichnenden, das nichts bezeichnet" (1972b:212); and he continues:

Ein solches Wort ist nicht inhaltlos, sondern hat einen derart persönlichen, subjektiven Inhalt, dass es für die Uebermittlung allgemein-verständlicher Information nicht mehr geeignet ist, was übrigens vom Autor auch gar nicht angestrebt wird. (ibid.:213)

The same principle also applies in Ball's case. The text behaves, so to speak, like an ordinary poem, with a particularly strong foregrounding of one paradigmatic element, that of sound and 'word' repetition and association. Patterns of phonic association and variation link series of units like "bim/bimba/bin/ban/bimbala/bimbalo/pimpalo/bumbalo" and others; the same vowel pattern, with different consonants, appears in "zim/zam/zimzim/zimzala/zimbrabim/zanzibar" etc. A different pattern is established by the series "glassala/galassassa/sassala/blassa" etc. Traces of conventional word endings link units with different sound patterns, thus hinting at the presence of morphological rules ("bimbalo/affalo", "urullala/zimzala", "katalominai/purzamai/negramai", etc.)

This impression of a close, if obscure, analogy with conventional language is enhanced when the other phonetic poems in the sequel are considered and several identical or near-identical 'words' and endings indeed appear. It looks, then, as if Ball's phonetic poems function as a semi-system, analogous to language but with a highly indeterminate or inadequate syntactic structure. This observation in turn permits and justifies the search for forms of linguistic meaning. Here also the 'lexical' level of the text contains obviously suggestive terms: with the proper name "Zanzibar" as the clearest clue, various identifiable words occur in "rhinozerossola", "elifantolim" (which appears as "jolifanto" in the poem 'Karawane'), "affalo", "negramai", and possibly also "zimbrabim" ('Zebra'), "brussala" ('brousse'), "tromtata". Given this basic semantic field (Africa, jungle), a term like "ögrögöööö" may be read as onomatopoeic and associated with "elifantolim". Hence, although the poem is syntagmatically unstructured, it does establish an immediately recognizable semantic field, and it thus operates on a partly subjective and partly inter-subjective basis: subjective in the patterns of sound-association, inter-subjective in the obvious semantic elements it still contains. In 'Gadji beri bimba' these semantic data are established in the course of the text; other poems indicate the major field in their title and thus lend the whole poem a semantic orientation. In the poem 'Wolken' (BGG:24) for example the term "pluplubasch" will automatically be associated with rain, onomatopoeically and by allusion ('pluie', 'bäche'); R. Meyer's reading (1973:64-80) of 'Totenklage' works indeed on the assumption that the poem contains the "Nachweis eines Sinnes" (ibid.:67) which may be detected on the basis of the semantic field suggested in the title.

The oral performance of the text will then reinforce the inter-subjective and communicative basis by the 'semanticization' of intonation, pitch and rhythm. Needless to say, the poem will inevitably remain semantically simplistic, multivalent and indeterminate ("...an hundert Gedanken anstreifend, ohne sie namhaft zu machen", FZ:96), but this would appear to be the price Ball pays for a mode of expression which is, on the one hand, uninhibited, syntagmatically unstructured, and not hemmed in its development by 'logical' processes, and, on the other, able to communicate on a 'transrational' level by appealing, in ritual recitation, to archetypal and collective representations and associations. In a comment in March 1916 on

experiments by fellow Dadaists with simultaneous recitations of several texts (in a parodic imitation of the polyphonic practice initiated by Barzun and others), Ball notes that this type of presentation reveals in fact "den Widerstreit der vox humana mit einer sie bedrohenden, verstickenden und zerstörenden Welt"(FZ:80). By the same token, it may be argued, the significance of Ball's phonetic poetry does not so much lie in the question whether or not the poems are successful in revitalizing the "innerste Alchimie des Wortes" (not in Rimbaud's sense of reaching out to 'the unknown', but in the sense of a withdrawal into the innermost 'unviolated sphere' of language), but rather in the complexity and consistency of the whole train of thought which leads Ball to the ultimate experiment - short of silence - in the de-construction of conventional literary as well as non-literary language, with a gesture which affirms the radicalism of Dada's ideological critique in general and of Ball's philosophical interpretation of Kandinsky's pictorial principles in particular. In that respect Jacques Rivière's observation in his 'Reconnaissance à Dada' of 1920 is still valid:

La plupart des poèmes Dada sont non pas seulement indéchiffrables, mais proprement illisibles et il n'y a pas lieu de leur consacrer plus d'attention que leurs auteurs, dans le fond, ne leur attribuent d'importance.

Ce sont les idées, les principes, si l'on veut les axiomes d'où ils découlent qui doivent nous intéresser. (Rivière 1920:217)

As it is, Ball himself anticipates and implicitly approves of this appreciation of the Dadaist enterprise and, one assumes, of his own experiments with phonetic poems, when he notes in his diary in April 1917, at the time of the Galerie Dada:

Fürs deutsche Wörterbuch. Dadaist: kindlicher, donquischottischer Mensch, der in Wortspiele und grammatikalische Figuren verstrickt ist. (FZ:149)

NOTES

- (1) The following abbreviations are used in this chapter:

JE: Hans (Jean) Arp, Jours effeuillés. Poèmes, essais, souvenirs, 1920-1965. Paris, Gallimard, 1966.

AGG: Hans (Jean) Arp, Gesammelte Gedichte, vol.I (1903-1939). Zurich, die Arche, 1963.

FZ: Hugo Ball, Die Flucht aus der Zeit. München/Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, 1927.

BGG: Hugo Ball, Gesammelte Gedichte. Zurich, die Arche, 1963.

Briefe: Hugo Ball, Briefe 1911-1927. Einsiedeln, Benziger Verlag, 1957.

- (2) Arp claims to have come to the use of collage and 'papiers collés' independently of the Cubists, which may well be true (JE:420). His view however that the Cubist use of these techniques aims at the re-introduction of 'real' elements into an abstract work is not shared by later commentators. R. Passeron for example points out:

Les papiers collés, que l'on croit parfois être une sorte de rappel à l'ordre du réalisme, dans une peinture que le cubisme analytique avait poussé vers la musique formelle, sont en fait des aplats significatifs par leur seule forme, sans allusion au réel. Juan Gris se met en 1913 aux papiers collés et opère ( ) un progrès lent et sur vers un cubisme plus abstrait. ('La peinture et son avenir en 1913', in Brion-Guerry 1971:300)

- (3) P. Pettit (1975:102) indeed observes, as does Chomsky himself, that the examples of selectionally deviant sentences are by no means 'uninterpretable'. Referring to Chomsky's five examples, he writes:

In each case a context can be supplied in which the description assumes the status of a metaphor. ( ) No.1 might apply to seeds in spring, though rather unhappily; No.2, under some strain, to an obsessive golfer; No.3, humorously, to a devious child; No.4 to a common sort of situation, with the force of a proverb; No.5, amusingly, if pedantically, to holiday makers at any seaside. Consideration of these examples suggest that every transgression of a selectional rule constitutes a potential metaphor. What I want to say is that most metaphors are constituted by such transgressions. (Pettit 1975:102)

- (4) In his essay 'Thématique'(1925) B. Tomashevsky discusses among other things the function of 'false motivation' in detective stories, and he observes in this respect that

La fausse motivation est un élément de pastiche littéraire, c'est-à-dire un jeu sur des situations littéraires connues appartenant à une solide tradition et utilisées par les écrivains avec une fonction non traditionnelle. (in Todorov 1965:284)

Elsewhere in the same essay he also points out that "Au fond de



tout pastiche, il y a une autre oeuvre littéraire (ou tout un groupe d'oeuvres) sur le fond de laquelle il se détache"(ibid.: 301), so that 'pastiche' appears as a particular form of anti-stylization (Bakhtin). In Arp's case this can only mean that his pseudo-metaphorical and pseudo-narrative writing opposes the 'high seriousness' of traditional poetry and of the accepted avant-garde as well. Like his non-figurative work in the plastic arts, it directs itself against 'convention' in a general sense rather than against any particular movement or group (although it may be speculated that his pseudo-metaphorical writing must have as its most direct target the overwhelmingly metaphorical orientation of the Symbolist tradition; cf. Jakobson 1963: 62-63).

- (5) It is in fact hard to ascertain which version came first, but (although the point is relatively unimportant in this case) it may be assumed that the version quoted in the text (above) is the original one. Arp's rewritings of his own work have a tendency to expand rather than contract; the final stanza of what is presumably the second version reads:

la feuille est un coeur muet  
 la feuille oublie qu'elle dort  
 elle parle comme une cloche vide  
 et réveille les oiseaux blancs  
 qui sont tombés dans un piège d'âge  
 les feuilles échangent des yeux  
 les feuilles sont blanches  
 comme l'âge la lumière et l'espace (JE:126)

- (6) In Steinke 1967:118 the poem has the date '1914' for its subtitle, and the punctuation is slightly different from that of the version in the Gesammelte Gedichte which is quoted here.

- (7) After he has left and repudiated Dada, Ball relates these notions of creative intuition and of an art of pure association to Bergson. In September 1917 he notes in his diary:

Mit dessen [i.e. Bergson's] Begriff der 'intuition créatrice' kann ich gar nichts mehr anfangen. Die Intuition als schöpferisches Prinzip: das scheint mir eine unmögliche Position. () Zur Zeit des Kabarets hat Bergson uns viel beschäftigt; auch sein Simultanismus. Die Folge war eine rein assoziative Kunst. (FZ:186-187)

This repudiation is already anticipated in a note written towards the end of his involvement with the Galerie Dada; in May 1917 he observes: "Vielleicht ist die ganze assoziative Kunst, mit der wir die Zeit zu fangen und zu fesseln glauben, ein Selbstbetrug" (FZ:158).

- (8) It is disconcerting, at first sight, to find that this passage in the diary is followed by a firm rejection of the ideas it contains, when Ball adds: "Vielleicht ist es der Sprache einmal beschieden, die Absurdität dieser Doktrin ad oculos zu demonstrieren". It is evident, however, from subsequent references to Siva and Marinetti and from the development of the concept of phonetic poetry as such, that the speculations in the passage do represent Ball's own views. Two explanations have been offered to account for this apparent anomaly. K. Riha

(1975:266) suggests that Ball here dissociates the linguistic from the political aspect of Proudhon's theories, accepting the former and rejecting the latter. R. Sheppard (1973:65) points out that Ball's letters of the years 1915-16 still speak in positive terms about Bakunin and anarchism in general, and that the diary was probably rewritten at a later date, after Ball had broken with anarchism and with Dada. This explanation seems the more likely of the two.

- (9) The question whether Ball's concept of phonetic poetry is also, wholly or partly, derived from the 'transrational' language ('zaum') of the Russian Futurists and Cubo-Futurists is still somewhat controversial. According to Raoul Hausmann, in an article first published in 1958 (and included in Hausmann 1972), Ball knew of the Russian experiments via Kandinsky, but this is contested by K. Riha (1971), who underlines the importance of Ball's own development of the idea of phonetic poetry through the diary entries, where the Russian experiments go unmentioned. G. Lista (1972:86) also points to Ball's references to the Italian Futurists in the months before he produces his phonetic poems.

It should be added that, in spite of various similarities, the orientation of the Russian 'zaum'-poets seems to differ considerably from Ball's conception. Where Ball professes to stir subconscious and archetypal representations in the audience and to establish thus a 'transrational' (or 'subrational') mode of communication, Alexei Kruchenykh for example sees 'zaum' primarily as a 'pure' medium for powerful emotional expression (cf. Markov 1969:131); also, investigations like Khlebnikov's systematic experiments with the semantic value of particular phonemes are quite alien to Ball's approach.

Conclusion

Die Literatur kämpft um ihr Bestehen.  
Sie ist auf der Suche nach neuen Gattungen.  
Das muss der Leser begreifen, der verwundert  
auf die Wüste unseres zeitgenössischen  
Schrifttums blickt.

Boris Eikhenbaum, 1924.

It was pointed out in the introduction that the poetry of Modernism (always in the restricted sense in which the term is used here) is to be considered in the context of the wider series of 'the Modern'. This series is customarily regarded as having its roots in the nineteenth century, and as beginning with the Romantics or Baudelaire (Friedrich 1956; Paz 1974), or with the disjunction between Realist-Naturalist and Symbolist writing (Mukařovsky 1974: 207-225). In respect to the present work, the essential issue (as was also indicated in the introduction) concerning the literary-historical position of Modernist poetry lies in the recognition that its highly diverse modes of writing form part of a pattern of continual oscillations and multiple antagonisms within the larger series of 'the Modern'. As O. Paz puts it, 'the Modern' is essentially a tradition of internal polemic, plurality and heterogeneity:

La modernidad nunca es ella misma: siempre es otra.  
Lo moderno no se caracteriza únicamente por su novedad, sino por su heterogeneidad. Tradición heterogénea o de lo heterogéneo, la modernidad está condenada a la pluralidad: la antigua tradición era siempre la misma, la moderna es siempre distinta. (1974:16)

V. Zirmunsky, it will be recalled, speaks in similar terms of the interaction of various micro-systems within the broader macro-system of 'the Modern' ('Die literarischen Strömungen als internationale Phänomene', 1967, in Fügen 1973:188), implying the presence of both diachronic and synchronic ruptures within the general macro-system. This is also the point which emerges from R. Barthes' general distinction (in 'Littérature et signification', 1964:262) between 'history' (as the macro-system) and 'diachrony' (the various micro-systems), whereby, as in the Formalist theory of literary evolution (cf. above, introduction), the successive 'micro-rhythms' (Barthes' term) of diachrony are determined by a process of "épuiement d'une parole et passage à la parole antinomique"; in other words, "c'est

ici la différence qui est le moteur, non de l'histoire, mais de la diachronie"(ibid.).

The rupture between the Symbolist and the Modernist modes of writing, then, may be regarded in terms of a major re-orientation within the series of 'the Modern', in the sense that it constitutes the replacement of a dominant aesthetic convention by a complex and heterogeneous group of poetic practices whose emergence may be accounted for in terms of the rejection of the hierarchy of values and principles underlying the Symbolist conception of the world together with its poetic and stylistic code. On the other hand, where Symbolism, as an international movement, presents itself as a complex but still relatively homogeneous phenomenon, the various types of Modernism in the early twentieth century give evidence of a number of sharp synchronic ruptures as well - as becomes clear for example in the different emphases to be found in Expressionism on one side and Cubism and Vorticism on the other, or, in a wider context, in the hostility shown by Cubists, Vorticists and Dadaists alike towards Futurism (even if particular formal techniques often pass from one antagonistic group to the other, whereby their original function may or may not be reversed). In this respect the role of extra-literary (socio-cultural) factors, and the concern manifested within particular branches of Modernism for extra-literary aspects, should be taken into consideration as well. These have only been summarily indicated in the preceding pages, as the fuller perspectives of this approach fall outside the scope of the present work. However, in spite of the impact of these extra-literary elements and of the divergences springing from particular national literary and socio-cultural traditions, it remains of central importance to understand the heterogeneous forms, manifestations and preoccupations of Modernist poetry in relation to the fundamental conceptions of the Symbolist aesthetic and of the body of norms and expectations governing Symbolist and Symbolist-inspired writing. As was also indicated in the introduction, the limitations imposed on the selection of authors discussed in the present context do not affect the validity of this argument as such, since the work is primarily concerned with basic principles of construction and theoretical questions: even those poets who, as for example in Pound's or Ball's case, may not be familiar with the specificity of Mallarmé's aesthetic principles, are seen to operate with categories which reveal themselves as

incompatible with the stylistic code of the Symbolist poetic in general and with the idealist and synthetic orientation of the Mallarméan conceptions in particular.

The notions which dominate the Mallarméan approach to poetic writing, then, revolve around the concepts of Structure and Transposition. The artistic structure is seen as intimation of a Beyond, and as profoundly emblematic in character. Mallarmé speaks of his work as "représentant, comme il le peut, l'Univers", and of "la corrélation intime de la Poésie avec l'Univers"(1945:279,159) - an exalted conception which, like the capital letter for "Poésie", the Modernist poets will find unacceptable, as indeed Arp's systematically subversive practice amply demonstrates. For Mallarmé, language is the space where Transposition and Structure operate, the space lying between Chance and the Absolute, between materiality and the 'notion pure' which is expected to result from "un degré de raréfaction au-delà de l'ordinaire atteinte"(1945:850). On the level of poetic technique the aim is the abolition of referentiality and the creation of 'virtuality', in order to arrive, by means of polysemy and connotation, at a work which would be "vierge de tout, lieu, temps et personne sus"(ibid.:544), and which rests upon the recognition of significant correspondences ("...établir les identités secrètes par un deux à deux qui ronge et use les objets, au nom d'une centrale pureté",1973:293). This conception finally results in a paradox between the solipsistic nature of the enterprise (arising as it does out of an idealist reversal and a series of metaphysical postulates) and the requirements it entails for objectivation and impersonality (in the 'impersonal' artistic structure which eliminates Chance, in the doctrine of the Book as the supra-individual orphic artifice, and in the absorption of the poet's individual self by the 'impersonal magnificence' of the Idea).

It may be appropriate to refer briefly, in addition, to some essays by the Belgian Symbolist and follower of Mallarmé, Albert Mockel. In these texts what was called the synthetic and idealist character of the Mallarméan Symbolist aesthetic is clearly set out. Mockel's 'Propos de la littérature'(1894), an essay which gained Mallarmé's warmest praise (in a letter of 17 October 1894; Mallarmé 1953:188-189), outlines the universalist and transcendental aspect of the concept of correspondences and their symbolic significance.

Having observed that in the natural world "toutes choses convergent au but unique", he declares that "la concordance parfaite de quelques formes nous présente un reflet de l'Harmonie future"(Mockel 1962:86). The conception of the world in terms of metaphysical and transcendental categories and the notions of correspondence and convergence in turn determine Mockel's view of the orientation of the artistic product away from material reality and towards the Infinite and the universal Idea ("L'idée particulière n'embrasse que le relatif, () et rapetisse l'oeuvre d'art à une réalité immédiate et tangible, lorsque la fonction même de cette oeuvre est de nous suggérer l'infini", ibid.:92-93). The poet, then, perceives significant correspondences in the material world, and projects them on a transcendental level by means of symbols and a refined artistic structuration:

Le Poète est celui qui saisit les rapports idéaux des Formes entre elles, et le symbole est créé par la cohésion soudaine de celles-ci, lorsqu'elles se montrent désormais nécessairement liées et expriment implicitement leur unité idéale. Ce serait, - je répète pour plus de clarté, - la fusion harmonieuse des formes disséminées et, en cet état, incomplètes, dont le rapprochement soudain fait jaillir l'unité avec la signification idéale. - C'est une synthèse. (ibid.:87)

The poem, that is, exists essentially in function of its character of suggestion, projection, intimation, in function of its aspiration towards perfect unity and harmony. Its 'forms' converge, but meet only in the Infinite. At this junction, then, between the material and the immaterial world, stands the Symbol:

Le Symbole est la réalisation figurée d'une Idée; il est le lien tenu du monde immatériel des Lois au monde sensible des Choses. Et pour qu'une oeuvre soit complète, il faut que, flottant aux molles vagues des choses, elle puisse du moins, à l'aide du Symbole, percer jusqu'au monde abstrus des régions intangibles. ('La littérature des images', 1887; ibid.:226)

The symbol is thus a visible expression of Harmony, and emblematic of the Ideal it suggests, in the way Mockel sees a cathedral as "un immense symbole" and hence as suggestive of "la Vérité (Dieu, ici) à travers la Beauté"(ibid.:90). The supreme language of ideality however is music ("la musique est la langue de l'idéalité", he notes as late as 1914; ibid.:218), on account of its 'immateriality', whereas painting is considered inferior precisely because "A la Peinture, manque l'Immatérialité"(ibid.:227).

Two salient points in this brief sketch of Mockel's views on art and literature may serve to illustrate the rupture between the Modernist and the Symbolist orientation, and the changes in the

function assigned to particular elements and techniques. In his 'Notes marginale sur la prose du poète Pasternak'(1935), R. Jakobson observes:

Le symbolisme a repris dans une large mesure le slogan des Romantiques pour qui l'art gravitait autour de la musique. Le dépassement des principes fondamentaux du symbolisme s'est opéré en premier lieu dans le domaine de la peinture, et c'est précisément la peinture qui s'est vu attribuer la position dominante dans les débuts de l'art futuriste. (1973:128-129)

Although Jakobson here refers primarily to Russian Futurism, the point holds equally well for the Modernist poets in France, England and Germany who take their bearings from the Cubist and Expressionist painters (even if especially Kandinsky's theoretical position with regard to Symbolism is highly ambivalent; cf. Sola 1975:53-54). The Cubist and Dadaist poets, as well as Hulme, Heym and Pound, borrow techniques and ideas from the example of the pictorial arts, relying heavily on the self-conscious practice of the painters for their elaboration of a non-Symbolist poetic of discontinuity and non- iconicity, and irrespective of whether this elaboration and restructuring tends to the presentation of what is regarded as the 'durable' and 'material' aspects of reality (as in the case of Hulme or Reverdy, in different ways) or rather to the notion of the poem as an organization of forms existing in and for itself (as with for example Jacob, Pound, or Arp). Plainly, the adoption of painting instead of music as the art form with which poetic procedures are correlated is neither gratuitous nor accidental, but symptomatic of an altered aesthetic conception, which has abandoned the aspiration towards ideality (since this is the primary quality attributed to music in the Symbolist view). As also Pound's distrust of melopoeia suggests, the replacement of music by painting denotes in fact a radical change in the constellation of values and principles determining the Symbolist and the Modernist modes of writing respectively.

A second observation prompted by Mockel's pronouncements relates to his references to the "cohésion soudaine" of the forms of reality and their "rapprochement soudain" in the poem. In his discussion of the poetic image, Reverdy speaks in roughly similar terms of the conjunction of distant realities between which the poetic mind has perceived a pertinent relation, and of the possibility to intensify the artistic emotion provoked by the image by the abrupt presentation

of the conjunction of its terms. Pound also refers to the presentation of the Image "in an instant of time", "instantaneously" (1968b:4). But whereas in Mockel's case the sudden conjunction presents a recognition and an expression of "rapports idéaux", and aims at the suggestion of a "signification idéale", no such orientation is present in the techniques proposed by Pound or Reverdy. Where Pound sees the Image in terms of an objective transference of emotion and subsequently of the arrangement of 'planes in relation', Reverdy uses the concept of the image to demonstrate the irreducibility and individuality of the poetic product as a separate reality. Jacob speaks in the same fashion of the need to achieve the reader's 'transplantation' into the artistic world of the poem by means of abrupt transitions, the clash of stylistic registers, logical incompatibilities and similar devices. Both Apollinaire's and Arp's poetic practice is marked likewise by the creation of sudden semantic disparities and bewildering conjunctions. In each of these cases however the conjunctions have the character of deliberate anomalies rather than of the recognition of a "cohésion soudaine", and their anomalous and discontinuous nature stresses precisely the 'otherness' of the poetic text, its autonomy as an opaque, non-iconic object in its own right, a sign of itself and not a prefiguration of the immaterial categories to which the Mallarméan Symbolist poem aspires. Given their literary-historical context, then, these techniques, and the function assigned to them, acquire a polemical aspect on account of the significant absence of a dimension deemed essential in the poetic code of the previous generation. The formal and structural principles of the Modernist poets, in other words, do not exist in isolation, but derive their relevance to a large extent from their relation to the conventions and expectations established by the Symbolist aesthetic.

If the reaction against the synthetic and idealist component of the Symbolist approach is one of the main distinctive features of the Modernist poetic, it follows that its rejection implies a process of re-orientation, reconsideration and re-structuring of the whole hierarchy of aesthetic norms and values which determine a mode of writing. It may be argued, then, that the Modernist poetic practice in the years between, roughly, 1908 and 1918, inscribes itself largely in the context of such a reconsideration and re-structuring of its own material, its own principles of construction,



its own position. The abandonment of the transcendental and metaphysical orientation of Symbolism and the development of an antithetical aesthetic may again be illustrated at two different levels.

First, in opposition to the idealist conception of Symbolism, the Modernist poets display in one sense an unmistakable preoccupation with the realities of the empirical world. Thus Hulme speaks of his "solid vision of realities"(1955:78), and of the need to present individual things, not abstract types or counters. Pound insists on accuracy of perception, precision of expression, and the imperative creation of "the bodily vision"(1971:5). Heym, adopting the stance of an objective observer, refers to himself as "der Mann der Dinge" and as one who has learnt "zu schauen, ohne zu wünschen, einfach zu schauen"(1960:164,150). While Reverdy develops his concept of 'le réel', Apollinaire's conversation poems set out to register the 'ambient lyricism' of a particular environment. Yet, although in all these cases the concern for the material world can hardly be overlooked, it would be erroneous to assume that they represent in any way a return to the presuppositions of conventional Realism. A closer look at the context in which these statements and techniques have their place will reveal a more complex picture, which essentially corroborates Mukařovsky's distinction (above) between Realism and Naturalism on the one hand and Symbolism and Modernism, both opposed, in different ways, to the categories of Realism, on the other. Each of the above-mentioned Modernist poets eventually comes to operate with the concepts of non-iconicity and discontinuity, whereby the emphasis falls not on 'faithful' representation (in the conventional Realist sense), and even less on a strategy of rarefaction and transcendental projection, but on the construction of a self-contained, formally opaque artistic product. Thus Pound's passion for accuracy and for 'things seen' is essentially a question of presentation as such, and it is precisely this particular emphasis which subsequently permits the elaboration of the ideogrammatic principle and of the Vorticist 'planes in relation'. Hulme's theory of perception and habituation leads to a practice of ironic defamiliarization of the habitual patterns of perception and of poetic writing alike, and to the creation of what he calls the "other-world through-the-glass effect"(1955:87). While Heym soon develops towards metaphorization, distortion and the description of 'visionary'

landscapes - a process which will reach its logical conclusion in the radical 'Realitätszersetzung' of Trakl's discourse. For Reverdy the notion of 'le réel' stands at the far end of conventional representation, and implies the abstraction and elimination of the 'fleeting appearances' of the observable world and the integration of elements derived from reality into a poem which asserts itself primarily as a self-reflexive sign. Apollinaire's simultanism, finally, radicalizing the fragmentation process begun in 'Zone', aims less at actual 'registration' than at the construction of a language-world where virtually any conjunction is permissible, and where the creation of semantic disparities stands in function of an implied all-encompassing poetic persona. In this way a type of writing emerges which, for all its heterogeneity and internal paradoxes, opposes the descriptiveness and discursiveness of conventional Realism as well as the metaphysical projections of Symbolism.

Secondly, considering the development of the main stylistic features from the early to the mature work of some of the Modernist poets, it becomes clear that in several cases the stylistic transformation is informed by a conscious policy of anti-stylization and ironic subversion, directed against the modes and assumptions of (neo-)romantic and Symbolist discourse. Formally and thematically the early work of Apollinaire, Heym, Trakl and Arp duly conforms to well-established moulds, but by about 1908-1910 the conventional patterns, clichés and automatisms have been largely abandoned. One of the earliest and clearest statement concerning the adoption of new principles of construction is probably Apollinaire's 'Les fiançailles' of 1908, where "l'ancien jeu des vers" makes place for a highly discontinuous structure based on a conscious "diversité formelle"(1970a:118); the poem 'Les fiançailles' itself, however, is only the culmination of a practice of parody and exploration begun well before 1908. In Heym's, Trakl's and Arp's mature production the moment of anti-stylization is equally strongly in evidence. In each case the conventional assumptions concerning the nature and function of poetic discourse are rejected together with the clichés of the early work. Pound's Chinese translations perform an overtly anti-traditional role, as does his (and Heym's) reliance on some of the stylistic categories of the Realist tradition, a reliance justified on exactly the same grounds for which Mallarmé opposes Realist writing - namely on account of "la prétension d'enfermer, en l'expression,

la matière des objets"(Mallarmé 1945:655), whereas a Pound, a Hulme, a Reverdy want to include the very 'materiality' of things in their poems. Hulme's treatment of conventional images (like the moon-image in 'Above the Dock') and Heym's 'demonization' of mythological figures belong in the same context. A similar polemical function, and hence an additional semantic dimension, also inheres in Apollinaire's terminology in so far as it introduces modern technology and an urban environment, and in Reverdy's preference for "sobriété verbale" (1975: 122), for a basic, even banal vocabulary and a simple, uncomplicated syntax in direct opposition to the stylistic "alambiquage" which, he says, is conventionally expected of poetic writing (*ibid.*:39,81). Jacob's heavily ironic discourse, uncomplicated syntax and parodic references to the adventure film and the popular novel as well as to established literary figures (in the poems "dans un goût qui n'est pas le mien" in the Cornet à dés) operate on the same subversive principle. The circle is complete when Arp finally brings about the de-construction of the notion of the poem as a finished and finely balanced construct and of the concept of the poet as its (self-) conscious organizing centre, thus subverting even the structural categories of the 'recognized' avant-garde.

The preceding paragraphs however should not give the impression that Modernism, even in its restricted sense, is in any way a coherent and unified movement. On the contrary, in the same way as its discourse is marked by discontinuity and dissonance, so its emergence and development are characterized by various synchronic ruptures, antagonisms and conflicts. Where, on the thematic level, Apollinaire glorifies technology, the new media, the urban environment, Trakl associates these data with evil and death; Heym's cities are dark, demonic and destructive. Although Apollinaire's attitude in this respect appears to be in line with the Futurist enthusiasm for modernity, he nevertheless condemns this movement on other grounds, namely for lacking a proper aesthetic theory, and Cubists and Vorticists voice similar objections. Dada most conspicuously borrows most of its aggressive and provocative arsenal from Futurism (as does the Vorticist periodical Blast), although ideologically it stands at the far end of the Futurist glorification of technology and war - while Apollinaire has by this time political reservations with regard to Dada. Pound's didactic concern with language and expression is equally far removed from Trakl's desperate "Man kann

sich überhaupt nicht mitteilen" as from Ball's radical disruption of syntactic, morphological and semantic patterns, although all three approaches are ultimately reducible to a similar sense of disaffection with a hopelessly discredited and inadequate medium. The extreme heterogeneity characteristic of the positions and manifestations of the avant-garde of the time finds a common ground, however, in the opposition to the philosophical and stylistic assumptions and presuppositions of the previous generation. The rupture with the synthetic and idealist orientation of the Symbolist position then manifests itself, under the added impact of local and socio-cultural factors, in a wide variety of responses, giving rise in turn to diverse preoccupations, practices and theories, as the repudiation of the Symbolist paradigm induces a reconsideration, in different socio-cultural contexts, of the nature and status of the poetic product and of the poet's self, as well as of language and reality as such.

In this whole process of re-orientation and re-structuring, Jarry and Hofmannsthal may be seen as occupying an intermediate position between both generations. Jarry's writing marks the moment of the subversion of the Symbolist convention from within, by means of the parodic generation of polysemy and sophisticated absurdity for their own sake (as the 'Linteau' of 1894 to Les minutes de sable mémorial makes clear). Hofmannsthal's 'Letter of Lord Chandos' (1901) on the other hand points to the moment of subjective and objective fragmentation and of the inability of language to bring into effect the general conceptualization required to make coherent statements about the world. Where Jarry's practice finds an echo in Jacob, Arp, and (to an extent) Apollinaire, Hofmannsthal's sense of disintegration and his sceptical, even despairing attitude with regard to the expressive and communicative potential of language is shared by a Trakl, a Heym, a Ball. The various types of masks adopted by the Expressionist poets relate directly to this sense of threat, loss and alienation, manifesting itself in Heym's case in the defensive 'squareness' of his verse forms and in the stance of the unimpassioned observer, in Trakl's case in the projection of the third-person persona of the outsider and in a discontinuous, departicularized and dis-individualized language, and in Ball's case in the recourse to 'Dionysian' principles and subsequently in the theatrical masks of Dada. In each of these cases however the mask eventually proves an inadequate defence. Heym loses faith in

his 'robust' forms and develops towards obsessive images of bleakness and desolation, and Trakl and Ball, preoccupied in their different ways with the inadequacies of language in the face of the pressures to which they feel exposed, both fall silent.

The other series within Modernism, apparently less determined by socio-cultural factors, offers a more 'constructivist' approach, concentrating primarily on the notion of poetic writing as the construction of an autonomous language-universe, and emphasizing the disjunction between this artistic universe and the empirical world. On the textual level a dialectical relation between cohesion and discontinuity, between formal or metonymic structuration and semantic disparity is here continually and sharply in evidence. As Mukařovsky points out in his essay on 'Dialektische Widersprüche in der modernen Kunst'(1935), the categories which are operative in Modernism in general are marked not only by a "Verschärfung des Widerspruches zwischen Inhalt und Form", but also by various antinomies on each of these levels of 'form' and 'content': "Die innere Antinomie der Form kommt im Werk als gleichzeitig organisierender und desorganisierender Faktor zum Ausdruck", he states, and on the level of 'content' there is "der Gegensatz zwischen Einheitlichkeit und Vielfältigkeit" (Mukařovsky 1974:222-223). Reverdy's practice is symptomatic in this respect: recognizable constellations and images are integrated into a work which considers them primarily as constructive elements and not as signs referring to an external world; throughout the poetic text a dialectic is at work between an underlying isotopic field and a foregrounded formal (syntactic, typographical) fragmentation; this dialectic finds a parallel in the conception of the image, with its multiple facets of disparity, conjunction, and poetic, non-iconic reality. A very similar dialectic of fusion and opposition informs Pound's ideogrammatic principle and the complex relations between Image and statement in the poem, developing eventually into the Vorticist 'combat of arrangement'(1970a:121). Jacob's and Arp's writing rests likewise on the generation of perplexing semantic incompatibilities, sustained however by a conspicuous formal consonance. In Apollinaire's Cubist poems narrative substructures are fragmented but still clearly discernible, while the heterogeneities characteristic of his simultanist work affirm, through the radicalization of spatial and temporal displacement, the 'reality' of the poetic text and the power of inclusion of the poetic persona.

It remains essential, however, to place these antinomies between and within the various structural categories, and the dialectic of discontinuity and cohesion, in their wider conceptual and literary-historical context. In the Symbolist conception it is precisely the idealist and metaphysical postulates which provide the groundwork for a poetic based on harmony, convergence and intimation, and for the central concepts of correspondence and Transposition. From this point of view the opposition between Modernism and Symbolism may be described in terms of the replacement of a fundamentally metaphorical by a metonymic orientation as the basis of poetic structuration. In the essay 'Hyperboles', G. Genette, drawing on Jakobson, speaks of the principle of 'analogy' which animates "la métaphore romantique-symboliste", observing that

...la nature romantique est () verticale: c'est la forêt de symboles dont parle Baudelaire, ou la résonance analogique se propage de bas en haut et de haut en bas, tout au long des fûts et des vivants billiers qui joignent le monde et l'arrière-monde, l'apparence et la profondeur. (1966:250)

This is, clearly, the orientation which lies behind Mallarmé's and Mockel's references to the 'convergence' and the "identités secrètes" between the forms of reality. In contrast with this conception, Genette points out,

...la Nature classique est ressentie comme une surface sans profondeur, comme un enchaînement de contiguités, elle est horizontale et sans en-dessous. (*ibid.*)

- and this would appear to be the vision which informs Hulme's view of the discontinuities between the various ontological spheres as well as Heym's comment on the disconnected 'Nebeneinander' of existence. With regard to the status and structure of the poem, however, this same principle is found to be at work in what was repeatedly described as the discontinuous and metonymic organization of the Modernist poetic text, as well as in the notion of the poem as a self-contained, self-signifying reality. It is instructive in this respect to find also that the idea of 'classicism' indeed occurs on several occasions in the theoretical writings of the more 'constructivist' branch of Modernism. Hulme, Reverdy, Jacob refer explicitly to the 'classical' nature of their conception. Pound speaks in the same vein of a Risorgimento and a Renaissance, while Apollinaire advocates the fusion of tradition and innovation, of order and adventure, intermingling in his own work conventional and new verse forms. As Hulme's and Reverdy's positions show, the adoption of a supposedly 'classical'

conception also relates to the deliberate restriction in matters of thematic scope and verbal elaboration which the new poetry imposes upon itself, in opposition not only to any transcendental orientation but also to the more general stylistic features of late nineteenth century poetry. In 'Qu'est-ce que la poésie?' (1933-34) Jakobson remarks that "Laseconde moitié du xix<sup>e</sup> siècle fut l'époque d'une brusque inflation des signes linguistiques", a tendency which, he says, fostered "la confiance dans le mot", be it in the "naïve illusion naturaliste" or in the "illusion décadente solipsiste" (1973: 122). It is this 'inflation' which Pound dismisses as the "rhetorical din, and luxurious riot" and the "painted adjectives" of the previous generation (1968b:12), and which Reverdy's Nord-Sud characterizes as 'exubérance' and 'alambiquage'. Although a poet like Apollinaire soon develops a new type of exuberance, the moment of restriction and 'classicism' forms part of the Modernist enterprise, manifesting itself primarily, as was suggested above, in the de-construction of received concepts and in the reconsideration and redefinition of basic constructive elements. The point which clearly emerges from all this however is that (as was shown in the discussion of Pound's notion of phanopoeia) even in those cases where stylistic considerations appear to be the main impulse behind the elaboration of new principles of construction and of poetic writing, the strategy of 'restriction' and 'redefinition', the moment of classicism in Modernism, in fact entails a repudiation of the basic idealist and transcendental data of the Symbolist aesthetic. The other side of this process then lies, plainly, if paradoxically, in the moment of exploration, a venture which extends from purely thematic innovation to new patterns of formal and semantic structuration and to diverse experiments with pictorial and typographical elements, automatic writing, collage and the like, displaying a heterogeneity fraught with paradoxes, dissonances and antinomies on the level of the signifier as well as of the signified (cf. Mukařovsky's observations, above), but gradually elaborating the central categories of the poem as a self-reflexive and self-sufficient entity based essentially on discontinuity, parataxis and juxtaposition, and of poetic writing as a process requiring objectivation and disindividualization.

These categories, finally, also form the common ground between the more 'constructivist' tendency of Modernism and the Expressionist branch, where (in so far as the poets discussed here present some of

the basic preoccupations of early Expressionism) overtones of anguish and disorientation have to be accounted for as well. Here the crucial notion of 'Zerrissenheit' replaces Symbolist projections and neo-romantic idylls. Although Heym notes in his diary in September 1911 that "...meine Dichtung den besten Beweis eines metaphysischen Landes ist, das seine schwarzen Halbinseln weit herein in unsere flüchtigen Tage streckt"(1960:164), the remark by no means implies a Symbolist-inspired perspective, but rather what W. Falk calls "...die Grunderfahrung des Expressionismus, wonach der Mensch in der Tiefe seines Wesens mit Mächten verbunden ist, welche extranatural, extrakausal und überindividuell sind"('Impressionismus und Expressionismus', in Rothe 1969:83); its result is a poetry not of convergence and transcendental aspiration but of dissonance and demonic distortion. It is a similar sense of exasperation and 'Zerstückung' which prompts Ball's forays into the potential of the subconscious and the possibilities of the mask ("Man muss sich die lyrischen Gefühle abgewöhnen", he notes in September 1915;1927:37) as well as, ultimately, his deconstruction of the grammatical structure of language. In Trakl's discourse, where discontinuity, parataxis, juxtaposition and objectivation are strongly in evidence, the confidence in the poetic word which still marks the Vorticist and Cubist-oriented approaches, disintegrates also, dissolving in an open-ended paradigmatic network of cyphers. Speaking from a position where, in E. Philipp's words, individual poems can offer no more than "Etappen eines Orientierungsversuches"(1971:102), Trakl's work presents an existential dissonance which stands at the far end of the disparities of Apollinaire's assertive simultanism.

Yet the essential point to be grasped in this respect is that both these widely divergent and, at first sight, mutually exclusive branches of Modernism, that of classicism coupled with exploration on the one hand and that of existential disintegration and further deconstruction on the other, are fundamentally concurrent as responses, in different socio-cultural spheres, to the collapse of a previous, homogeneous aesthetic whose categories are for a variety of reasons felt to be untenable. In essence, it may be argued, both tendencies within Modernism present attempts to come to terms with the end of the Symbolist paradigm and with the ensuing crisis of poetic language. Where in Mallarmé's idealist conception poetic language is the 'space'



where Transposition and Structure are brought into operation (in the triad language- poetic language- the Idea), the Modernist poet, in the absence of a transcendental perspective, faces a state of disarray, even of distrust and loss of confidence in regard to the finality of poetic writing. It is then this situation, and the resulting threat of subjective and objective fragmentation, which calls for a renewed search for a sense of unity and coherence. In the more 'constructivist' branch of Modernism (primarily Jacob, Reverdy, Pound) the notion of the poem as a self-signifying, separate entity appears to perform this role, while the Expressionist tendency (Trakl, Ball) employs archetypal and intertextual elements to establish a basis for expression and communication. In both cases however the endeavour to find a new sense of unity is accompanied by antinomies and formal dissonances. Thus in the Cubist and Vorticist approaches the concept of the self-sufficient poem entails a moment of order and restraint (of 'classicism') as well as a moment of adventure and exploration (which may spring from an apparently self-confident and integrative attitude, as in Apollinaire's case, or from a sense of social and cultural alienation, as the context of Pound's or Arp's poetic programmes suggests). The notion of depersonalization in these cases relates to the disindividualization required by the poem as an autonomous formal construct. Where on the other hand poets like Trakl or Ball make desperate attempts to build an expressive and communicative basis by the introduction of archetypal elements, their enterprise is accompanied by a more radical negative impulse which tends to further disintegration and the deconstruction of 'meaning' as such. In their discourse depersonalization invariably carries overtones of dehumanization, signifying a profound sense of existential as well as social and ideological alienation. In this respect Ball's appeal to the 'collective unconscious' of his audience is only the other side of Trakl's increasingly hermetic and cypher-like writing. The correlation should not be overlooked however between the psychological factor in Trakl's and Ball's respective enterprises and the role attributed to the poetic mind in, say, Reverdy's or Pound's conception of the poetic image (its double aspect of conjunction and disjunction) or in Apollinaire's inclusive simultaneism. In spite of the different contexts and of the different structuration of their writing, both tendencies evince, from their respective angles, a similar preoccupation with the need for a new coherence,

a new synthetic concept - but one which a priori excludes any idealist projection. It is not surprising, from this point of view, that, after a new series of ruptures, the Expressionist style eventually makes way for its antinomy, a New Objectivity, while the Cubist and simultanist approaches, aided by aspects of Dada, are transformed into the poetic of Surrealism.

However, as far as Modernist poetry is concerned, both the 'constructivist' and the Expressionist endeavours as well as the varying shades of exclusively aesthetic preoccupation, social alienation and ideological protest which lie between them, can be properly understood only when, apart from socio-cultural factors, they are considered in their literary-historical context, that is to say in terms of the objective possibilities and limitations imposed by the momentum of the literary series - in this case the replacement of the central synthetic and idealist terms of the Symbolist conception and its stylistic norms by the antithetical orientation of the Modernist poetic, whose very dissonances and heterogeneity of forms and manifestations bear witness precisely to the various attempts to establish a viable poetic theory and practice on a radically altered basis.

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