

Chapter Two

The Labors of Knowledge

Causality

To define the notion of cause used in the following chapters a good beginning would be to defer to the philosopher R.G. Collingwood. The term cause, Collingwood tells us, has three important senses:

(1) Of the *first* sense he writes: “that which is “caused” is the free and deliberate act of a conscious and responsible agent, and “causing” him to do it means affording him a motive for doing it” This sense Collingwood calls the *historical* sense in that here both cause and effect “are human activities such as form the subject matter of history.”¹

(2) Of the *second* sense he writes: “that which is “caused” is an event in nature, and its “cause” is an event or state of things by producing or preventing which we can produce or prevent those whose cause it is said to be.” This sense Collingwood refers to as the sense found in “the *practical sciences of nature*,” which he describes as “the sciences of nature whose primary aim is not to achieve theoretical knowledge about nature but to enable man to enlarge his control of nature.” This, he says, is “cause” as we see it in “engineering or medicine” (this being a very good pairing). Such a practical science, he notes further, is “valued not for its truth pure and simple but for

¹ Collingwood, R.G. in *Philosophical Problems of Causation*, Tom L. Beauchamp (Ed.), p.118

its utility, for the power over nature it gives us” and is *most importantly* one “whose practical utility is not an ulterior end for whose sake it is valued, but its essence.”¹

(3) Finally, of the *third* sense of cause Collingwood writes:

[T]hat which is “caused” is an event or state of things, and its “cause” is another event or state of things standing to it in a one-one relation of causal priority, i.e., a relation of such a kind that (a) if the cause happens or exists the effect must also happen or exist, even if no further conditions are fulfilled, (b) the effect cannot happen or exist unless the cause happens or exists, (c) in some sense which remains to be defined, the cause is prior to the effect; for without such a priority there would be no telling which is which.²

Of this third sense, which will be most important to this critique, especially in contrast with the second, “*practical scientific*” sense, Collingwood tells us:

[This sense] refers to a type of case in which an attempt is made to consider natural events not practically, as things to be produced or prevented by human agency, but theoretically, as things that happen independently of each other: causation being the name by which this dependence is designated. This is the sense which the word has traditionally borne in physics and chemistry and, in general, the *theoretical sciences of nature*.³

In his description of this third sense of “cause” Collingwood further identifies it with what he refers to as “applied” science. “By an applied science of nature,” he writes, “I mean one whose essence *qua* science is not practical utility but theoretical truth, but one which, in addition to being true, is useful as providing the solution for the practical problems by being “applied” to them.”⁴

The A (W.B.) Cs of Symbolism and Allegory

¹ Ibid. pp.118-119

² Ibid. pp.118-119

³ Ibid. pp.118-119

⁴ Ibid. p.119

Walter Benjamin and (I)nc. have this affinity which in fact is not an affinity but rather an ongoing mimetic encounter in which we find ourselves deeply involved in symbolism and the symbolic, yet ever feeling the need to overcome it while preserving it. In the prologue to his *Origin of German Tragic Drama* Benjamin spells out (what in the years after its publication became) this negative, anti-Platonic metaphysical critique of symbolism and the symbolic. In this prologue he sets out a critique of one branch of this metaphysics—epistemology.

Rather than deny or critique our ability to know, which is in essence the metaphysics of skepticism, Benjamin assumes that the sentiment, or notion, of knowing does indeed have some validity in itself. In his critique of epistemology (which he later admits to being epistemological) Benjamin puts forth a fundamental opposition to what he refers to as knowledge, on one hand, and truth, on the other.

<u>Knowledge</u>		<u>Truth</u>	
	} Concepts		} Essences
<i>Vorstellen</i> (ideal representation)		<i>Darstellen</i> (depiction)	
a possession/possession		a creation/creation (drawing-out)	

Knowledge, according to Benjamin, is a thing. It is an idea, a mental representation, a presentation in the form of an image. It is something one has, one possesses, in the way one possesses a concept of this or that, or in the way one possesses

experience or has an ability to sell. Truth, on the other hand, is not a thing. It is not an idea but rather a depiction, a presentation in the form of acting, yet not necessarily *acting*. One does not have it or possess it in the way one possesses a concept or an ability, but rather it is a part of one like the faculty of sight, or tactility.¹ One does not possess truth but rather depicts it, creates it, through drawing-out.

The symbol, according to Benjamin, is more akin to knowledge than it is to truth. The Romantic idea that the symbol *is* the mediator between being and seeming; is the unity of the material and transcendental object; or is the manifestation of the idea is all, according to Benjamin, a distortion of Romanticism which still holds sway in contemporary theory. Worst of all, he opines, is the distorted notion of allegory in relation to symbol given to us by Romanticism, i.e. that an allegory expresses a concept, while a symbol expresses an idea.

In his in-depth study of the Baroque in *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, and in his later work on writers who in one way or another display variations on the Romantic notions of the symbol and allegory, Benjamin's negative critique of the symbolic made possible a vision of allegory which undoes and preserves the most important features of symbolism and its analysis. In the Baroque, says Benjamin, allegory was not the expression of concepts, as the Romanticists described it, nor was it the expression of ideas, as they described symbolism. Rather, says Benjamin, allegory, like truth, involved essences, depiction, creation and drawing-out. In this period allegory was

¹ The particular notion of presentation is, as we shall see, akin to the classical Stoic conception of

ambiguous, multiple, and dialectical; much more involved in the negative sacred than the positive. The view which Classical and Romantic theory gave to allegory was one in which it, like symbolism, was clear and definite, solvable and ideal, and much more involved in the positive sacred than the negative. According to Benjamin, allegory in the age of the Baroque (and still today, one could say), is *the form of conflict* between the pagan and the Christian. In this conflict, as in the conflict between the colonial efforts of the symbolic and the resistance of Rodolfo's "*palo*," truth, essence and depiction continue to battle the forces of knowledge, idealism, conceptualism, and possession.

The Romantics, according to Benjamin, saw allegory as involving the transience of emblems, of signs. Allegory was described by Classical and Romantic theory in terms of systems of convention (or culture). Like all signs, or emblems which they found in printed form, one was left with a need to solve, to interpret and, in doing so, to unlock the meaning which time and distance had rendered mysterious. In unlocking these mysterious meanings one gained access to another system of convention, another culture. In doing this the Romantics undertook a campaign to undo transience itself. We call this campaign "history" or, sometimes, just "story." The main purpose of this campaign, to gain access to *another* system of convention, *another* culture, (i.e. one beyond, yet still their own), became amongst the Romantics a quest to achieve a salvation, a redemption for mankind *and* those "other" peoples (like the Alz people) whose systems of convention and cultures had been degraded. Through images of death and decay, of ruins, they battled against transience, rejecting its necessity. The image of

Greek *noesis*. For additional further explication see F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon*, p.126.

Frankenstein's monster, in defiance of transience, robbed of salvation and redemption, saved from death and decay, seeking only a knowledge and possession which would solve his own riddle and lead to salvation, lead inevitably to the horror filled, lifetime pursuit of its creator and the salvation which only he could give. History and/or story, like Frankenstein's monster, becomes its own would be ruin.

In contrast to this Romantic understanding of allegory and symbolism Benjamin presents that of the Baroque. Emblems and signs which we find from this period did not engender a need to solve and interpret in order to unlock a *meaning* which time and distance had made mysterious. There was no need to flee with fear from transience, but rather a need to dwell within this fearful transience. In confronting the mysteries of the sign and emblem one was, like with the storyteller's story, to sink the point at hand into oneself. In doing so one confronted not the other, or *another* system of signs and conventions, but rather ones own. One did not gain access here to *another* system of culture beyond, yet still ones own, but rather gained access to *the* essence and truth of life itself. It was in this that one found in death what later became salvation and redemption for the Romantics. Through images of death and decay, and especially of the ruin of the death's head, those of the Baroque did not battle against but rather accepted transience. The key idea was not one of salvation or redemption, of the spirit lightening-up to heaven and the body fallen down into the earth in decay, becoming one with nature. This idea was rather one of petrification, of the *stillness* of the still life, otherwise known as the *nature morte*. In this world, even imagining these paintings from it, one senses a heaviness of

petrification forming. The living matter in these *nature mortes* has been petrified, made still in the ripest living essence of life itself, that is, as its objects (like the storyteller) approach death. The objects, made still like the skulls of the death's heads often found amongst them, are, like Rodolfo and Elegua, the sad, yet scary, yet goofy faces conveying the essence-of-life-in-death. Ambiguous as nature itself (often depicting a mundane table setting of fruit!) they allow no interpretation, no hermeneutic assault, and in not doing so do not become the story of *another*, separated from us in place and time, i.e. history, but rather *the story of ones own*.

Linking Benjamin's critique of epistemology with his contrast between (Classical and Romantic) notions of symbolism and allegory on one side and Baroque allegory on the other, we get the following set-up of ideas to be pursued below:

Allegory (Baroque)

Petrification

Truth

Essence

Nature Morte

(Essence-of-Life-in-Death)

Life = Dwelling in the Time of Death

Time of Life

Ambiguity

Drawing-out

(Creation/a Creation)

Story of One's Own

Symbol/Allegory (Romantic)

Salvation, Redemption

Knowledge - Feeling

Concept, Idea

Frankenstein's Monster

(Essence-of-Death-in-Life)

Death = Dwelling in the

Solvability

a Possession/Possession

Story of *Another* System
of Conventions (Culture)
(or Convention of Expression)

Alzpeech

Although there exists today a lexicon of the Alz language, this lexicon is a not linguistic, but meta-linguistic. In studying this lexicon we gain little knowledge which helps us speak the language, yet a great many ways in which to speak about our inabilities to speak or act within it. This language, being at once a professional and a personal language, encompasses the two extremes of what today are referred to as the subjective and the objective. It is in many senses a dialectic. On one hand, its meta-linguistic aspect derives from classical Latin and Greek, giving us words like “hippocampus” (sea horse), “substantia nigra” (black substance), “atrophy,” and “dementia.” On the other, it is a form of reference, a means of telling or relating which is sunken into the life of each Alz person. Some of these people have highly developed abilities to speak it in its meta-linguistic aspect, and to use the power therein, but these same people lack (or have lost) the ability to speak at the linguistic level within this language. Most of those who cannot speak in the *metalinguistic* aspect try to communicate in everyday human languages, but often go misunderstood. What a strange situation this is to the human visitor, not really being able to speak either side of this language at first and then trying to negotiate between and within both. This negotiation is not only between words and forms of expression but between two sides of an unwanted class struggle within the Alz people.

The tendency among mankind to not recognize the Alz language as a language is also a barrier to cross in ones study of it. The strict division which is made between its linguistic and metalinguistic aspects I have come to see as unnecessary. In framing this language in such a way the colonial project and its sophists have been very successful at recognizing those amongst the Alz people who are potential (and often unknowing) supporters of the colonial project, and denying voice and reason to those who oppose it. This has lead to the notion that many of those who oppose it are said to suffer from a disease.

During most of my first year with the Alz people I came to see my discussions with many of these people as a very unusual kind of storytelling involving all of the elements attributed above to Baroque allegory, which I today refer to as *dreama*. Like all storytelling, and baroque allegory, I came to feel its point was to instruct, but to do so in a way which is yet mysterious to both tellers and listeners. The storyteller, according to Walter Benjamin, runs the story through his or herself; “sinks the point at hand [*die Sache*] into” his or her own life. He or she does not, however, do so “naturally,” says Benjamin. The storyteller, all storytellers, which include all persons about to die, possess and work with a certain *craft* of storytelling; a craft which works with a certain material. One could maybe say they come to possess this material when it first assumes transmissible form. This is a *form* of the stuff that stories are made of, i.e. a *form* of “man’s knowledge, or wisdom, but above all his real life.” Nearing death, *or* dwelling in its time of instruction and illumination (i.e. “life” in the Baroque vision), we all become craftsmen of this stuff, this material in its transmissible form, and it is death itself which

makes us into the craftsmen of storytelling. We listeners, those of us not on our deathbed but nevertheless dwelling in this time of death (life) are, in this time and place, confronted with death and a truth and essence of human life itself to which we used to, but no longer, grant authority. In the still nomoreness of the dying, in the human face of the beyond, one comes to either accept the inevitable truth of “a human life” or to reject it in the attribution to it of a purpose and a place in history. Benjamin would say that we do both, yet by “a place in history” he would mean *natural* history. He writes: “Death is the sanction of everything that the storyteller can tell. He has borrowed his authority from death. In other words, it is natural history to which his stories refer back.”

The question is here whether these people, some of whom I will introduce to you, were *borrowing* their authority, their craftsmanship as storytellers, from death, or whether they were working with that knowledge, wisdom or “real life” which had recently assumed transmissible form in them. Could this transmissible form, or this assumption of it which may indicate that which has changed their knowledge, wisdom and lives, be thought of as the cause; a cause towards and from which we all strive? Have they somehow reached it, this transmissible form, sooner than others who share in their humanity, and now dwell with it, continually crafting it, acting it out, yet not *acting*, in a *dreama*?

Harwood H., Alz Philosophe

Harwood philosophized this transmissible form, when he could, while he could, but eventually succumbed to and came of age (or was it I who did so?) When I last saw him he continually stared straight ahead, his jaw dropped, eyes wide open as

if astonished (or petrified), it was, and is, as if, quoting Benjamin, “in his expressions and looks the unforgettable emerges and imparts to everything that concerned him that authority which even the poorest wretch in dying possesses for the living around him.” “This authority,” says Benjamin, “is at the very source of the story.”

Before Harwood stopped talking, or was it I who did (oh how one comes to resent the propensity of these people to drag one out and then down like a rip current!) he and I had many a great conversation. With Harwood, as with many others, one needs to take time, to spend it luxuriously, to waste it. One needs to expend this time *listening through* a great amount of repetition, confusions in time and space “orientation,” distraction. One must dwell in a space of anxiety, where one is not one. One has to become a “patient” oneself; to listen, waiting until a thought or a train of thoughts reached its end. No one did this that I knew of, but me, and it is in through this patience that I gained instruction. In truth, any end which I may have reached remains provisional, as we shall see the very nature of this instruction demands.

I’m sitting with Harwood and listening. Listen with me and be patient too, as he speaks, slowly, slurring his words and overly emphasizing words in odd places, reminding one of someone who’s drunk.

“It’s not altogether my fault but rather the fault of the church for not picking it up, and using what I have to use,” he says. “What’s that?” I say, then repeating his

words as I learned to do, “What do you have to use?” “Well,” he says, “my *knowledge*, my *experience*. What else could yuh say about it? Doesn’t that cover *something*?” “Yeah, yeah,” I say. “Well that’s it. These other people, *draw* them out, see what their *background* is, what their *education* is, what have they *learned* (he says stretching out the vowels) elsewhere.” “Is that something you’ve always done?” I ask. “No.” “When did you start doing that?” “Well, I always have done it. It’s commonplace to *me*. I think it’s important that you have a background of *substance*.” I nod.¹

“Yesterday when we were talking,” I say, “you said you always were a quiet person but now you feel that you have some sort of liberty and some sort of freedom and that you’re gonna say what’s on your mind and that you’re gonna talk, and through talking, you said, we were talking about enlightenment, and you said that through talking people can get enlightenment and you think that’s something a lot of people don’t understand.”² “That’s right,” says Harwood, “that’s the basic substance of *all* that I said.” “What do you *mean* by enlightenment?” I ask. “A little bit of knowledge,” he says, “applied knowledge; not just knowledge but, when you *apply* it, and know *how* to apply it, and you can draw it out of another person, there’s something *else* again, you’ve got *substance*.” “Is that something that’s hard to learn,” I ask, “to

¹ Remember here that this conversation exists in *dreama*. Who “I” am is unclear here in that who I am to Harwood remains indeterminate throughout our conversation. Who he is talking to, where he is, and what he is doing are to be “drawn out,” and remain to be seen. Does he misunderstand me, or do I misunderstand him? This and other such questions involving my own identity here remain in play.

² This is surely a game, however, those who *no se*, for he cannot remember yesterday’s events.

draw them out?” “Yes, yes it is. I think it *is* hard. I would say it’s “*really hard*” but it has a little more substance to what you are doing. You’re not just *talking*.” “What do you mean by substance?” I ask. “Well, you’re making *points*, you’re making *scentse* out of what your saying, and you’re simplifying what you’re saying by using common words and not some words that are over their *head*. [I think of Rolando’s head here.]

“Yesterday,” I say, “you said that you thought that *indirection*, that sometimes when people are indirect that sometimes there’s enlightenment and there’s wisdom in being indirect, and I remember John L. said this was nonsense but you disagreed.¹ “I disagree a little bit, I get it around the other way around.” “How’s that?” I ask. “Using *all* that you know about a substance, not just taking it singly, one at a time, because *I* think that when you’re talking like you’re trying to do now, trying to get something outa *me*, you have to talk about everything, and the more that you *haven’t* talked, the lot more that you haven’t learned.” “So you’re saying then that in the dialogue between people there has to be a sharing of opinions and there has to be more said and not just questions and answers,” I say. “That’s right,” says Harwood. “So do you think,” I ask, “there’s much more to an opinion than just saying a couple words?” “Yeah, yeah, it could be said in a number of *ways*, the same thing, because if you’re doing so,

¹ Who John L. is is of little or no reference here, in *dreama*.

it's enlightenment to a person who never heard it that way before, and he gets something out of it that he can also *apply*, because it's in the application of knowledge that it's important and not just knowing knowledge and having nothing to *do* about it." "In what ways do you think they could apply it?" I ask. "By using what they have been told, by using what they have been told," he says, stressing each word, "not just *thinking* about it, because it's in the *use* of that you have actually *grasped* what has been said."

"You said yesterday that maybe people who are elderly have something to say but they're too polite and they don't, they don't..." I struggle for a word, and Harwood jumps in. "They don't get all the knowledge from them that they *could*. That's what you're after here, trying to get as much knowledge as *possible*."¹ "Why is that important?" I ask. "Because it broadens your scope of the *subject at hand*," he says, "and you're trying to *draw out* from them different aspects of that subject, see what I mean?" "Why do you think people are too polite," I ask? "Well they're too brief," he says, "they don't broaden the subject enough. They just say enough to get by with it." "Do you think they're too polite for some reason?" I ask. "Do you think it's because people don't want to listen to them that they're not talking as much as they should, or... Why are they so polite? Why don't they just say what's on their minds and put substance into it? Why not?" "Well," says Harwood, "they *should* put substance to it, because if they haven't put substance to it how would their knowledge be expanded to cover more of the subject in another way than what has been said?"

¹ Harwood seems to know what I am after, but no one would really believe he was capable.

You see what I mean? Do you *understand* what I mean?"¹ "Yeah," I say, repeating my question, "what did you mean when you said older people were too polite?"

"Well they're limiting what they say so it don't be too confusing, you're not doubling up or putting more into the subject than what they can understand." I decide to ask it another way. "Why are they so brief and why don't they expand on things?" I ask.

"Well they're *good* at it," he says, "why confuse the subject by having too many variations to what is being said? You can have too much said, about the subject which, individually, stays in place, but they're too broad, they're so broad that the person listening is only grasping here, here and here but they're missing the in-between, the continuity."

"So the people that are here that you've talked to, what do you think their problems are with the rest of the world? Do you think that they are not good at expressing themselves or..." "Some of them *are*," says Harwood. "What are their other problems?" I ask. "I don't know that's about tellerzbeze, cuz if you know a little about the subject your variation will fill in for you and draw *out* from them a different point of view. You draw it out from *me* see, just for conversation because you want to find out what I know. What do *I* know, and why do I *know* it? Because what else I express to you is expanding on what the original *subject* was."

¹ Does he mean to make a distinction here between seeing and understanding? If not, why say it in this way? There are answers to these questions, but none of them involve intention or meaning as we have come to know it.

“What do you think that older people know that younger people don’t know?” I ask. Harwood reacts with a sort of laugh. “Well you’re putting *other* things in there so that you’re not missing anything. It’s like the word encyclopedia. If you put the word encyclopedia into the conversation, expanding it so that *all* of the *content* of the *subject* has been covered, but if you can’t say it specifically, a lot of the subject is being missed because there’s too much of it. See what I mean? Do you *grasp* what I mean?” “Yeah,” I say, “but is there something good about the fact that it’s not all there, I mean, is there some wisdom there?” “Yes,” he says, “there’s *nuthin’* good when it’s not all there.¹ The subject and the things that you say and you talk about should be *to the point*,” he says, the last words in a sort of scolding tone, “to the *very* point, because what you’ve missed may be in the subject that you haven’t brought up. See you *withheld*, and held *back*, on what could be expressed, and the way it could be expressed. Let your *mind* work. Has everything been said in the proper fashion, in the proper way? If it has, then you’re picking up the variation that they missed out in speaking or conversing.”

“What do you think problems of *memory* have to do with people not being able to express themselves?” I ask. There is a pause. “Cuz they haven’t *used* it,” says Harwood, “they haven’t used it. They may have *said* it, but they haven’t had knowledge of the uses of it.” “Of what?” “Of *anything*. See knowledge is not really contained, you shorten knowledge by means of containment, briefing, so that you’re

¹ Note the odd combination here in “Yes, there’s *nuthin’* good...” What are we talking about? Harwood seems to sense that I am suggesting that there is something good about a conversation that’s less than comprehensive, but he rejects this. There is something of a reductionist in Harwood, yet a reductionist who believes in variation and mutiplicity in expressing this reductionism.

not getting too much to grasp and understand. See you're limiting it. See what is involved in it?" "Yeah I think so," I say. "Because if you had too much to say, you're actually saying nothing, because it's too much to grasp, and you've gotta say the subject with so much *simplicity*, and I said simplicity now I didn't say complexity." "But sometimes simplicity is not the same as being direct and short, right?" I ask. "There's nothing direct with being direct *and* short," he says, "because you're to the point." "But," I say, "you seemed to say yesterday just the opposite. You seemed to say yesterday that you were a person that was much more indirect as opposed to direct." "Well," says Harwood, "that's not necessarily true, because I could be indirect about something and still getting over a *point*. Some people may understand the simplicity of what I said because it's said in a different way, and that's the point that they've picked up and they forgot about the others. Yuh gotta *simplify* what's being said, or what you're trying to *say*, or have *me* say because if you don't, then there's too much *VOLUME* in the conversation so that you retain *nothing* of it, not *enough* of it, in doing conversation. You're trying to draw from me and maybe I'm doing too much and trying to grasp the whole thing and missing the key points of what has been said."

"What do you think the key points are?" I ask. "Well, that would be hard to say. What are the key *points*? *You* figure that out, and then keep your subject within those few points and if you get a response from them in the same like manner it's not gonna be confusing, it's gonna be perteneer the same thing that *you've* said..., or that

I've said, whichever way you wanna *put* it.” “Mhmm,” I say.¹ “You’re trying to draw from *me*,” says Harwood, “Why did I say it in that *fashion*? See what I mean?” “And that’s up to *me* to figure out,” I say. “Yeah, it makes you figure it out. Ask the *point*. *You* ask the point of that which you understand and see if it fits in. If it doesn’t fit in, then you missed the point altogether.”

I decide to indulge myself on one of Harwood’s favorite topics, the topic of my project “Ancestral Lands.” “What do you think about *exchange* in people’s discussions with one another? Do you think it’s always give and take, equally or...?” “It should be pretty much equal, says Harwood, “because if it is not equal, then you are not on the same level. Your conversation and my conversation may be on the same subject but it’s too varied and they don’t *fit* . The more commonplace it is, it’ll fit in all occasions.” “Does that make an *enlightenment*?” he asks. “I don’t know,” I say, “I guess the problem is that when you’re simplistic like you say, then people who aren’t simplistic don’t take you seriously, and people that are simplistic maybe don’t understand the whole of the problem, or the whole of the subject because you’re not giving them enough details if you’re being simplistic.” “What you just said,” says Harwood, “the *substance* of what you just said, you *think* about it, you just think about it for a little while and you’ll find out that because you’re not being simplistic you’re covering your subject a little *broader* , and some people will pick it up in a different way than what you originally intended, but they have picked up something

¹ What is this conversation about, what do I want to say, or what does Harwood want me to say? “Whichever way you wanna put it” says Harwood, for what we are after is applied knowledge, and we are after it as we presently speak.

broader, more *meaningful* than the original *subject*. You see what I mean? Just keep that in mind and I think you'll see yourself being broadened by conversation because

I

might say something in two or three different ways. I don't have to say it the same way twice. I don't *have* to because I may have more knowledge of it."¹

"Do you *choose* to say things in different ways sometimes?" I ask. "No, no, I choose to make the easiest way that I know how, because the simpler it is, the complexity is not *there*, has been *knocked out*." "How?" "By not bringing it *up*," he says, as if this should have been obvious to me. "Because the group wouldn't *understand* it. See that means that if your knowledge, or expression, doesn't get to the knowledge or the point that you want to get, then *you're* missing the point. If you find that more and more people understand what you've said, then you've actually broadened the subject and made it more meaningful." "Is that important for the subject that I'm working on?" I ask. "Well sure," says Harwood, "why *wouldn't* it be?" "Well, hopefully," I say, "if we can work together, then you and I can *both* help people out to that kind of understanding." "That's right," says Harwood.

"Do you think," I ask, "that there's a need for understanding some of the problems that you might be going through?" "Sure, yeah," says Harwood, "cause

¹ The more knowledge one has of something, says Harwood, the more one sees the multiplicity of possible expressions of it as being one. Multiple expressions should lead, via conversation and applied knowledge, to a common expression which is both multiple and one. But really I know this is all crazy; really I know he is not making sense. The key is, though, as Harwood says, *to apply* this knowledge towards understanding, and not to look for meanings and solutions which he defies and denies me at every turn.

they've missed the point someplace." "You're right," I say. "They missed the point of the subject," he joins in, "They're talkin around the subject and the point that you wanna make has been *missed*, and that point that you're trying to make may be as important as to what they've already addressed but they haven't added to it so it's a broader subject." "Who are they?" I ask. "Anybody in conversation, male or female, supervisor or just nothing but lieutenant, or students within the program." "Do you think medical doctors understand this point you're trying to make?" I venture. "I don't think they think about it," says Harwood. "Why not," I ask? "Because *they* miss the point, they haven't broadened the subject so *everybody* understands it." "I agree." "If you understand what I'm *trying* to say to you." "I think I *do*!" "Then your point is broader, because there's more subject, and you're reaching more people so they understand what you're talking about, without just a lot of *chatter* about it. If you can be brief, then be brief. Why *not* be brief? See what I mean? If yuh *understand* what I mean, then go ahead and apply it, go apply it."

"What difficulties do you have personally with people not understanding you?" I ask, "Are there things that cause you difficulty and you feel that people aren't taking the effort to understand or...?" "They're not interested in the subject," he says, "because it hasn't touched on them, some of their basic understandings. You gotta reach them through what understanding, maybe they don't have enough intelligence to *grasp* what you're talkin' about. *They* may not. *You* may know what you're talking about, but *they* don't. And you gotta *simplify* it, try to simplify it all the way along the line. That doesn't mean that you have the only meaningful *expression* of it,

but the broader that you can express em and make em *think* about it, the broader you've got the subject covered."

"Do you think medical doctors understand anything about memory and about the way people communicate," I ask, "Do you have much faith in their ability to understand that?" There is a pause. "I don't think you're quite grasping what I'm trying to say to you," says Harwood.¹ "If you're broadening the point, you may be too broad, and the subject hasn't been called for. If you reach the subject with a good, basic understanding, that's all that's necessary. If they wanna know more they should be asking *you* more." "Who should be asking me more?" "The group that you're talking to. You don't have to be broad because the broader you are in a subject misses a lot of points. Cuz it's not always what your mind has said but what their mind will grasp. You see my point. They'll be asking you the questions to simplify the answer, and that's what you want. You want them to express themselves in such a way that you know that they missed the point up to that point. But if you can say it in another way, they may be able to grasp the additional point that you're trying to make which covers the same subject." "Yeah, that's a good point," I say. "Now that's *enlightenment*," says Harwood. "I haven't always done that. You're the first person that has *drawn me out*, of *myself*, and so I gave you enough understanding that you see there is a variation to the point that can be missed cuz you wanna be brief, not because you don't *know*, but because you simply wanna be brief. So when you cover a subject and then you wanna find out whether *all* of them understand

¹ Note how it is I who persist in wanting to engage in discussions of memory and of communication

what you're talking about, you wanna speak in natural voice, question your subjects, what they understand of what you said. Do they understand the way that you said it? You see what I mean? And, I'll compliment yuh. You're the first person that has done this with *me*."

"Well, from what I've seen," I say, "working with people that have similar problems, or you don't even have to think of it as a problem but rather as different ways of thinking, different ways of experiencing things, different ways of communicating, different ways of sharing..." Harwood interrupts. "That's right, that's right," he says, "and that's *always* within the *group*, because when you say something *correctly*, now, there are a few who don't grasp what you're trying to say. And you're, right now you're drawing more out of me than a lot of people have, cuz they don't understand me, the way I'm thinkin. Why am I saying it this way one time and another way another."

"See to me," I say, "I think that, from what *I* see, and from talking to you, that you've helped me a lot to, you know, *understand* this." "Well good!" Harwood interjects, "Good." "But I think that the problem is that most people don't see that persons like yourself have a lot of wisdom to give, have a lot of, they have something to teach, there is something about life, something about communication, about relationships, to be learned here, and the *problem* is that this whole system is run by people who don't take the time to listen and don't show the respect to at least imagine

that these persons have something to *say*, they have something to teach.” Harwood breaks in, “but they haven’t expressed it in a way in which they understand it best. You see, you cover a subject, but sometimes people aren’t listening to you, not because you haven’t touched the subject, or covered the subject, but you haven’t covered it to the *fullest*, because you haven’t got the time to do it to the fullest.”

“That’s right,” I say, “time is a very important factor. People don’t have the time, or take the time...” “And the point,” interjects Harwood, “is that they’re missing the subject, all the subject. So you can *ask* them occasionally: ‘Do you understand what I said, and why I *said* it in such a fashion?’” “And that’s what your doing sometimes,” I say, thinking aloud. “Yeah.” “So that’s what you meant earlier when you said that you used to be more shy but now you will come out and say ‘I’m asking you if you’re listening to me and I asking you if you’re trying to understand what I’m saying.’ And you’re *persistent* about that because you’re not just gonna let it go, I noticed that, you seem to be the type of person that is saying ‘I’m not just gonna let it go, I’m gonna ask again, again, and again until you get my meaning.’” “Yeah,” says Harwood, “I think you’ve done something both for me and *for YOU, YOU*. I appreciate your asking me these questions cuz I’ve had few people do so.” “Well, everybody should learn something,” I say, “hopefully I’ll be able to help other people understand...” “Yeah.”

“Do you feel that you have an illness of any sort or how do you feel?” I ask.

“I don't have any illness to the extent that I'm *knowledgeable* of it,” says Harwood.¹

¹ Am I to make nothing of this statement? Am I to assume that he means he has no problems? This

“You told me yesterday you have some forgetfulness?” “Well that’s in each of us,” he says, “we fail to express ourselves, to meet other people within the group that haven’t yet thought of what you’re trying to put over. Because things are expressed a certain way, you can’t say it the same way all the time, because your group has *character* and one group has a character of a certain nature and another group is a little more intelligent, another a little less intelligent, so you’ve got a variation in there, and you gotta be knowledgeable of it. Do you need to be brief or do you need to be broad. Because if you can be brief, you can cover more of the subject, but you haven’t covered the details that are available. Understand?” “Yeah,” I say, “but it’s not easy for most people, including me, to fully understand, but I think I’m closer to understanding it than some.” “You’re closer now than you were ten minutes ago,” says Harwood, “and there’s been few people, and I’ll be frank with yuh, few people that’s questioned my veracity, and you are saying I have a lot of veracity, and have a little variation to what I have said because you may not be thinking the way that I am thinking. In others words I’m making a common unit between us, to broaden your thinking to come up to mine, or bring mine down to you.” “What’s the best way to do that?” I ask. “The way to do it is to understand people, the lack of their knowledge, of thinking, not for you specifically to use the same words to get the subject across. You are to be complimented for trying to draw me out for I think that my thinking can be complex.” “Well,” I say, “I think it’s more difficult for a younger person to understand because they don’t have the same experiences.”

would be foolish. He does have a problem, but is aware of it as if in a dream. In our conversation his problem is becoming my problem, yet, as if in a frustrating dream in which no one seems to understand one no matter how hard one tries, it remains his problem to be understood and my problem to not become another uncaring face being encountered in the dissolving crowd.

“You see,” says Harwood, “I’ve gotta add variation to what I say, one way one time, another way another time, and why did I do *that*? Why am I missing a point here and trying to make a point there? And at another time they just don’t *mix*. They just don’t mix, and yet I’ve said the same thing two different, or three different, or four different, or how many different ways did you say it. You’re to be complimented for drawing *me* out. You appreciate me and I appreciate you, because you’re listening to me, and you want me to say something that’s important. I don’t wanna just be talkin’. I want you to have a useful purpose out of what I said, what I have *tried* to say. I won’t say I’m correct all the time because I have to vary it to meet the situation, and the situation changes with each group, although it may be the same subject, it’s *gotta* be varied, and you gotta let them *know* the reason for your variation. Your not trying to be *that way*, you’re trying to be *exact*. But you can’t be exacting all the time because the more exacting you are the more you leave out.”

“That’s funny isn’t it,” I remark. “That is *psychology* that’s in the mind, and you’re to be complimented for drawing me out, understand? The mind is a very complex instrument within all of us, and you’ve got to be able to touch on that within all people, or you’re not a good speaker. Haven’t I said something here?”

“Oh sure,” I say, “but I think nobody understands it in that way because the way we understand language, and the way we understand the mind, is totally opposite of what you are saying. We don’t understand it in terms of human beings communicating, getting knowledge, sharing experience, gaining *enlightenment*. We

don't think about it that way, we think about it in different ways." "You're *complimenting* me," says Harwood, "you're complimenting me and I appreciate that, because I've tried to do something that you've wanted me to do, and I *seemingly* have at least *touched* on the subject. I said *touched*, I haven't completely covered it."

"See," I say, "here's what I assume. I assume that someone of your age and your position understands me, you understand what I'm saying here, you understand *me*. My problem is to understand *you*. I don't assume, as a lot of other people do, that you don't understand, and I think they're wrong, I think you understand everybody but they don't understand you. Would you agree with that?" "Yeah, I agree with yuh, and I thank you for the compliment." "It's not a compliment, I feel, but just a true statement," I say. "Well it is a true statement, but it is a compliment to me that I've got the subject covered for *you* ." "You and other people have helped teach me this lesson, and I would like to teach this lesson to other people, but when I talk to them they have a hard time understanding what I'm trying to say to them..." "Now you've *got it*," says Harwood forcefully, "you've got a background *right now*. You've got a background right now that you didn't have five or ten minutes ago, that you could make use of in a varied way and you watch how many compliments you get out of that." At this point Harwood becomes concerned that his church group is gonna leave Pennsylvania without him and he must go. He thanks me much and takes his leave as I disappear into the ether. Harwood lived a quiet life; he has a high school education and worked as a bookkeeper.

*

There is something else in language, in speech, which dialogics fail to capture. There is something which is conveyed, which goes beyond self-delusion and desire. There is something to be understood in that which is not sensible, which is not sensuous. There is a certain compliment to be had in not conveying meaning, in not partaking in it, in rejecting it for other forms of understanding. In speaking with Harwood I came to know this something, this compliment, which this work is in a certain sense an application of. In *reading our dialogue*, however, I begin to feel that the tables are turned and that Harwood and you, my readers, are now characters in a *dreama* which I hopelessly struggle to maintain control of. This is what I make of this dialogue and this is what I make of you, changing faces of those whom I have known and will never know. I need your help, I need your compliments. Help me through this *dreama* and (I)nc. will be forever grateful. Know, however, that you will not be remembered nor appreciated and you may in fact undeservedly suffer the most vile affronts which I can muster while asleep.

Carmen L., Pietist Doctor

“What I chose to do over there was out of vocation; what I chose to do here is out of *necessity*,” says Carmen, “*initially* it was out of necessity. Over there I studied medicine because I like a sense of accomplishment and I *thought* that I could get through in the medical *field*. It gives you a sense of doing *something*, of being *helpful* in life when you meet someone who is sick and you’re able to *alleviate* their suffering, their pain. In my opinion, in medicine, if you really think more deeply about the problems, you can even have more *influence* because it’s not just the physical problem that is ailing

that *individual*; that individual is part of a community, and *his* problems are really sometimes caused by the environment in the community that is also affecting other people. So, in order to help that person many times you have to address the problems *in the community* and not just the *individual*, and that's what I *like* to do. I loved what I was doing there."

After graduating from medical school in Santo Domingo, Carmen moved to the border region of the Dominican Republic and Haiti where she worked as a physician for the poor. "I lived in the southwest of the Dominican Republic," she says, "By car, through very bad roads it's like 12 hours from Haiti. It's one of the poorest areas, and many of the little towns are isolated." "And you worked for a Catholic group?" I ask. "I worked for a mission," says Carmen, "a Catholic mission, that was a mission of the arch-diocese of Milwaukee, Wisconsin." "And what was their orientation?" I ask, "They were liberation theologians, pro-socialist, leftist nuns and priests right?" Carmen laughs. "Yes, I mean, a lot of the times *other* professionals in the community would say 'are the priests and nuns *aware* of what you're doing?' I said, 'not only are they *aware*, they're *supporting* me in what I'm doing.' Because we were part of a *team*."

"So when you were at the university you were politically active and you met these people at the university or how did you meet them" I ask. "No," says Carmen, "in the university I was involved in groups that had *social* inclinations, uh, social *political* inclinations..." I smile. "Come on," I say. Carmen smiles. "Okay, well I was involved in groups that were trying to change the economic, political and social structure in the

Dominican Republic. Then, as a part of the law, I was required to do a one year, it's called *patrontia*, it's the one year you work on your own in a remote area and when I went there it was an *extremely* poor area, and I felt frustrated where you would see the same patients weeks and weeks with the same problems. The problems, whether it's diarrhea, malnutrition, the solution is not in the doctors *office*, the solution is in the *community*, it's in the *structures* that we were living, so I started doing some work that were not the *usual* things that doctors do. You know, I started meeting with the community leaders, I started doing some education, telling them what I felt were their rights, you know, that they did not have to be begging the government for scraps; that they were entitled to the land, they were entitled to a decent life, that they were entitled to a school, that they were entitled to roads, you know that kind of thing, and that they were entitled to a water system that *worked*, that people could have water that was clean and their children wouldn't get sick, and then also I was teaching them the importance of taking care of *themselves* and not waiting for other people to do for them. You know, the power is in *them*. They don't expect others to do for them, you know, *a liberator.*"

"How did you *do* that?" I ask. "I dunno, I think if anyone who has some type of *neurons* that allow you to think and see this situation, you have to see that the roots of those problems are not just *that* the people are *lazy*, you know. It's not *destiny*. There *has* to be, you know, when you start *thinking* and you see men who go to work at three in the morning and come back at four in the afternoon, those are not lazy people. To work for maybe five pesos, ten pesos, and at that time when he gets home is when their kids are

going to have breakfast. I mean, this is not a person who's lazy, this is a person who's not being given what he's entitled to."

"Is there a conflict between the religious aspects and these social aspects?" I ask, "Is it difficult for..." Carmen interrupts. "It would have been difficult if I would have been working with other priests, and with another parish. There was another parish, in that whole area there were only two parishes, right. The parish that was in the main town was very conservative. I could not have done *this*, okay, in *that* parish." "They were conservative in that they would have helped the government against you" I ask. "Yes, they would have helped the government. They would have also taught the people that the solutions to their problems were not in this earth, you know, and they should be *praying* and they should be more *involved* in the church, they should be *baptizing* their children, they should be getting *married*, they should be doing all these things so that God will *help* them, and these everyday problems are not important. You know, what's the point in getting married, what is the benefit of any one of those people in having a religious ceremony? It doesn't make any *sense*. That's not their problem. Their problem is they're having children that are *dying* every day, and those children are not dying because God has *decided* this. I don't think God has decided that *at all*. So that's basically it. One something we would do, for example, is there were many women who were having children and they did not *know* how to prevent an unwanted pregnancy. I mean these were children they were having from their husband, common-law husband usually, but they didn't know how to *prevent* it. Not that they *wanted* to have the children, but they didn't know how to prevent it. Probably if I had worked in the other parish I wouldn't

have been allowed to teach these couples and these women contraceptive methods. I would have been told to use the natural methods and all these things and, the parish that I worked with *allowed* me, maybe because we *interpret* family *planning* and *control*, um *birth* control, as different *things*, and maybe that's what helped."

"How do *you* fit in there?" I ask, "Would you see yourself as someone who's a Catholic but on these certain points disagrees with the church, or would you see yourself as someone who's outside of the church but believes the church is pliable?" "Oh no," she says, "I *feel* that I am a hundred percent *Catholic*, but I *interpret* Catholicism in a way that makes *sense*, *my* sense [Carmen laughs]. You know, for example, I disagree with the *government* trying to control *birth*. I disagree completely with that because usually governments are going to try to control birth of *poor* people, okay. You see, for example, what they did with the Norplant. The Norplant was tested initially in Brazil, in the poor areas of Brazil, and it is a birth control method, you know, controlling the births of the poor people in Brazil. Then, once it was tested *there*, and it was found to be *safe*, or relatively safe, then it was approved in the United States as a *family* planning method for people who are in another economic situation. See even the poorest in the United States are not even *close* to the poor in any one of those countries. I agree absolutely with family planning, and *the church* agrees with family planning, you know, plus I believe also that the Pope is just another man who's trying to interpret the word of *God*, and I have the right to *disagree* with him, because I'm also another person who can interpret the word of God."

“Right,” I say, “So what then is the word of God based upon? Is it based upon...” Carmen interrupts me. “*Common* sense,” she says, “the word of God, to me, is based on the common sense that if we are in a community, I call the word the community, in order for each individual to be able to exist in harmony in that community, each individual has to respect the other people sharing that community, and respect is another way of loving, and I think that’s what the word of God *is*, I mean I don’t think that anyone should be in *any way* superior to anyone else. No one is the privileged child of God. When you have children, your children really have the same rights and, if we’re all the children of God, then we all have the same rights, and we’re all *entitled* to the same gifts from God. This earth doesn’t belong to any one group.”

“Who does earth *belong* to?” I ask, “Does it belong to *man* or whom?” “It belongs to every *thing* and *everyone* that exists. You know, it’s the same thing with the *animals*. We are *sharing* the earth with the animals, the plants and the water and the air and everything, I mean, and that’s the whole thing, we should not be *exploiting*...” I interrupt Carmen. “You don’t believe we have dominion over the animals and the earth?” I ask. “That’s an *easy* thing, you know, I think that we have *brains*, to *use*, adequately, what is *there*. You know, like in a *jungle*, in a jungle the *trees* respect each-*other* to a point that they have *established* a way of existing with each other, without annihilating the other. That’s the same way we should exist, with the animals, with the plants, with the air, with the *water*.”

“So it’s a thinking oriented towards *ecology*,” I say. “Right, exactly,” says Carmen, “and more oriented to more primitive societies, what they *use*, what they *need*, and they don’t *abuse* the earth, you know they *respect*. That I admire greatly. They’re going to hunt because they need to eat. They’re going to use methods of utilizing the land that does not destroy the land.”

“So why do you think they do that?” I ask, “Why aren’t primitive societies wasteful?” “I think most primitive societies are *not* wasteful,” she says, sensing a point to my question, “I think the reason they do it is for *survival*. You know, they might not be educated in a college or anything like that but they do *understand* that if they kill off these animals, then they won’t be able to have these animals for feeding or for clothing or for whatever, and you see that, for example, when they kill an animal they’re going to use *everything* of the animal, *everything*.”

“Is there,” I say, “a fundamental contradiction, you think, between socialist practice and the Catholic church, or is it necessary in the Dominican Republic that they go together?” “In the Dominican Republic it would *have to* be,” says Carmen, “because, by tradition, people in the Dominican Republic, even if they don’t understand why, are *very* Catholic, okay, or they *think* they’re very Catholic, and the Catholic church, if anything is going to be done, it would have to be with the support of the Catholic church, in this century and probably the next century too. The Catholic church is a *power* there. Unfortunately the people who are the leaders in the Catholic church in the Dominican Republic are conservative.”

“Would you consider yourself to be a humanist?” I ask. “Probably,” says Carmen. “How would you define that?” I ask. “I’m more an *anarchist*,” she says with a laugh. “Okay,” I say, “how would you define that?” “I establish my own rules, but I have rules so I guess I would not be an anarchist. I don’t follow any, really, one doctrine, or any one leader, or any one philosophy or anything. It’s basically what I think is good for those who share the universe, what’s good for me.” “How do you determine what’s good for them?” I ask. “What would not be good for me I *feel* is not good for someone else, that’s how I *feel*. I treat like I would like to be treated. And that doesn’t mean that I do it all the time, sometimes I don’t. But that’s basically it.” Of her friends and fellow activists in Santo Domingo Carmen says: “They *felt* a lot like me.”

Enlightenment and The Alzheimer’s State

Above we see two distinct versions of “enlightenment;” one Alz and the other Pietist. My discussion with Harwood began with his regret that his Protestant church never used what he had to say about the world; never used his knowledge and experience. He’d spent a quiet life listening to other people’s thoughts but now he felt at liberty to speak his mind, to talk with others, and to partake in the work of enlightenment in the sense of the word given to us by Kant in his famous essay “*Was ist Aufklärung?*” “Enlightenment,” writes Kant, “is the emergence of one from a state of childhood, or minority, which one has brought upon oneself.”¹ The term *Aufklärung* denotes elucidation, illumination, clarification, enlightenment, and learning about the facts of life.

¹ The term Kant uses here is “*Unmündigkeit*” which has the German root “*Mund*” or “mouth.” In a

Reading the dialogue between Harwood and I, you, the reader, may have felt frustrated and bored. As a writer I ignored my duty to you the reader, to cut and explicate. I do this because it is essential that you get my point about dwelling in such ambiguity, that you try to imagine doing this day in and day out for years. You and I would no doubt like more, more to make something out of. As a reader you may have skimmed forward, or at least thought of doing so. If one applies symbolic or semiotic analyses to such dialogue one will inevitably become frustrated as one continually fails. Most all contact with the Alz people will end up this way, i.e. will in end in *dreama*. But, then again, so will any attempt to deal with any state in which the reason (*logos*) involved defies your own individual appropriation of it. Somewhere in my interactions with Harwood it became possible, as somewhere in interaction with this book I hope it will as well, to interrogate our need to make sense of the Alzheimer's state, a state which is said to be defined by a loss of reason, by a self-imposed state (or regression) into minority (or *Unmündigkeit*). Being seen as a loss of reason (*logos*), the question of meaning does not go away, but rather becomes secreted, becomes that which is to be attributed to the other according to how one imagines this self-imposed state of minority (or regression into the childlike, or adolescent) in regards to oneself. If it can be said, as I believe it can, that those with Alzheimer's are most often speaking for themselves as children, it can also be equally said that we, their caregivers and would be healers, are speaking for them and ourselves in this way as well. As people in a dream we need to move among the Alz

certain sense, this minority or not-yet-come-of-age state, has to do with *not being declared* to be of age. In another sense it denotes an unrecognized way of speaking for oneself from this state. See "What is Enlightenment" in Kant's *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, pp.41-48.

people feeling their frustration, their urgency, like children in need of help, unable to go it alone. Contemporary psychology and medicine disable this possibility in their notion of dementia. The tendency to speak for the Alz people and (*via*) ourselves as children, as one sees in Willie Mae, Felipa, Carmen (and myself) is disallowed from playing a role in a better understanding of how to actually work, *via* applied knowledge, towards naming the cause of and finding a cure for this disease. Psychology and medicine put a great deal of effort into alleviating this frustration and urgency to name the cause of this disease. They are particularly successful at eliminating their own and our own urgency and frustration, yet much less successful at alleviating that of those with the disease and those who care for them.

So what is the Alzheimer's state? For now suffice it to say that it is both this felt sense of urgency and frustration *and* those terms, definitions, practices and techniques which deny this sense of urgency and frustration a place in the search for a cause. It is that which we must work through and with in an applied science to name the cause *and* that colonial presence which works against applied science and for practical science and historical explanation. It is that which turns sympathy into analysis *or* pity, dialogue into thinking *or* exegesis, and the curing of disease into listening and application *or* legislation (i.e. social contracting).

On this last point let us return to Harwood's own understanding of this state *vis-à-vis* what he refers to as "enlightenment." By "enlightenment" Harwood says he means '*applied* knowledge through whose application one draws applied knowledge out of

another person.’ In doing this, says Harwood, you get “substance,” which is what one says about a conversation in which one is making sense, and using common words. *This “substance” is, I argue, is the very same as that which Benjamin and I are above calling “truth” (as opposed to knowledge).* To Harwood, as in Baroque allegory, it is most important to “use” and to “apply” what one has been told because it is only in doing so that one can “grasp” what has been said. The idea here is that one hears, applies and uses what one has heard in order to understand why the person who said it said it, and why he or she said it in the way they did. It is only through such a process of grasping that one can draw another out, and by “drawing another out,” following Harwood (*via* and *contra* Kant), is meant *allowing them to* teach about the facts of life, to elucidate, to clarify, to illuminate, to enlighten, and to capture, to “grasp” ones own *essence*, i.e. to speak the truth.

But what is this essence, this (these) *scentsse*? Harwood and others of his kind are (mankind is) somehow struggling, as in the time of the Enlightenment according to Kant, to emerge from a state of childhood, or minority, which they have brought upon themselves. In this struggle between the members of humanity the only way they can emerge from this state is for humanity to gain instruction about the facts of life through gaining instruction, to elucidate through gaining elucidation, to clarify through gaining clarification, to illuminate through gaining illumination, and by grasping their essence, as adults. Harwood’s “drawing out” is therefore not easy to understand if applied to the situation between the Alz people and humanity. This is due to the inherent prejudice humanity has regarding the Alz people; a prejudice which assumes that when an Alz

person (like Harwood) refers to humanity, that he is necessarily referring to persons other than himself. It is *all* of humanity which must emerge from its self inflicted state of childhood or minority through drawing out, and not solely the Alz people or the humans themselves.

In essence we are all Alz people, all subjects of the Alzheimer's state, but most of us deny that we are. Although we continually speak for ourselves as children, and must do so, for they are ourselves and our closest others, we deny this speech any legitimacy in the rational, enlightened pursuits of science, art and statecraft in general. It is the denial, or rather, the secretion, of this fact which leads to the most unspeakable acts in the name of name of awakening, a people, and humanity.

On the other side of enlightenment is Carmen. In her words too we see a form of drawing-out (of morals, etc.), reciprocity, substance, practical knowledge and, while no dollars, *scents* -making. Carmen continually makes a holy calling out of the very things she elsewhere refers to as "necessity." Like Harwood, she sees herself engaged in the work of enlightenment. After years of the drills, memorization, discipline, tedious rationalism and silent obedience of medical school Carmen moved off to the hinterlands where she then came of age. What a sense of power she must have felt, to not only *have* feelings, to "feel" this or that *politically*, but to have the liberty and the power which *causes people to listen*. Like Harwood, she would be the first to say that drawing these impoverished people out wasn't easy. She listened to them, became enlightened through seeing their plight and, in gaining the practical knowledge they gave her, applied this knowledge of them back onto them. This, however, is where the similarity ends.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the enlightenment experiences, philosophies and work of Carmen and Harwood was that in Harwood's case enlightenment was pursuing truth, essence and substance (which he links to applied knowledge), while in Carmen's it was pursuing *practical* knowledge (knowledge in the form of salable experience) which provided practical solutions to fit "real life necessities." As in all such callings, however, it often becomes difficult to distinguish the darker personal, spiritual side of "what needs to be done" and "necessity" from the clear, objective, economic and political side of these two.

When it comes to the notion of cause Carmen's is wholly practical. The very essence of the cause according to Carmen is its practical utility, its necessity. 'Does it work or does it not work? What will do it?' According to this way of thinking one does not talk to Harwood as I do, to learn, but rather to "validate" his feelings, to make him happier, more content (always according to her own awakened feeling), and under control. Also, anything that is learned in such a way must be used to these ends and these ends only. Willie Mae and Felipa learned this lesson well, and became the most practical of practitioners, shock workers of the cause. Carmen had a dream, she said, to make the center into a 'research facility' where such practical technologies could be developed. The Alz physicians, whose resistance to this dream she resented, and whom she never told of her own M.D., seemed to not be concerned with such "social" solutions.¹

¹ Note here the use of "dream," how it stands opposite to that of *dreama*, and how resentment mixes

Harwood's notion of the cause, on the other hand, was conceived in its very essence as something to be applied and, through dialogue, as he explains and explains again in the previous conversation, something through which one gains more applied knowledge. But this knowledge is not even knowledge proper in that it does not aim at more knowledge but rather something beyond it, i.e. truth. Collingwood refers to this notion of the cause as engendering a science or pursuit "whose essence *qua* science is not practical utility but theoretical truth." This truth is similar to that which Harwood describes in that, as Collingwood says, it is not simply illuminative "but one which, in addition to being true, is useful as providing the solution for the practical problems by being "applied" to them."

In addition, one might also observe that Harwood's version of enlightenment seems to dwell in the language of the spiritual, while Carmen's, although avowedly Catholic, seems to dwell in the everyday language of fighting for the good cause. With Carmen and with Harwood, the idea was "to get the word out," to draw it out, to have it drawn out, and build on it. Harwood called this "enlightenment" and Carmen called this "interpretation of the word [i.e. the community] which is based upon common sense." The former works on the dialogue and the latter works on the symbol and education.

From a Benjaminian standpoint, Carmen's words are words of sensation and sensationalism, information and education. She exemplifies not the storyteller but rather

with ambition to build systems which move us ever further away from applied knowledge and science.

that which the storyteller gave way to in history. Speaking always about the cause, though never naming it, she secretes experience. She does so, however, not with the authority of the essence-of-life-in-death, as does the storyteller, but rather with the authority of the essence-of-death-in-life. The strength, vitality and conviction of her youth moves her like the holy spirit, the word, and *the cause* itself, painting a starkly contrasting image to the weakness, petrification, and suspended far sightedness of Harwood's stare.

Most striking about Carmen's version of enlightenment is its attachment to the primitive. At the heart of this thinking lies a desire not for a primitive form of religion and conception of causality, but rather for a murkier form of the present status quo which mimes a *more* primitive state (while rejecting magic and witchcraft). In this world we would all come to see ourselves in reciprocity with plants, animals, trees, the air, and "everything." As it was in the beginning, that is "the Word," in Eden, from which we are fleeing, is also that towards which we should strive.¹

Both words, of Carmen and Harwood, constitute other speech, i.e. allegory, yet, as we shall see, represent quite different forms of it. Both of their words, their forms of allegory, are forms of enlightenment, yet both are negations of it. Harwood's negation of enlightenment leads to a *negative labor* of enlightenment which preserves *the* Enlightenment, and Carmen's negation leads to a *positive labor* which has sought for centuries to *bury it*.

¹ As we shall see, this form of edenic primitive, with its essential bent on survival, adaptation and so

The A (G.B.) Cs of Language and Eros

It is not uncommon for two lovers to feel that in the whole world within and around them only their love “makes sense.” There is something in this erotic, enlightened understanding which two people share which seems to point to a form of understanding beyond that of meaning, that seems to go beyond clear verbal expression or at least to call for a greater power of expression than we can normally bring to bear.

It should be of no surprise or coincidence, therefore, that Eros is linked with those who are seen as lacking in clear verbal expression, be they children, the elderly, or any other group easily kitschified or fetishized in this way. In this state of lesser *Mündigkeit* we see a certain innocent beauty which we are drawn to mime, which we *like*, often unaware that their appeal is that of the negative sacred. Near the end of the preface to his novel *Madame Edwarda* Georges Bataille writes of this appeal thus:

They say that beauty is the snare of the devil; indeed only beauty can make tolerable the need for disorder, violence and indignity that lies at the root of love. This is not the place to examine the details of different kinds of delirium with their multiplicity of forms, the most violent of which are slyly revealed to us by pure love and bear the blind excess of life to the gates of death.¹

It should also be of no surprise or coincidence that a people who have been denied a voice, have been denied a *Mündigkeit* and given a responsibility for this denial, be it physical or moral, like the Alz people, look to beauty, in and through the other, as a way in which to express ‘the multiplicity of forms found in the details of their delirium.’

Like Benjamin’s storyteller, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, and like the

on, could be said to be at the modern, utilitarian heart of practical science in general.

words of Bataille above, the ‘most violent forms of delirium’ which the Alz people enact are indeed “slyly revealed to us by pure love and bear the blind excess of life to the gates of death.”

But although this “delirium,” and/or “dementia,” in and through which their obsession with pure love in all of its excess slyly reveals the essence-of-life-in-death, is meant to serve the purposes of knowledge, of symbol, possession and so on *à la* Romanticism, it resists it every step of the way. Through “the form of delirium” I am calling *dreama*, they engage in both a form of storytelling which gains its authority from death, and a form of applied investigation which, when followed into its nightmarish depths, calls one's own construction of meaning and symbolic understanding into question. It is in the *dreamas* of the Doctor, Harwood and others that I gained an enduring presence of dialogue and thought with which this series of ideas continue to lead me in my naming of the cause. The words on these pages constituting certain stories and events of Harwood, the Doctor, John L. and others are wholly Socratic. In them the craft and presence of the storyteller, that which constitutes the space of death and conveys the essence-of-life-in-death, is substituted, as in the baroque still life, by a *memento mori*, by a death's head in the form of philosophy and ethnology. These words-become-my-ethnographic-subjects retreat into and reside within a realm to which their state has condemned them, a realm not beyond life but beyond the essence-of-death-in-life. Tried and condemned by their state, by the (I)nc. (as I must) describe, they refuse to join it, incorporate into it, as Plato, in his pity, would have them do. These words, in a

¹ Bataille, Georges *Eroticism, Death and Sensuality*, p.270.

continuing dialogue with their ethnographic subjects, are the Socrates which Nietzsche described so lovingly in his *Birth of Tragedy*:

That he was sentenced to death, not exile, Socrates himself seems to have brought about with perfect awareness and without any natural awe of death. He went to his death with the calm with which, according to Plato's description, he leaves the symposium at dawn, the last of the revelers, to begin a new day, while on the benches and on the earth his drowsy table companions remain behind to dream of Socrates, the true eroticist.¹

That these words-become-my-ethnographic-subjects would bring about a perfect awareness, and without any natural awe of death, i.e. that they would not describe and languish in the essence-of-death-in-life, would be the very reason I consent to their death, that I demand it, as opposed to their exile into the forest of symbols, or Eden. They, like the words of Harwood and most every Other among the Alz people, eventually leave the symposium at dawn, a place in which love and death mingled in *dreama*, leaving *us* to dream of them and their words, leaving a *memento mori*, a death's head, with which to act, but not *act*, like Hamlet beside the grave of Yorick, in some allegorical *dreama of our own*.

It was Plato who made the essence of Socrates, the *logos* of those who came before him, into the essence-of-death-in-life, into the state and dual (I)nc.. Elsewhere, in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes of the death of Socrates once again:

I admire the courage and wisdom of Socrates in everything he did, said—and did not say. This mocking and enamored monster and pied piper of Athens, who made the most overweening youths tremble and sob, was not only the wisest chatterer of all time: he was equally great in silence.²

¹ *Birth of Tragedy*, (13)

² *The Gay Science*, 340, p.272

This being said, Nietzsche then makes a statement which most directly addresses the issue of language, instruction, and the essence of Socrates as well as the relationship between words in the space of death and silence, continuing:

I wish he had remained taciturn also at the last moment of his life; in this case he might belong to a still higher order of spirits. Whether it was death or the poison or piety or malice—something loosened his tongue at that moment and he said: “O Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster.” This ridiculous and terrible “last word” means for those who have ears: “O Crito, *life is a disease.*” Is it possible that a man like him, who had lived cheerfully and like a soldier in the sight of everyone, should have been a pessimist? He had merely kept a cheerful mien while concealing all his long life his ultimate judgment, his inmost feeling. Socrates, Socrates *suffered life!*¹

It has long been a puzzle to me why Nietzsche interprets the last words of Socrates thus and, even more of a puzzle as to why he does not, as I do, place the blame on Plato for making these last words into the foundation for Platonism. In this space of death, in the many words found in the death of Socrates, we find what may be a clear layout as to how Plato sees his own ideas and the words of Socrates forever linked. The most devious move of Plato is not, however, in the long speeches of Socrates found in this space, but in his attitude towards his teacher’s last words. With the great historical weight of a short and direct quote, affirmed by many and basically indisputable, Plato makes the whole life of Socrates, his secret genius as Nietzsche might have it, into an affirmation of Platonism. In saying “O Crito, *life is a disease,*” as Nietzsche sees it, the essence of Socrates becomes the essence-of-death-in-life. The sacrifice of a rooster after his death, *by his lover*, is seen as a payment for the relief which the god of healing has given him, death being the relief from this life. But this depends upon a certain view of

sacrifice which sees it as a means of thanks for something done, an odd sacrifice at that because it would be thanking the god of healing for letting one die. Although sacrifice is much more complicated than this and remains not very well understood, for now let us take Nietzsche's reading of this sacrifice- as-a-thanks as a fair assessment. In saying, right before death, that he owes a rooster in sacrifice to the god of healing could Socrates not be saying that he expects to be healed, that he expects to live beyond the effects of the poison? But how could he? How else but as words-become-philosophical-and-historical-subjects? This is surely the case, the crucial question, assuming he is correct, is *how* he lives on and, more specifically, if he lives on in the death space as the essence-of-life-in-death, or if he lives on as the essence-of-death-in-life. Surely it is the former, as Nietzsche earlier seems to affirm in describing how he leaves the symposium at dawn "while on the benches and on the earth his drowsy table companions remain behind to dream" of him and his words, leaving his own *memento mori*, a death's head, with which to act, but not *act*, in some allegorical dream of their own. Could there be an irony here in which Plato so much wants to make these last words of Socrates his own, his words-become-Plato's-philosophical-and-historical-subject, his (I)nc., the Socratic state, that he hears Socrates describing these words, his life and essence as a disease, as the essence-of-death-in-life, and not as they were meant, as the essence-of-life-in-death? Could Nietzsche then be observing this irony and mistaking the essence-of-death-in-life, i.e. disease, as being equated with "the life of Socrates" or "life itself"? In sacrifice we are not recreating the essence-of-death-in-life, so as to mime our plight and to give thanks to a god who will one day reciprocate in saving us from it. For those with Christian "ears"

¹ Ibid. 340, p.272

in particular, for we are discussing Plato and Nietzsche here, those for whom the words-(of-Socrates)-become-historical-and-philosophical-subjects, the cry of sacrifice *is* certainly heard thus. For those with ears attuned to the words-of-Socrates-become-ethnographic-subject (as I am making them here), the cry of sacrifice is heard as the essence-of-life-in-death which here are the living words of Socrates, resounding like a dying rooster's cry and the still life of it on a golden platter, a *memento mori*, a death's head with which to act, but not *act*, as members of the symposium left in our slumber, in some story, some allegorical *dreama*, of our own. Nietzsche gives further support to this task in *Human, All-Too-Human* writing: "If all goes well, the time will come when, to develop oneself morally-rationally, one will take up the *memorabilia* of Socrates rather than the Bible."¹

Above all Socrates was to Nietzsche the archetype of the man of applied knowledge and science. Just as in the sense of the third form of cause and its call for an applied science given to us by Collingwood, Socrates was seen by Nietzsche as one who brilliantly combined the theoretical and the practical, the first involving the latter as Collingwood describes, i.e. as a combination "whose essence *qua* science is not practical utility but theoretical truth, but one which, in addition to being true, is useful as providing the solution for the practical problems by being 'applied' to them."²

In Nietzsche's admiration and critique of Socrates we have a template for a sketch of a philosopher, physician and, I dare say, anthropologist whose Socratic character as a

¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich *Human, All Too Human*, 86, p.332.

² It is also important to remember that in his method Socrates was seen as a *physician!*

thinker is part saint, part rebel and part trickster. Above all else this character works with the words-of-Socrates-become-historical-and-philosophical in a way which de-historicizes and de-philosophizes, i.e. de-Platonizes, them. In *Erotism, Death and Sensuality* Georges Bataille contemplates such a Socratic figure, stressing, as is necessary, that this figure be one who, like Socrates, is his or herself an Erotist. To be an Erotist, says Bataille, is to not to be a philosopher of ideal virtue or malady, but to one who studies them ethnologically and analytically in terms of transgression.¹

This “philosophy of transgression,” as Bataille often refers to it, may not, however, be what we might immediately expect. As a pursuit *via* the essence-of-life-in-death which is the true, erotic Socratic heritage, we may like Socrates himself exhibit some of our best wisdom in silence. Language and erotism are not always compatible, says Bataille; the philosophy of transgression may often lead us to even “renounce our philosophical attitude” in certain times and places. The contact we have with erotism may not lead us to a descriptive union with our subject, but away from it. When it does so, says Bataille, erotic experience seems akin to sanctity. It is my feeling that both Socrates and those I knew like Harwood seem inevitably to lead to silent sanctity, but it is also my feeling that this silent sanctity must be overcome. Out of this silence, says Bataille, there comes a moment “when the stirrings of transgression itself take over from the discursive account of transgression.” This moment, says Bataille, is related to “the feeling of the *continuity* of being.”

¹ Note here that in designating transgression and not (also) prohibition or taboo that I mean to indicate that one can transgress against those things which are, in Plato’s thinking, virtuous *or* maleficent.

This moment, this “feeling of the continuity of being,” “when the stirrings of transgression itself take over from the discursive account of transgression” is that which I would identify with the Alzheimer’s state. In it one finds all the common symptoms seen in the Alz people, especially the “loss of self.” The key to the Alzheimer’s state rests in the puzzles within phrase “I can’t say” heard again and again amongst these people. It is never clear amongst these people whether in saying “I can’t say” if the person saying it means “I don’t know” or “There is a taboo, prohibition, or some other moral and/or philosophical cause/reason preventing me from saying it.” In the end one may find that there is most often, in fact, no difference between the two. No matter what is said, however, the fact that there is something to be said, that there is something which needs to be said, leads to (or is further seen through) the actions of these people, i.e. seen through a transgression against them in which a certain “feeling of the continuity of being” is glimpsed. This transgression is the very basis of language according to Georges Bataille and, as we will see in what is to come, in one way or another an insight shared by Paul Valéry and Walter Benjamin as well.