The right words in the proper places: an investigation of the poetry of Tony Harrison, from text to TV

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SUMMARY

This thesis looks at the work of Tony Harrison: his poetry, *"from* The School of Eloquence", and "The Mother of the Muses", his theatre works, *Yan Tan Tethera* and *Medea: A Sex-War Opera,* and his televisual documentary-poems, *"v."*, *The Blasphemers' Banquet, Loving Memory* and *Black Daisies for the Bride.*

I examine these works in the light of their incorporation and manipulation of 'external' voices and cultures: of his working-class Leeds background, discourse feminine, Muslim fundamentalists, literary 'blasphemers'. In later works, this technique is framed in terms of supplementing absences, first of voice, then of the human self-presence that voice figures: of the dead and the mentally non-present.

I look specifically at how this *representation* of elements generally seen as im*propre* to the media he occupies on their part, as a public poet, enables the inserted material he appropriates from its propre milieu a platform from which to comment on its conventional, marginalised status. Conversely, I investigate how the gesture of re-presentation takes Harrison's work further from the 'original' he is seeking to incorporate as in supplying their 'lack' he occupies their propre space, increasingly in effect removing them from the discourse.

This double process, presented in terms of Derrida's ideas on supplementation and joining-as-separating, is seen to be effected by Harrison's manipulation of codes - oral/typographic, restricted/elaborated. His claimed philosophical positions, with regard to phallogocentric discourse *versus* 'discours feminine' and theocentric theatre *versus* theatre of cruelty, are interrogated. This brings in Lacanian-psychoanalytic notions of subjectivity, Harrison's and those of the real people he invaginates into his texts. His *giving* freedom to these unbounded forms and their propre occupants is seen as ultimately a reframing of governance, a re-drawing of boundaries, which in turn are overrun by the properly *un*governable properties of film/video, human subjects, and language itself.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I've got to find the right words on my own.
Tony Harrison, "Book Ends"[1]

This thesis examines the work of the poet and dramatist Tony Harrison, his poetry - the sonnet sequence "*from* The School of Eloquence" and long poem "The Mother of the Muses", theatre works - *Yan Tan Tethera* and *Medea: A Sex-War Opera*, 'video-poems' "*v.*" and *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, and 'poetic-documentaries', the television programmes *Loving Memory* and *Black Daisies for the Bride*[2].

I will particularly be addressing the communicative strategies Harrison uses to reach an audience wider than poetry normally engages. Linguistically, these strategies can be seen as an incorporation of 'non-standard' speech, voices conventionally considered 'unformed' or 'ill-formed' for poetry, such as those of his family in the sonnet sequence and Harrison's 'alter-ego' skinhead in "*v.*" These discrete textualisations of speaking-subjects as 'other' to the narratorial voice of the poet are structured around Bernstein's linguistic categorisation of speech codes into *elaborated* and *restricted*. These categories are generally attributed to the middle-class and working-class respectively, but within the poems, although they take on sociocultural issues, this dichotomy expresses more personal experiences of 'eloquence' and 'ineloquence'.

Connected with these categorisations is the notion of 'orality'. Following Ong's exploration of perceptual differences in the function of language for 'oral' and 'literate' cultures (also no longer as simple as 'uneducated' and 'educated', as I shall show in the instance of Muslim orality in Harrison's TV poetry), Harrison's poetry demonstrably takes into account its apprehension as directly signifying 'action', while the poet is playing with his role as 'author', marking his separation from textual control and presenting his poetry as the network of citations that constitute language.

The need to claim responsibility for these effectively ungovernable voices and citations becomes one of the central issues I explore in Harrison's work. For the 'oral', non-literary audience section, categorised by their use of restricted-code speech and oral worldview, to comprehend Harrison's work, it has to seem to fulfil their perceptual requirements of language. Specifically, for the works I am addressing, these are two: that it is directly attributable to the person who signs for it, and that it performs the formal properties of writing - presents the centricity invoked by 'eloquence' and enacts a 'truth', through the denotative authority of the printed word (and videoically in the

theocentric positioning of the author as authoritative). Yet, as a contemporary writer, while acknowledging these specious linguistic claims in his subjects (who are also his 'objects', the targets of his message that they are included in the poetry), Harrison is inscribing their inverse. His texts invoke the myth of control while demonstrating its absence, this absence, as 'freedom', being the other half of the message of inclusion; you are involved in what has excluded you, and you are free, it does not govern.

In this field of play the voice of the 'other' is appropriated as dialogic antagonist. This is what I will be focusing on, tracing how Harrison attempts to write the voices of the excluded - the ineloquent working class, the 'written out' feminine, the anti-literature (in its postmodern sense, as precisely Harrison's field of inauthority and play) religious fundamentalists, and the dead or demented 'absent'. The skill with which what I will call these 'im-propre' are used to deconstruct the generic form within which they are inscribed exposes these forms' boundednesses. However, it also, reflexively, questions the poet's method and motives of incorporation, and as much of the ideologue of literature proves impropre to cultures of orality, the process of rupture works in both directions, on what is re-contextualised via insertion as well as its effect on the occupied structure. Ultimately I will be questioning the validity of Harrison's gesture of inclusion, its possibility on his terms (the explicit terms of the poetic, dramatic, videoic prefaces to each of the texts discussed here) as in analysing his techniques the nature of his representation increasingly appears as an appropriation of discourses, a confinement of them within his own interested textualisations ostensibly made *for* them.

My analysis will draw on Derrida's reading of the *propre*[3], to discuss what is propre to poetry, what to orality, what can pass between them as positively-framed assimilation, what is appropriated, taken for its own properties out of its proper place, and what survives, speaks as itself despite these actions. The propre, then, incorporates the senses of 'property', 'own' and 'proper', to delineate that which is constitutive of a structure, form or subject *before* they come into being as the apprehended reproduction of themselves; the propre is what is anterior to specific, contextually engendered framings. In Harrison's designed representation of speech, subjectivity, ideology, from outside poetry, that which is given as propre to his incorporated subjects in his characteristic gesture of cross-cultural *assimilation* can be an *appropriation* of their language or stance, a re-presentation of it within his own framework; when it transcends this frame, their propre also transcends his design, standing as its own system, opening the deconstruction of his. While his manipulation produces innovative and engaging Art, Harrison's ostensive relinquishment of authorial centricity not only places him as a representative of that to which he has no claim, the free polyphony of genuinely distinct voices, each propre to its own worldview, but

perhaps more importantly, when this claim is shown to be valid, the presence of these voices disallows their propre presentation by formalising poetry: in the act of these other voices being presented, they are silenced, by the very ina-propre-ateness of the attempt. As Harrison's career becomes a search for their appropriate form, from poetry to stage to TV, this problematic of the *inherent* inappropriateness of 'literate' approaches to 'oral' culture will parallel that search in this study.

In Harrison's earlier works generic intertextuality is genuinely disseminatory; *Yan Tan Tethera*'s central 'myth' of sheepscoring is used to demonstrate the structure of all cultures to be interdependent, reliant upon the processes of adoption and adaptation. The more socio-politically motivated texts, "*v.*" and *Medea: A Sex-War Opera*, incorporate specific 'other'-voices as a strategy to negate the exclusion and marginalisation of the discriminatorily targeted groups they 'speak for': the disaffected unemployed youth, women. The controversy surrounding "*v.*" testifies its effectiveness as an engagement with the literary establishment, the 'realism' of the personified 'skinhead's' language causing widespread debate on obscenity in art. The often offensive vernacular is justified and made acceptable by presenting the 'skin's' construction *as* Harrison's 'alter-ego', so the traces of linguistic governance that structure this 'separate' voice are ultimately propre to the poet as overall speaking subject. However, in the case of Harrison's treatment of the Medea myth, the polyphonic framing of the text is *undercut* by the authorial will-to-truth, the textually-established aim to present the true version of the myth is *appropriated* as part of the male authorial discourse, the truth that is told is reductively a male projection of woman, another myth that confines within the gesture of freeing.

Harrison's video work is innovative in its blend of poetry and documentary footage, combining an external 'reality' within the 'written' videoic diegetic. In judging the communicative success of the videos (not 'films', they are recorded on video format and employ the structural techniques of the promo-video as part of their 'propagandist' function within their presentation as television documentary, as well as generically borrowing from film proper), I have used Metz's Lacanian-derived positioning of specular identification. Primary identification is with the camera point-of-view, secondary identification is with the filmic subject. Through the manipulation of these two positions, Harrison structures the narrative such that the incorporation of specific documentary footage of a targeted group allows the specific shaping of their interactive encoding of the video. This is particularly important in *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, where, allowing (to an extent at least) for the oral/literal divide, his attempt to dissuade fundamentalists is communicated via a semiotic montaging of (their 'own') fanatical behaviour; the accompanying text-message is less certain to reach its

destination, as evidenced by the lack of effective discussion between the 'oral' Muslims and the 'literate' literary establishment concerning *The Satanic Verses*.

As the videoic signification is integral to the spoken text, much of the work being about the (videoed) 'real' and its organisation, I have produced a text of the video-images, describing each separate viewing instant of "*v.*" and *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, and appended these to this thesis (Appendices One and Two). What is present on screen constitutes the specular diegetic and is necessarily encoded as interactive with the spoken text; to this end I have noted each change of shot or focus, and where the text ties in with the visual producing a specific emphasis, or prioritizing a 'preferred' encoding strategy. This methodology of discussing complex montage sequences in deconstructive specificity has been used by Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier[4] and others in the still exploratory field of film deconstruction. Such detail is justified in delineating what the manifest cognitive environment is at any given instant, as, following Sperber and Wilson[5], I feel that to give a partial account would colour the material in designating what is 'relevant' and overlook the effect of the iterations which are not framed as 'purposive'. The resultant analysis examines not just the effectiveness of Harrison's interdisciplinary approach, but also how the different media escape over-all control, how the framing of an external reality, to insert it within a textualisation, results in the re-emergence of the ungovernable as propre to its (videoically exploited) exteriority.

Further, the Lacanian framework which I have used to explore relations between parent and child in the sonnets, and between the sexes in *Medea: A Sex-War Opera*, is also applied to explain the psychoanalytic relations between spectator and film image: the idea of the splitting of the reading/writing/viewing subject into *moi* and *je*, self and other. The mirror-stage identificatory process that leads the fragmented subject to posit the possibility of wholeness in the re-incorporation of their textual or specular o/Other is constitutive of the desire that motivates the reading/viewing process. This desire is necessarily figured as deferral, the gesture of appropriation of the other being enacted via a suturing process that projects a grafted completeness in the place of rupture, division, which allows the enactment of completeness without incurring the 'risk' inherent in fulfilled desire, which would be the death of the subject. This reading is 'propre' as it traces Harrison's own exploration of the theme of death and oblivion, his transcendental intra-textual signifier, what he calls in *The Blasphemers' Banquet* 'the big 'O' of nothingness' re-occurring from text to text.

This overall theme emerges in the sonnet sequence, where the atheist Harrison comes to terms with the death of his parents, is continued in "*v.*", the graveyard elegy in which the poet anticipates his own death, is 'philosophised' in *The Blasphemers'*

Banquet where the Muslims' religious deferral of pleasure in the pursuit of Paradise is countered by Harrison's invocation of Omar Khayyam's *carpe diem*, 'I love this fleeting life', and is explicitly exorcised in the *Loving Memory* series, where the various cultural ritualisations and perceptions of death are explored and contrasted, from the nostalgic escapism of an English rural funeral to the ritualism of a Roman Catholic death, interrogating the underlying philosophy of *life* that informs how a society perceives its passing. The key video/programme in this sequence, "Into the Void", can be seen as an exposition of Harrison's own ideological position, then, incorporating the videoic techniques and ideas from his sistertexts to create a work that challenges the dominant perceptions with which his less exploratory texts are framed.

I shall be considering, then, the technical *language* of Harrison's videos, as well as the poetry they articulate and the images they revivify ('literally' giving videoed lives, 'real' peoples' actions to 'images' whose referents language has deferred). In the structure of his videos, Harrison demonstrates repeatedly the digital presence/absence divide he is discussing and making 'real' in appending to his discussions 'documentary' footage, by blanking out the screen in a mimesis/demonstration of (Lacanian) death. In other techniques that constitute his vocabulary and form his signature in the medium, he foregrounds the materiality of the video medium by overt cutting; disorients secondary identification by montaging syntagma; draws attention to the framing of a particular point of view in the imposition of closure; comments on the process of textualisation at play in his even his own re-presentation by inserting himself as actor within his own productions. These properly *video* techniques are discussed in terms of Derridean *invagination* of separate segments of text or documentary reality, such that the text enfolds the insert, incorporating the chunk's own context and citational matrix in the act of appropriating a specific aspect, thus again demonstrating the ungovernable nature of the structure; the inserted chunk is a structural/systematic piece of its viewer's life, so the TV-viewing situation enters the programme, just as the programme alters it. Harrison's work often *incorporates* this process of *mis en abyme*, re-inserting a syntagma within the framing video like an internal reflective incorporation process, a re-citation that is contained by the thing that is recited. This is most noticeable in *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, where the opening scene is spliced back into the middle of the programme, and returned to at the close, its re-appearance serving as a marker of the video's communication time against which to structure its otherwise fragmented diegetic structure. Showing Harrison's development through genres, this technique plays a highly significant role in *Medea: A Sex-War Opera*; the opening mime of Medea's execution and Creusa's 'burning' is re-cited throughout the play, re-framed by the different accounts of the myth that are presented and then destabilized. Since *Yan*

Tan Tethera the recitation process has served as metaphor for the mythic circularity of life, death and regeneration.

Typically the section placed *en abyme*, is what I have distinguished as the 'dumb show', an increasingly dense overture-presentation of information and of its interpretation that in the videos I refer to as a semi-autonomous, supplementary, 'promo video'. Harrison introduces his theatre and video texts by presenting this masque or mime that encapsulates the argument of the ensuing performance, providing a way of 'reading' the text, 'promoting' it, to capture an audience that would not normally watch a 'poetry' driven event, or to present to them his basic argument before the channel is changed. In the Medea opera, the Overture enacts Medea and Creusa's deaths, alongside a totemic puppet-dramatisation of Medea's child-murder, so providing a visual representation of the misogynist myths that Harrison is writing *against*. *Yan Tan Tethera* incorporates an elaborate formal 'clockwork' stage piece that enacts the circularity of time within the forthcoming drama.

The video for "*v.*" has an extended black-and-white montage sequence that explores the dual signification of 'V' as victory and obscenity, affirmatory and negatory, in terms of WWII, the war that popularised it as a gestural semiotic. Here, the 'dumb show' derives its connotations from silent black-and-white movies, presenting a visual commentary prior to the poetic text, demonstrating the historical manipulations of "V's" signification by splicing footage of bombing raids and large-scale devastation with the propagandic positivism of statesmen and the military. The contextualisation of conflict places the poem's personal message as a voice that is speaking out for individual freedom against the social and political restraint that fosters unrest as a tool of social management.[6] Both *The Blasphemers Banquet* and "Into the Void" incorporate dumbshows which situate Harrison as poet anterior to the proceeding text, marking the identity of the overall text-speaker, and demonstrating his controlling function, stressing the 'written' as inscribed within the visual medium.

Corollary to, and in a sense originating, this dramatic-videoic figure is the use of epigraph which introduces the sonnet sequence "*from* The School of Eloquence". The personal to the man writing the confessional sequence is framed by the historical and personal contextualisation of the 'same' man who is its subject; Harrison's sociocultural background, the ineloquence of his forbears, are allegoricised in his uncles Dick and Harry, stutterer and mute, in a ironic riddle prior to the sequence-proper, which also presents them as psychoanalytic figures for the immediate family from which his education left him experientially and linguistically estranged. Similarly, the dedication to his father-in-law which fronts the long poem "The Mother of the Muses" is engaged within the intertextual dialectic; the concept of 'in memorium'

which it presents is what is deconstructed within the process of the poem's attempt to commemorate its subjects absence.

The presence/absence polarity is linked with Harrison's treatment of death, as the notion of the trace or trait lives on after the individual subject or event. In the sonnet sequence the mark or trait of his parents is reproduced as their language, present in the poet's; the absent subject *created* by language is shown to be the proper place for their reinscription. Loss is negated through the operation of the signifier which creates the illusion of presence, so allowing the poet a site from which to communicate with his 'past', to perform that which was not possible while his parents were alive. Again this returns the theme of control: it is only in governing, re-tracing the linguistic markers that a form of understanding can be gained. Harrison's incorporation of his parents' language as *his* 'other' enables him to enact a will-to-completeness that the 'real' presence of the subjects (the separate inhabitation of their speech structures as propre-to them) would prevent, re-marking them as an Other, not defined in terms of Harrison.

It is the process of textualisation that allows Harrison to insert himself within discourses from which he feels excluded, and that allows him to break the exclusion of others from the milieu in which he situates himself. The gesture which allows the voice of the Other within his text retroactively inscribes it as Harrison's prescriptive textualised 'other': in its being made present, authorised, it can not fill the role of the symbolic, *inaccessible* Other as it is no longer exterior to the controlling subjectivity. This process works towards a textual synthesis which enacts the confessional in the sonnet sequence, the rupture of the classical form with ineloquence, reclaiming a consciousness that occupies the form with a determinable identity which is more than what the speaking subject claims as propre to himself.

This becomes less successful in the video incorporations as that which was propre to the invaginated subjects remains inscribed within the contextual property they bring with them, highlighting Harrison's attempt to re-textualise them in their positioning within a separate video sequence, and showing specifically the nature of Harrison's conceptual projection of what he seeks to appropriate and *re*present. In *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, the incorporation of an actual auction resists having an extra layer of symbolism written over its taking place as event, the auctioneer and buyers are shown to be ('present-to') *themselves*, so defying Harrison's attempt to appropriate them to present a pre-determined, textual point. 'Writing' the present is more successfully realised in conditions of the *implied* presence of the subject's absence, hence Harrison's technique of using statues and icons to carry his personification of the original, the lack of *speaking* subject being supplied by its poetic reinscription.

However, the ethics of this technique are called into question as the subjectivity Harrison appropriates moves in his later works away from the inherently textualised (the literary-historical 'blasphemers' Moliere, Byron and Voltaire who now exist as fictionalised characters generated from their own written context) to the recently-deceased subjects focused on in *Loving Memory*, where the 'absence' he fills is still felt by the bereaved, as the *specific*, 'real' lack of an identifiable subject. In pursuing the relation of presence and identity, his atheistic stance allows him to manipulate the subjectivity of the 'absent' subject to explore the gap between physical presence and self-presence, the lack caused through death is supplied by his textual projections that create a still-human persona for an exhumed corpse that demonstrates its loss of subjectivity through the *in*appropriateness of Harrison's textual commentary. Reversing this strategy, the remains of voice as indicator of presence is shown in "Into the Void", as constitutive of a phenomenological fallacy, the supplementary role of narrative is here exposed as in its turn demonstrating the rupture between speech/breath and subjectivity; the operation of memory creates the illusion of presence from its vocal signification.

Finally, in *Black Daisies for the Bride*, this breach is pushed to the limit, as the portrayal of Alzheimer's patients, no longer present-to themselves, but nonetheless present on screen, have their 'lost' identity reconstructed, textually by Harrison, physically by actresses, appropriating specific histories in order to show 'what has been lost' by the disease, but in so doing *supplanting* the subjectivity of the patients, negating the 'present' being of the individual in their reconstitution of what they textually, *fictionally* once were. In this video the representations speak for 'their' silenced subjects, making them subject-to a fiction which is in no way propre to them, now, or before the onset of dementia.

Harrison's incorporation of marginalised discourses and innovative use of media tends to focus any critique of his work around the issues which his material highlights, in much the same way that his prefatory epigraphs/dumbshows/promo-videos succeed in setting the agenda for his following texts. His stand against academic elitism works to deflect any rigorous interrogation of his underlying philosophies, his advocates employing a form of socio-criticism that incorporates the accessibility Harrison espouses in his work. While preventing the monopolisation of his Art by 'Them', this also serves its own interest in controlling the critical framework which supports his texts[7]. This privileged position instigates its own theocracy, the culturally 'eloquent' being excluded from commentary on what is designatedly their 'other', reliant upon Harrison as mediator to situate newly-included material *and* specify its signification, the 'ineloquent' still being denied a voice in socio-cultural terms, lacking the education, access (desire, as they are convinced of the irrelevance of the issue to them) to

comment, or the linguistic technique to articulate the misappropriation that often takes place.

This governance of his texts' reception and criticism is highlighted in the restrictions placed on the reproduction of *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, 'originally' an *oral* text, situating itself within current discourse and using the latest video-sampling techniques:

> [...]No part of this poem may be reproduced or photocopied under any circumstances, whether for private research, study, criticism, review or the reporting of current events [....] Any unauthorised reproduction of any part of the poem may result in civil liability and criminal prosecution.[8]

This inclusive protection of the text as 'belonging' to the author effectively controls how it is framed, as the publisher acts as promoter, regulating the re-use of the *video*text in a gesture that negates the 'sampling' used in the production itself; the auctioneer, holds no copyright in his unscripted oral language, which is (as I discuss in my chapter on this poem) *crucial* to *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, both in itself and in its very iterability, by Harrison, who would forbid that property to 'his' text. In situating himself in the new technological era that focuses creativity around assemblage, spoken, musical and filmic, the act of appropriating montage documentary segments as a legitimate process of incorporating different subjects and contexts, then preventing, making *illegal*, its repetition is an untenable will-to-governance. This is not only inappropriate to the structure and the artistic discourse he is engaging, but effects a closure that is theocratic in its claiming of *its* use of citation as 'original'. Such an act makes a mockery of the video's central anti-theocentric argument, the Muslims' desire to prevent (religious) 'mis'representation is re-inscribed in Harrison's 'defence' of literary freedom. In this sense it is fair to argue that Harrison's video poems overwrite their apparent oral/videoic presentation with a logocentricity that invokes the legality of the word to prevent this (thesis') critical interrogation of his act of appropriation[9].

In addressing socio-politically sensitive topics, Harrison's work is inevitably framed as a 'positive' contribution to the debate, his self-textualisation as pro-feminist, working-class spokesperson conflates any criticism of his work as an inherent attack on the marginalised groups he 'represents'. While I fully support the inclusion of these often excluded areas in culturally available art, it is nevertheless important to interrogate the underlying philosophical presentation of these ideas, to deconstruct Harrison's often militant stance and explore how his subject matter is constituted and determined, establishing that his targeting of individual discourses and ideologies often situates his textualisations in a place that is in no way propre to them, and discover what this re-siting means in terms of the accrued interest that shapes this presentation, both for Harrison and the audience to which he is successfully communicating. It is not

sufficient to enact a gesture of inclusion, if the included become further alienated in their supplanting by their textual signifier, worse, if they occupy another's inappropriate but eloquent text of themselves (the male truth of women, the prioritisation of literary 'ethics').

A discussion of the male suppression of the female discourse does not properly address the problem if it ultimately incorporates the voice of women as adjunctive citation, supplementary to the male (Harrison's) which designates the 'truth' of women without reference to the propre feminine it is determining. The inclusion of 'working class' or restricted-code discourse is rarely analysed in terms of its representational function, the invocation of an excluded class is sufficient to mark this invaginated material as Other, self-identical and so unopen to criticism as it brings its own defining framework with the citation. Since the oral nature of the language marks it as linguistically other - most academics unable to 'read' both voices present in such poems as "Them & (uz)" - the textualisations Harrison presents appropriate the propre subjects, the 'classical' structure of the poetry is criticised, but the codified other is analysed 'intact' as though its role makes it effectively external to the entire critical process.

In interrogating what Harrison is actually doing, instead of discussing what he *says* he is doing I hope to produce a critique that demonstrates his works stand *as* productions. The patronising appraisals included in his 'legitimized' critical framework of the Bloodaxe Anthology, which only address what his work stands-*for* are ultimately a limitation and it is time Harrison took responsibility for that which he *signs* for...

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[1] line 13.

[2] As yet these programmes exist only as broadcast, their 'poems' have yet to be published. The text I refer to in detail, of *Loving Memory III:* "Into The Void", I have transcribed as Appendix Three of this thesis.

[3] Derrida, "Tympan", in *A Derrida Reader,* page 150.

[4] Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier and Pierre Sorlin, "October" - *ecriture et ideologie* (Paris, 1976) cited in Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology*, page 270.

[5] Sperber & Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (Oxford, 1986).

[6] The 'sociopolitical' message here is actually in what Harrison finds to be his 'personal' language, and this may explain the success of this montage, as I am suggesting that Harrison is at his most successfully communicative when he is talking about his own situation, and not talking 'for' others, appropriating their discourse; in the Bloodaxe critical anthology, when describing his coming-to-poetry, he frames it in terms of such war-images, specifically the bombing of Leeds, commenting that 'all my images are of the war'.

[7] I refer specifically to the Bloodaxe *Critical Anthology*, with which Harrison was involved, which rejected any material that was too 'academic' and provided specific methodological guidelines as to how Harrison was to be analysed, placing specific emphasis on his inter-textuality and his incorporation of marginalised voices.

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[8]Copyright notice for *The Blasphemers' Banquet* in the Bloodaxe *Critical Anthology*, page 394. My version of the text is taken directly from the television broadcast and my filmtable and analysis were completed before the poem's publication in the Anthology, before, that is, Harrison appropriated the copyright law.

[9]Harrison's effective claim to originate the citations that form *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, to own them, that is expressed in his legal copyright, places him in a corollary position to Searle, in *his* refusal to allow Derrida citation-'rights' of his essay on citation. Here, though, Harrison is going further, applying 'Derridean' notions of iteration before refusing them to others, practising a law whose breaching is the basis of his text(s). See Derrida, "Limited inc abc...".

VERSUS AS OLD AS THE HILLS: *YAN TAN TETHERA*, AND THE REWRITING OF THE TRADITIONAL

2.1 INTRODUCTION: BETWEEN TWO FREQUENCIES

Yan Tan Tethera is characterised by ambiguity - social, contextual, personal, generic - through which cohesion is effected. As I shall show, for the text itself, this means superseding its linear textuality, and providing a way of evaluating and 'realising' the other, what I will show in this thesis to be the central, ambiguities of Harrison's work.

Through the exploitation of accessible genres - folktale, mock pastoral, myth cycle and minimalism (metrical and musical) - which invite the expectation of the floating signifier/signified relationship, Harrison pushes the accepted 'reality' of the text beyond its formal bounds, to parallel the reality of social issues not immediately accessible to his middle class, 'establishment' audience. He does this by extending the process, *propre* to the original genres, of interpreting-by-analogy. As the folktale deals with the central human conflicts, working-out anxieties through the invocation of archetypes that enact the drama[1], so providing a release, catharsis, through the success of the surrogate hero[2], or an acceptance of inevitable evil, purged by vicarious experience[3], so *Yan Tan Tethera* deals with the problems and anxieties of a particular socioeconomic class by modifying these basic formulae. Instead of dealing with wish-fulfilment on an absolute level, *Everyman* seeking wealth-love-and-happiness, it is domesticised - a Northern worker, a shepherd, seeks similar goals in his 'local', albeit 'foreign', defamiliarised, land; the genres are 'brought home'.

To facilitate the transition from convention, the hero is a familiar dramatic archetype, with roots stretching through the *Wakefield Mystery Cycle* plays, set in the *literary*-archetypal environment of late-Renaissance mock-pastoral. From both intertextual fields, he engenders associations of simplicity, honesty and innocence, whilst, citing the tradition of their subsequent uses, interpretation is not limited to the predetermined confines propre to these genres. As both are essentially projections-into-texts of the self, the folktale-hero originally the preliterate self confronting anxieties and feared traumas just as the pastoral-hero was the hypothesized self in an ideal environment, so the nature of Shepherd Alan is fixed by the projections of his audience, he becomes the composite of (their) human desires. As his character-indices float between genres, they create essentially similar images, though with significant differences which hold the two images apart, leaving play between them, a multidimensionality, a stereogram. If the reader, as audience, creates the text, it is the text that defines and redefines what it is that can be created.

This process consciously mirrors the nature of myth - the genre to which Harrison endlessly returns his narratives - as outlined by Levi-Strauss:

> The mythic deduction is always dialectical as in nature, and it is never purely cyclical but rather spiral-like. When the analyst follows a path returning to its point of departure (et the end of a series of transformations), he does not find complete reversibility: he reaches the same longitude but at a different latitude. The distance between the two latitudinal points - beginning and end of the trajectory - is a meaningful semantic fact. The distance may be a matter of framework, code or lexicon, according to the strategy adopted in the investigation[4]

Because one stereotypic projection is followed by another, of a different genre, subsequent textual generic *reversion* does not elicit a congruent retrograde step from the audience; rather their understanding of the character is now composed of two, in the reiterated gaps between which is fuller understanding built. The text draws from a wide range of cultural and generic sources, yet retains a simplicity and 'tightness' of form which acts as a reminder of its rôle as device: it is never entering the full conventions of any pre-existing form, only ever citing them, it only ever exists as a vehicle for these citations. Each facet presented is propre, 'of its type', yet is recontextualised, deriving layer upon layer of fresh *signifiance*s from its new frame, and adding new interpretations to the preceding facets, as it reframes them. The demonstration of these facets' re-stagedness is always self-conscious, citing their *original* stagedness, particularly that of the Elizabethan Masque, the mock-Arcadian staging of which is iterated here in a *designedly* non-naturalistic fashion; showing the falseness of its own representation of genres, *Yan Tan Tethera* shows their artifice.

Whilst remaining true, then, to both the originary genres' explicit and implicit conventions, the text's juxtapositioning and joining of them creates a dialectic which articulates them as a '*sign*'; familiar while engendering the new,

> a sign is a reality perceivable by sense-perception that has a relationship with another reality which the first reality is meant to evoke. Thus, we are obliged to pose the question as to what the second reality, for which the work of art stands, might be[5]

So, whilst what Maranda[6] has called the 'kernel function' of such a linear pseudo-folktale is necessarily simplistic, the text enables an understanding beyond its structural boundaries via its series of 'transformations' (analogous to syntactic transformations). This again reiterates and highlights the *structure* of its masque, Arcadian and minimalist elements, as, in essence, transformational of ritual and folk culture, appropriations of shared art by a particular class or section of the population, 'refinements' *to* genre. This appropriation is, as Harrison is at pains to underline, an interested process inherent to art (his *Orestia* demonstrates the classical Greek origin of the masque as propagandic appropriation of myth), analogous to the writing of

History by the eloquent winners (which he addresses in "*from* The School of Eloquence" - see chapter 4 for a discussion on language and that sequence), but this interestedness is, in the end, inevitable (as Harrison's propagandist *Medea* inadvertently demonstrates), reflecting the original structure of 'communal art', as reflecting the rôles of, and being 'rooted in '

> daily experience, a product of *gemeinschaft* in which the distinction between audience and performer is imprecise.[7]

2.2 STRUCTURE AND THE USES OF STRUCTURE

As a folktale, *Yan Tan Tethera*'s structure is conventional. The 'hero', Shepherd Alan, encounters evil yet overcomes it through magic and ritual. The 'kernel' story even has specious authenticity in its purposed incongruity of Christian and pagan, 'native' elements: the magic rhyme has imposed upon it a layer of religious significance, while the failure of the evil Caleb Raven's pagan ritual is foregrounded by the paradoxical, im-propre, '*Christian* ritual' performed by the twins, which it echoes and inverts. The archetypal 'trickster' figure, stemming from Indian folktale, so stressing at once the universality, communicability *and* appropriability of the genre, acquires overtones of Christianity, becomes 'the Bad *'Un*', and the final symbol of peace becomes the church bell, restored; 'harmony' is metonymically enacted, but in the frame of Christian 'restored faith', suggesting again the process of appropriation, and the interestedness (of the Christian church) in continuing it.[8]

This reappropriation of genre and structure embodies Harrison's aim to make 'art' and 'culture' transcend their given sociocultural limits, to not only return them from their interested positions and break their inherent exclusions, but to redistribute them, reunite the segments of texts that have been appropriated by separate minorities and return them to an unsegregated audience. By utilizing different modes of writing, each audience-member (and each reader in their particular knowledge and lacks *becomes* an interdependent member of a 'full' audience) is made equally familiar and unfamiliar with equivalent aspects of the text, and is made aware of other members' different understandings of linguistic - dialectal - or formal - dramatic/operatic - units and structures.

Yan Tan Tethera appropriates the function as well as the structure of the myth, then, recontextualising social/linguistic divisions in a fresh, other, perspective, at the same time perpetuating the adaptive mutation of the kernel folktale that provides this perspective to the changes in the prevailing culture that have sought to 'forget' it beneath increasingly conventional ('eloquent') written texts. This dual appropriation fits the text with a specious naturalness, as Harrison has keyed it into the development of both society and the becoming-written 'traditional' tale of the typographic age:

> Inherited or international tale-plots or actual experiences [...are] transformed to
> fit the deep ('timeless') structures of culture[9].

Various elements of the tale can be catalogued in the motif-index[10], but the variety of cultures from which each stems shows *Yan Tan Tethera* not to be a folktale proper, but rather a demonstration, as I have suggested, of the universality, validity, cross-cultural accessibility and applicability of the folktale structure, as well as of the enduring presence of folktale intertexts in even 'high' art. The inherent variety of sources and universality of the folktale-structure, though, also articulate what is propre to the myth - its 'depth' (in Maranda's term, above) of scope, constituted by folding in all the meanings of all the tales of all the audience that in themselves are not context- or culturally-bound; as it were, containing the set of which it is a member:

> The folktale can partake of several wholes: all other folktales of the culture,
> the entire oral literature of the groups of its carriers, the audience itself, or the
> folktales of all cultures[11]

So, the folktale-*structure* is a universal vehicle of communication, the audience's response to it sufficiently opened by familiarity and convention, and by the expectation of the unfamiliar, to allow a sort of suspension of disbelief; structural familiarities, in this convention that has operated since childhood, *must* be used to take in differences-from-the-present, which in a more ostensibly 'other' frame could be resisted. Indeed, this familiarity-of-unfamiliarity removes resistances - there is no 'academic' pressure to catch all the allusions, nobody is excluded, even the pre- or non-literate have internalized this structure, and operate it, like everyone, without question[12]. It is through this receptivity and shedding of conventional preconceptions of 'art' that the fable overtly functions, just as it does as articulation of the Jungian archetypes that are similarly shared and projected by the audience's individual and collective unconscious.

The central metaphor of the sheepscoring is deliberately chosen as an unfamiliar symbol/structure for the whole audience[13], so while the familiar provides a way into the text, other aspects are unfamiliar, require linguistic and cultural 'learning', forcing the audience into an enactment of the text; the central, eponymous, aspect defamiliarizes the whole, being part of no shared culture or language, so forcing each audience member to admit some degree of innocence, again stressing this quality (propre, as I have suggested, to each of the genres played with here) of the text in all of us, beneath the misleading 'knowledge' our cultural conventions give each of us.

2.3 FORMALIZATION, RELIGION, AND THE FOLK.

Out of the folktale tradition, then, comes the folk*play*'s stylized narrative progression, linking propre formulaic, invocative structure with the more abstract treatment of comparable universals in the Elizabethan Masque. *Yan Tan Tethera*'s sequential simplicity draws on this source material: the three basic types of English folk play[14] -

'hero combat', 'wooing/bridal', and 'Old Tup' - are all interwoven in a masque structure, performing the folktale's propre 'borrowing' in the doppelganger form that is borrowing it. Again, Harrison's *written* tale appears *orally*-based, and returns notions of 'form', conventionally conceived as propre to 'high art' to this traditional structure, while citing the traditional in the 'high' or formal.

Harrison's interest in this formalization of folktale structures to suit interests is evident from his *York Mystery Cycle*, *The Mysteries*. The mystery play is a distinct genre, composed of the purposive reframing of the folk play's implicit interpretation of its own elements and 'story' by Christianity (this defining aspect of the mystery play is what Harrison will re-apply to myth in his *Medea*, where events are ideologically and dramatically framed by a feminist 'subtext'), so it retains many of the folkplay's features, but becomes selfconscious, selective, and necessarily *post-* the folkplay/propre, in doing so. The *First* and *Second Shepherd's Plays* of the Wakefield or 'Townely' Mystery Cycle directly share structure with *Yan Tan Tethera*; from the opening soliloquies of the two opposing shepherds, to the religious harmony effected at the close, the consistent use of non-localized Northern dialect and of a tight rhyming-scheme, and in the craftedly 'harmonic juxtaposition of comic, serious and secular elements'[15], these plays' similarity to the opera at once demonstrate its generic 'authenticity' and evaluate its reworking of the genre of which, *by deviating from earlier representatives of the genre*[16], it is performing membership.

Likewise, the mock-Arcadian *staging* of *Yan Tan Tethera* points to the realm of wish-fulfilment, for the use of this stylistic convention signals, to the literary audience, that the opera is dealing with projected ideals, a pastoral perfection, whose citation brings with it (since at least *As You Like It*), its own parody, however, and the idea that while this is not the place to develop ideal solutions, in its very self-parodic 'stageyness', it is open to their reworking. Harrison is demonstrating the potential for liberating re-determination of the overdetermined, through the *dissonances* between folktale and pastoral conventions, by cross-contamination, which makes any reversal-to-type, any prospect of return to undeconstructed 'normality', unsatisfactory. This fuels the need to analyse beyond the overt form of the text, which does not settle, provoking, ultimately, the instruction not to take *Harison's* work as given, but to dis-cover the propre, the 'real', in what *he* samples from outside, and his interestedness in appropriating (involving, but also transforming) these elements.

This *moire* of genres is underlined by the opening scene's careful staging, which creates a set of expectations only to destroy them in the creation of another, so deconstructs our expectations of an 'opening' as a *definable* start-point, an origin: the 'sunrise', the archetypal/primeval opening, which situates us at an origin, of a day or of creation itself, is 'without light', lacking its essential, propre, power, as origin, to originate life

or work. This displacement of 'nature' is further underlined as the rising sun ceases and is revealed to only exist as symbol, archetype, the shape being 'in fact' a burial mound, man-made artefact of death, relic of a Pagan past, monument to the power of belief (which has framed the opening as originary sun). Following this tableau (I shall show in later chapters that this significant device is characteristic of Harrison's interpolation of his own interpretations in his texts, especially of *Medea - A Sex-War Opera* and his television works) is the 'real' sunrise, revealing a further layer of artifice in the brightness of a non-naturalistic Arcadian setting: Harrison ensures the audience sees the structural transparency of his work, *textually* signalled in comparing the scenery's mechanics to an 'intricate clock', a metaphor which works equally well for interpretation and perception.[17]

2.4 BREAKING THE BORDERS: TEXT ELEMENTS TRANSCENDING THE TEXT

By so generating a way of thinking his text, Harrison subverts the designed impotence of his chosen medium, removing the accepted parameters of opera as autonomous, high art, and making it engage with the political in that the audience creates this polyphonous text and is thereby implicated in an alien cultural context it would otherwise avoid/leave outside these parameter-borders. This conception of art as the creation of a collective unconscious is akin to the nature of the folktale's performance in preliterate societies, dealing with universals imperfectly perceived (which phallogocentric language has sought to contain but in doing so has particularised, for situation and ideologue), through the symbolic realm of the archetype. This constitutes a replacement of folkloric convention with the disseminatory sign:

> The work of art exists as an 'aesthetic object' located in the consciousness of an entire community. The perceivable artefact is merely, by relation with this immaterial aesthetic object, its outward signifier; individual states of consciousness induced by the artefact represent the aesthetic object only in terms of what they have in common[18].

The text is tailored for no particular audience, but to enable each audience member to reach an equivalent understanding. For the assumed literary audience of Harrison-as-poet, literary-conventional markers, and their transgression, are present, yet the voice of the folktale speaks to all, a narrative structure learned in childhood and taking on a more significant role in adulthood as the voice of the subconscious, dream-structure for fears and desires, which in turn structures stories re-told to children. These folktale archetypes, that is, are the archetypal citations, returned here to reclaim the literary models as their origins, so subverting critical aloofness by re-establishing the pastoral as a mode of *experiencing*, not for analysing, discussing, subsumed needs. This multivalence is typical of folktheatre itself, and of ritual, whose citation cyclically makes propre the use of music, dancing, songs, and the free combination of all aspects

of art, as they are shown to have been reframings of ritual's articulation of subconscious archetypes. This diversity in turn enables a wide-ranging accessibility:

> plurisignation of theatrical art, distinguishing it from any other art, makes it possible for theatrical action to be comprehended simultaneously by spectators of various tastes, various aesthetic standards[19].

The key role of the inserted folkstructure into opera at the same time forces the literary/operatic audience to regain a pseudo-naiveté propre to this structure, and to admit an ignorance regarding other cultures; the impossibility of 'owning', culturally, such a work, means each audience member must put aside preconceptions, which, in terms of the *theme* of *Yan Tan Tethera*, that this polyphonous structure is demonstrating, means putting aside *prejudice*.

2.5 *DIFFERANCE* AS A WEAPON: SHOWING CHANGE

The concept of *differance* is foregrounded as purposive, anticipating the opera's conclusion in its juxtapositioning of actuality and appearance. The two flocks of sheep are differentiated musically, the belled voices of Caleb Raven's Wiltshires 'like something loose from the body' are determined by an external, detached force, the voice of the stolen church bell, marking them from Shepherd Alan's. But this differance, this difference created by and performed as distancing, is *extrinsic*, an un-natural, im-propre distinction 'given voice' as their speech is governed metrically by *diabolic* cadences, 'units of 13, the "unlucky number"'. In this superstition, as well as in its 'vocality', this differentiation utilises the oral canon (particularly the Indian tradition of the talking animal narrator/chorus[20]), which shifts the point of view, so realises the inverse perspective we have here. As throughout Harrison's poetry, orality (this convention continues in the oral culture of the pantomime - *Little Red Riding-Hood, Puss In Boots*[21]) equates with misunderstood, abused, exploited, and as in his poetry, in including it here, he 'gives voice' to those conventionally excluded from literature: this is exploitation felt, not praised as man's triumph.

Significantly, the sheep's voices change at the final stage of the third section, as the mention of the gravemound harmonizes the opposing Pagan power; the 'music of the hill', which is given as a supernatural force in its own right as voice of the past, ultimately stronger than the evil clouding the present. As an 'artificial but organic intruder of the landscape', the hill operates the 'vigorous invented logic via modes of juxtaposition, modes of repetition, modes of change'[22], which Harrison utilises semiotically in all media throughout the opera.

The superficial difference between flocks is not a simple allegorical statement of propre difference, highlighting the validity of physical insularity and prejudice. However

marked breed variation - 'short and down' Cheviots producing coarse, open woollen fabric from different spinning methods to those used to make worsted from the 'long and lustre' Wiltshires - and the concommitant differences in associated industries, transmigration is not excluded, but made more significant. Caleb Raven's complaint,

> For the chalk downs they're queer.
> His sheep have black faces.
> They don't belong here.

states nothing but its uninformed prejudice (re-iterating this theme by the motif of jealousy over grazing rights that is used to signify it, and is catalystic to the central dispute, in the Wakefield Mystery Cycle)[23]. As Alan longs for the familiar bleak Northern landscape, idealizing its barren harshness in a stylized way made traditional by the Brontes and Scott, that is, in a post-literary way made again to show the artifice it is at pains to hide in its originary naturalistic texts, so Caleb Raven resents his intrusion because it suggests an alienness to a received, but no more 'natural' structure. The speciousness of both statements of prejudice is illustrated by the Cheviots' ability to adapt, and breed, in their new environment, their deconstructive viewpoint reducing the opera to what *is* propre, natural, *not* man-made, *pre*-linguistic.

Black against white, an opposition Harrison re-assimilates in much of his work (it is one of his listed 'versuses' in "*v.*", but, far from 'deconstructing' its dichotomy, he begins "Cheating The Void", 'Darkness is oblivion, Memory, light', see Appendix Three), is subverted here into non-racial, anti-conventional distinctions; Caleb ('black') Raven has white-masked sheep, Alan, black. Only colour as *index* of prejudice remains. 'Masks', the traditional *word* for sheep's coloured faces, made literal, 'real' on stage, shows its own loadedness, an artificial marker of difference, sign of appropriation and 'identification' (-*with* an 'owner'), of *usage*.

Shepherd Alan's objections to the South are founded on this prejudice and created-, so, (in the naturalness hypothesis of the opera), false-sentiment. His irrational desire to return home is set against the physical reasons to remain; the evergrowing flock and his pregnant wife dramatize the tension between reality-not-faced and the imagination that is occupied in its stead. Via the conventions of the Masque, the veracity of Alan's beliefs are tested by (and test) the action, providing a semiotic exposition through interaction of reality and textualization. This ambiguity is stretched out as the literary strand is exploited; the pastoral complaint, the loss of Eden, is countered by present images of bounty and fertility. Likewise, the prejudicial rural mythology of superstition around the hazards of 'transplanting' oneself, and the unnaturalness of the unfamiliar, is shown to be interested, an example of the restrictive nature of (oral) belief-systems, having been instigated as local protective mechanism in times of plague

and feudal politics. In the wilful simplicity of the narrative, the move does Alan and his flock literally nothing but good.

It is again the musical articulation of the point that finalises Alan's sentiment as false. The 'Northern Air' which tempts Alan from his prosperity is a musical manifestation, as well as a metaphor, of the myth. That the tune's player, the 'piper', is perceived as the trickster figure later revealed as the 'Bad 'Un' questions its authenticity, suggests that the origin of such a 'harmonious' conception of any real place is imaginary and 'evil' insofar as it reveals an interest in segregation. The 'piper' belongs to both folkloric and pastoral elements of the opera; the piper who invites melancholic complaint in the *Shepherds' Calendar* cites, as well as the Eclogue's uses of song to delude, a motif common to most folk cultures, especially in Europe. This is the piper as 'outsider who removes the object of unhappiness only to reveal the true cause of sadness'[24]. Alan's mistake is illustrated in all the opera's genres, each suggesting its eventual rectification; the dissonance against its background of the 'Northern Air' will be harmonized when it is modulated, shown to operate in a more comprehensive 'language'.

As with the cycling of music through keys to 'resolve', so mythic rites of passage demand Alan's expulsion of his parent culture as a stage in his transition to a fresh culture, and the resolution of settlement:

> Buy absorbing the myths of his social group and participating in its rites, the youngster is structured to accord with his social as well as his natural environment, and turned from an amorphous nature product, prematurely born, into a defined and competent member of some specific, efficiently functioning social order[25].

Psychoanalytically, transition is *enacted* as isolation, a physical loss of community, which may only be ended by a rebirth, cultural and emotional:

> For groups, as well as for individuals, life itself means to separate and to be reunited, to change form and condition, to die and to be reborn. It is to act and to cease, to wait and rest, and then to begin acting again but in a different way. [...] it seems important to me that the passage from one social position to another is identified with a *territorial passage*[26].

In a supplementary act that disallows negation as the means of overcoming prejudice, of the self or the entered community, Alan is ultimately able to participate in a community regenerated by his inclusion, such that both 'sides' accept new ideas. This being concluded by the final revelation of the piper as Bad 'Un returns the opera to its post-mystery play religious gloss, stressing the remedial aspect of 'folk', community and family (here, the twins), in God/(every)man interaction.

So, adaptation is seen as the essential process of self-education, the inherent *personal* response to the world of signs, without which life is (like Caleb Raven's) stagnant, infertile. The occupation of the symbolic realm is seen to necessitate as individually

reactive a process of 'assimilation' as that of 'external reality' for the originally self-oriented child[27]; prejudice, as in Harrison's later, television, work (especially *The Blasphemers' Banquet*), is shown to be an unquestioning entrapment in symbolic systems. The possibility that signs can contain other, equally valid points of view, the possibility that poetry articulates for Harrison (retroactively in "*from* The School of Eloquence" where he faces the different significations of working class and 'eloquent' speech and presents this difference as his own birth into language), is being both told and shown to the audience, then, if they, too, reject their prejudices against other component-cultures of this opera in coming to accept the new, co-operative whole. The validity of the 'coming together' of North and South, in Alan and Hannah, is enacted in *his* success being aided by *her* nurturing, bringing the Southern equivalent of what Harrison elsewhere sees as the essentials of working life, '*cider* and bread' (my emphasis) to the sheep's meat and their common, new understanding of the meaning of the signs around them:

> Butcher, publican and baker, now me, bard
> Adding poetry to their beef, beer and bread[28]

Food, as I shall show, comes to be the symbol of cultural and emotional security in Harrison's poetry (see chapter 4 on "*from* The School of Eloquence"). Again, it shows its traces, and shows them to be various; while it boasts a sensuous appreciation of life, a contact with 'reality' unmediated by language, this boast has a long literary tradition, citing Keats (explicitly in "A Kumquat for John Keats") and the mystery plays' 'homeliness' - the *First Shepherds' Play* of the Townely cycle uses food to re-knit the community. This iteration at the same time of literature and life, symbolism and signification, is vital to Harrison's claim to dual audience; as the citation of Keats indicates, the symbol of food indicates life positively, affirmingly, to the literary audience, while the nonliterary audience perceives it as sign, entirely replacing in its on-stage materiality, a linguistic element[29]. Brought up, as his poetry articulates, where linguistic communication is limited (in both senses - rare and restricted) and emotion operated through a nonverbal implicit code, Harrison uses heavily the 'literary', a stylistic point much criticized[30], as to prove its communicative inefficiency *as* literature while working at the level as intertextual index. But the result is that the 'literal', the limited significations of 'cider and bread' replace the qualities of overdetermination thought propre to the literary, in a cultural reversal where signifier and signified in effect meet.

Alan cannot complete the trilogy of provision, provide the meat to accompany the cider and bread, while ever 'tethera' - the number three - is loaded with barrenness by Caleb's desecrative subtraction from the church, whose 'sweet trinity' it also

constitutes. The importance of the poet to the list of providers becomes clear, as the dominance by signs is what constrains life:

> Bread and cider can't refresh
> a corpse's decomposing flesh.

> The church here's fallen into decay
> since the Bad 'Un stole the bell away.

The terms of evil are *psuedo*-religious, its real penetration into the community displaced by a superstitious invocation of the power of iconography; in a move that will find parallels in Harrison's family's treatment of books as material, and, more frighteningly, in the book-*burning The Blasphemers' Banquet* shows during the 'Rushdie affair', the symbolic bell's removal is transformed into physical reason, the cause not the symptom, the icon imbued with the negativity of the community that it is then felt to hold and be responsible for. The inability to perform ritual worship curtails the practice of belief, which is centred in the realm of acts. Hence the reliance on the morphology of numbers that constitutes "the old Northern shepherds' charm", a use of words as material (not as signs) to ward off Pagan evils, 'the darkness, the demons, the devil'. Christian symbolism is shown to have performed a material, unthought function, as dangerous as any unthought language, and when it is removed, folk superstition performs the same way, showing *its* incorporation into Christianity to have been a mere change of ideolect, suggesting that both - or all - belief systems operate on the same nonlinguistic use of language.

2.6 THE PIVOT: THE 'CLOCKWORK' MOTIF AND ORGANISATION OF GENRES

Once the generic and thematic tensions are established, the opera moves into its climactic mid-point - a pivotal exposition of the multi-layered text, dramatically and musically. The mode changes from folkloric (Hannah's 'lament') to masque-dance, all protagonists are on stage, and they are symbolically aligned into 'opposing' forces, indicating that the metaphors of the text are to be articulated too, in the 'struggle' between belief-customs.

Alan's 'Northern Song' invokes the power of tradition, the 'magical lucky numbers' 3 and 7, the origins of life (man, woman child, 'holy' trinity) and the period of creation. Beliefs are freely blended in his song, *indigenous* flint is transferred from pocket to pocket to mark completed cycles, and the 'rightness' of this adaptation is signalled by the ease of the 'natural', unmarked pentadactyllous scoring system (literally, relying on the natural asset of the counter's five fingers, dactyl as digit, not (metrical) foot), whose pentametrical alliterative and assonantal rhymes facilitate the count, while the sheep number themselves off, lending their *natural* authority to the three/seven system. This is juxtaposed with Caleb's competitive counting, using Arabic digits against Alan

and his sheep's Northern numeral-names, but stressing units of thirteen, the evil number; his sheep's divisions into thirteen suggest domination, unnaturalness, where Alan's have suggested appropriateness, naturalness.

This 'duet' is essentially minimalist in structure, with stress on the main rhythms of the two bass voices offset by their sheep's complementary descants. The shifting pattern caused by the differing rhythms creates a significant series of musical effects; challenge, coincidence, counterpoint. On each beat a different group appropriates the impetus, as the musical structures swoop and the override one another, sometimes competing for dominance as the beat is shared (as on 'thirteen' and 'tethera', on the 13th stress, 7+3+3). Meanwhile the designedly 'minimalist' (Birtwistle is not a minimalist composer, but is significantly citing them here) use of chromatics and arpeggio-formations in the woodwind (citing Glass) and the contrapuntal rhythms of 'tuned hard sticks' (citing Reich's 'percussion' phase), emphasise the 'competing' texture, until the ultimate victory of Alan's rapid, measured repetition is signalled by Caleb's losing 'pace'; in a demonstration of Cage-esque interpersonal musical dynamics, his identity degenerates into a parodic version of the original 'natural' theme of his rival. The passage encompasses violent counterpoint, then Eclogic comedy (Harrison's stage direction suggest a 'Gilbert & Sullivan "patter song"'), then resignation to the natural use of breath and rhythm; Caleb is left 'breathless', 'out of step', 'disharmonic' (in more revivified metaphors), and doomed.

The spiralling 'yan tan tethera' rhyme, the revolving hills[31], the changing backdrop of seasons and progression of (solar) time place events in a time*less* context. The importance of the rhyme to this transcendent context appropriates the rhyme-as-talisman of the *First Shepherds' Play* of the Townely cycle; the drawing of a cross 'to make sure nothing scares us' is coupled with the rhyme

> Christ's cross, blessed East and West,
> Let nothing fright us
> Jesus onazarus
> Cruceyfixus
> Marcus, Andreus
> May God protect us!

This archetypally folkloric use of a given structure, the Christian prayer-structure, as a 'direct rite' (the term is van Gennep's, for an incantation attached to concrete situations and performed as sufficient to itself, as a sort of speech act), containing inaccurate oral transmissions ('onazorus'), performed *anachronistically* (before Christ's birth in the play), lends the force of authenticity to Harrison's non-historical usage of the rhyme to invoke a timeless, passed-on, always-valid sign.

So, the symbolic power-struggle supersedes its simple elements, leaving the 'reality' of the drama behind, the mundane (scoring ritual) expanded semiotically into a cultural demonstration and conflict, then into a spiritual incantation of naturalness and 'good' out of time. Harrison perceives this event as having the 'movement and immobility of a mechanical device' (s.d.), the stasis at the centre of confrontation, echoed in the 'static blocks' of Birtwistle's music[32], and the ritualistic enactment of the struggle ironically glossing the 'timelessness' of the set-piece, suggesting a lack of 'progress' in the energy expended in conflict. Action continues, but as an inward spiral, a condensation into a single dance, following the enduring, reducing struggle of life; evil as a never ending force always negating energy in exertion. From this organized chaos of conflict, masque-convention summons all participants on stage at once, in a formal interaction before the dénouement establishes a new order.

Conventionally to all invoked genres, this scene should end the 'action'. In folkloric structuration, the hero has overthrown evil in a contest, aided by magic[33]; the pastoral's Arcadia has been purged and renewed; psychoanalytically, neurosis has been 'spoken': and musically, the dominant theme restores harmony over jarring structures, establishing accord where the time-signature *has* changed as often as once every four bars. However, it is demonstrably not enough to emerge with *a* faith; the Northern charm's potency is weakened by the very reliance placed upon it as signified, replacing the North and embodying only iconic value. Prejudices survive Alan's absorption of the local mythology:

> Men say that his pipe's made of finger bones
> that come from the dead that lie under these stones. (306)

His cobbled faith does not have the weight of true adopted culture, hence he can disregard it, to be led away by the piper's specious Northern Air.

The early textual simplicity lulls the audience into expecting a structural progression based on the evidence of the choreographed conflict; Harrison makes specious conclusions psychologically inevitable, from his selection of genres and medium. But in performing a simple analysis of the text, the audience-member is engaged in the societal conflicts being articulated; the black/white, Christian /Pagan, North/South 'divides' are either entered or condemned, and even this act involves taking sides (with Radicalism, nonaggression, etc.), and the receiver becomes a participant, falling into the trap of 'black and white' prejudiced judgements.

2.7 THE ORIGIN OF THE PROBLEM

The crux of this involvement lies in the reception of the Yan Tan Tethera charm; folklorically evidently belonging to a lost culture, from whence derives the hero's magic, which situates the action in turn in terms of a domestic, 'modern' pastoral.

However, this central Northen symbol stands to be interpreted as a sign of another kind, radically shifting the emphasis of the conflict, leaving the audience standing guilty of the shepherds' own prejudiced thought-processes. For the linchpin of the divisive argument is false in itself. The 'Northern Charm', an archaic novelty established with the opening's 'rough crags' and 'moaning winds', is *Celtic* in origin (and, as with Medea's feminin-ity and his forbears' ineloquence, Harrison has made origins, sociocultural 'propre-ness' crucial), stemming from Welsh counting systems, and never recorded uséd by shepherds.

The first sheepscoring record is Ellis's (1877-79) paleotypological, the *sound* being of more interest than its source, furthered by Witty (1927) and Barry (within the last twenty years). Barry follows Ellis's conclusion that the rhyme has been 'obsolete since at least the last quarter of the last century [i.e. the 18th]', and points out that its fall from use has left it open to further transformation in counting games and knitters'[34] mnemonics, as the Opies' research indicates[35]. Specific variants centre around three areas - Wensleydale, having seven instances, is the significant 'Northern' region[36].

The origins of the rhyme affect the perception of what has happened in the text. The 'survival theory' fits the tenor of the opera; the rhyme survives among pockets of Celts trapped in wild moorland areas during the Anglo-Saxon invasion. This assures folkloric validity, situating the charm as Pagan relic (associating it, as in the opera's opening, with the 'music of the hills'), conferring fertility and protection over Celtic descendants as well as validating claims to inherent differences between North and South, seeing separated sheep breeds as indicators of less visible distinctions between the shepherds' races and belief-systems:

> The tradition in England was that counting-out rhymes were remnants of formulas used by the druids for choosing human sacrifice. Charles Taylor mentions it in *The Chatterings of The Pica*, and 70 years later Gomme gave credence to it[37].

Whilst denying 'Yan Tan Tethera' the authenticity of a truly *Northern* charm, this theory, the one implicit in the opera's offered reception of itself, allows for the charm's mystique as 'heritage'.

However, Barry points to the lack of evidence; there is none for the score's existence before 1745. Dramatic variations point not to 'an organic development', but to their being 'imperfectly acquired'. Ellis's conclusion also suggests they are newer, selfconscious, even:

> I am inclined to regard them as a comparatively recent importation[38].

'Yan Tan Tethera' is not an intrinsic, propre Northern charm, nor a relic, but is itself a recently-borrowed piece of alien culture, a demonstration of being framed and assimilated the way *it* frames and assimilates alien culture in the opera. 'Importation

theories' suggest it originates from either a Brythonic population at Strathclyde or from medieval or post-medieval Wales[39]. The latter 'origin' is most likely, on linguistic grounds: Ellis's morphological approach traces the transition of Welsh numerals to subtly different signifieds in a different culture:

> The word for 1 is also very nearly Welsh 'un', but it has been confused with the Northern dialect word 'yon' by a process of which the connecting links are preserved[40].

Similarly (and significantly to Harrison's choice), Witty found the Celtic language's *musicality* and its *disconnectedness* from referents motivate appropriation:

> attractiveness and musical alliteration had a great deal to do with the spread of the numerals[41]

Given these motivations, then, adaptability and attractiveness, Northern shepherds could easily impose a new etymology, from assumed *shared* origins with their own language, enabling the words a parallel, newly meaningful function:

> It was also natural that sounds resembling the known English words should be reduced to an English form. Thus Welsh 'un ar bymtheg might be mispronounced [eeun u bumfik] and then heard as [yaan . uboon], being taken to mean 'one above the last number', and Welsh 'ugain' for 20 might be taken to mean 'begin again'[42].

Likewise '3, tethera, [...] confused with t'other' (Ellis, ibid.) and the dialect for 'ta' for 'you', giving a sequence 'yan' - one, that one, or me; 'tan' - two, or you; 'tethera' - three, or t'other, a literalistic signifying interpretation of given folk counting scheme signifieds. This exemplifies the universal process of rhymes' adaptation in oral, pre- or non-literate cultures, lacking the written standard of an 'authorised version' and its (legal) associations of right and wrong:

> Thus we find variations, even apparently creative ones, occur more often by accident than by design. Usually they come about through mishearing or misunderstanding.[43]

Shepherd Alan's name is also originally Celtic: derived from the river Alne[44] - a Celtic-Yorkshire river still so named. 'Alan' demonstrates the propre adaptation and adoption of local and localised cultures *before* poetry, Harrison, frames it as doing so in an attempt to persuade 'him' (those for whom he stands) to be himself.

Alan's name speaks this history of adaptation and preservation even as he performs the processes in the name of 'his' rhyme, which becomes propre to him not as 'Northern' (as the opera designates them) nor as 'Celtic' ('survivals' of another age that the opera assumes), but as figure of the impossibility of the originary, let alone regional or racial, propre. Further, the name acts as a sign that is retained in *its* 'penetration into new territory'; the opera's cyclical semiotic elements are self-reflexive, in that characters

apprehend the future in the frame - language, behaviour, art - of past events, in what is seen to be the enduring circle of folklore in its apprehension of working life.

This exchange and intermarrying of cultures *as propre to them*, as characteristic of what cultures are (as much as citation of texts is shown to be characteristic of what texts are, and with the same deconstructive consequences for notions of propriety, property, and originality), is vital to our perception of the text.

The *actual* incorporation of a foreign culture adds a fresh perspective to our understanding of what the text is, no longer belonging to one culture and isolating others (even under the guise of 'inclusion'), but amenable, indeed composed of, adaptation, assimilation. In an opera this point becomes particularly salient, as the cross-cultural heritage of the art form is 'written out' in a movement of appropriation by those interested in the preservation of 'high art' that is managed by them such that those excluded claim to prefer *their* situation. In referring to those outside the theatre for its interpretation, *Yan Tan Tethera* speaks, while still in its propre language, of those whom conventional dictates would not understand.

This culture of adaptation is demonstrated by Barry's speculation on the scoring system's many modes of dissemination; by North-country men returning from work in Wales to their children, who received it as a novelty (much of our folklore is 'preserved' in the adaptive environment of the playground, as the Opies have recorded); by migrating Welsh woollen-workers whose industry declined at the beginning of the industrial revolution; and by men bringing Welsh sheepdogs to the North. The Pately Bridge scores, significantly closer to Welsh 'originals' than others, are attributable to the arrival of Welsh lead miners.

Involved in this *mis en abyme* of adaptation and adaptability is Harrison himself - in a movement of folkloric authenticity, he claims he first heard the rhyme on his uncle's Cumbrian farm, as a boy[45]. It is being returned in song to the oral repertoire from which it arrived, having undergone 'updating' and transformation that ensure it does not fossilize, but, returning it to the same place, make it new.

This antecedence is present in the text as a indicator of belief, Van Gennep's 'indirect contagious rite', which orders life, protects from abstract evil and ensures prosperity and fertility. The power of the belief lies in the harnessing of the individual's energy to an evidently 'potent' formularization, the trust that they will survive as it has, in the power *of* belief, of transcendence.

The charm's transformation - from other to propre - models the spread of language and customs, *and* the freedom from dominance of the individual, dominance as much by

uninterrogated belief as by totemic language, if he/she can also 'take on' other properties to a flexible belief-frame.

Adoption and adaptation become the opera's keys, then, as what seemed to be domination by linear tradition is rethought as the invocation of change and indomitable dissemination, what seemed to be division is shown to be the demonstration of necessary difference within a constantly renewed culture. Alan must go beyond the reiterative *assimilation* to the cognitive *adaptation* of his environment, so overcome the discontent he feels after the contest with Caleb.

2.8 SARCEN STONES: BRINGING CULTURE IN

This final transition is centred around the 'sarcen stones', iconic remnants of the civilisations this opera's myth and ritual cites. The superstitions surrounding these monumental stones derives from their *alien* perpendicular presence in an otherwise undulating landscape, signifying the adaptation of the 'original' environment by the settlers now burried in the two mounds occupied by Alan and Caleb. The process of incorporation is demonstrated in their integral role within the local belief systems, their *re*-naming, marking their difference, and bringing them within a local signifying structure:

> These sarsen stones owe their name to something strange in their appearance: the country people called them saracens because they felt that these harsh, angular blocks were alien to the yielding curves of the chalk on which they lay.[46]

As with the structure of myth, the imported cultural referent retains its contextualising 'foreignness' as propre to itself, the different quality functions as that which the original community defines itself against, and in this process the external becomes incorporated as necessary. The three protagonists' attitudes towards this importation marks their degree of prejudice: Alan's fear of the stones in their symbolic role of Other allows them to exercise what he believes to be their propre power, to *separate* him from his borrowed community. Their framing as 'foreign' invokes his own, the force that brought them to their new context being linked with antagonistic attraction to 'their' origins:

> Men say that his pipe's made of finger bones
> that come from the dead who lie under these stones,
> these enormous, enormous sarsen stones.
>
> Some of 'em must weigh nigh on fifty ton,
> you'd need a 100 yoke of oxen just to drag one -   (306)

In searching for mythic origins, Alan projects the Piper to derive from the unsettled remains of the Celts, adapting local superstition to express personal dissatisfaction; specious logic, leaving him prey to the temptations of the Bad 'Un.

Caleb desires to *possess* the origins, to control the stones, gain access to the treasures/power they contain; their totemic nature structures them as an index of fertility, the gold burried beneath them is the key to win Hannah:

> all I need to complete my life
> is the red gold that decks the bones
> stretched out beneath these sarsen stones.   (307)

This is a theocentric gesture against the polyphony proper to myth. The refusal to allow importation (his hatred of Alan), or to accept (his) contextual multivalency leads him to attempt the appropriation of what is culturally 'Other', enacted through his impropre repetition of the Northern sheepscoring rhyme to gain access to the mound, the source of its power, symbolised by the gold. The move to control necessarily fails, as the disseminatory nature of myth, belief systems, evades governance in that they have no origin, the process of re-writing, re-formulising is propre to the structure itself, and in attempting to contain this universalisation the individual is involuted within the historical contextualisation, the myth, like the mound, absorbs him, his claim of centricity being just one more voice among the many - the lonely cry of 'Tethera Dik'.

Finally, Hannah, voice of the feminine, enacts the process of adaptation that mirrors the opera's thesis. The belief systems of the stones' 'original' erectors as totemic markers of fertility are continued within their *re-contextualisation* as part of local superstition (*'old country charm'*, s.d. 309) framed by her indirect rite to ensure a safe pregnancy - the passing of a shawl through the stone's hole, the safe journey through the threshold promising its successful repetition in childbirth.

This continuation of myth again demonstrates the cultural adaptation process, as the significance of the appearance that provokes the identificatory act, is itself a historical accident:

> 'Grey Wethers', so called from their resemblance to sheep are sarcen or sandstone boulders, the fragments of a former capping to the chalk in remote times. Palm trees grew in this, their roots causing holes in the stones. Sarcens were much used for megalithic buildings around 2000 B.C.[47]

Hannah, embodying the fragmentary feminine, personifies cultural assimilation, iterated towards the close of the opera by her accepting twin boys not 'properly' hers. Through this created unity -'now we are 1-2-3, *yan, tan, tethera*,' (315) - she makes possible her own sons' and husbands' return.

Ultimately, the opera itself enters the realm of myth, becomes, as will Harrison's Medea, a reappropriation of (a) myth for our times, constructed propre-ly of

> products of popular imagination [...] organized into a meaningful [...] narrative form [...] a visible totality48.

It adopts and adapts genres of the 'universal' to reflect the totality of available cultures, ultimately in a message (transcendent of 'culture') enabled by their interplay and its comprehensive framework,

> the analytical principle of coexistent, superimposed, yet interpenetrating levels of meaning, which if *properly* applied reveals that myths are, structurally, systems of signs, and functionally, basic codes of communication between man (sic.) and the world49.

The structure becomes sign in its exploitation of genre and its layering of techniques and language, effecting means of communication constituent parts are each unable to provide. It is Harrison's most explicit use of 'translation' of disparate genres to return art to its propre, universal, demonstration of education and freedom, to show all genres' 'origins' and performance - life - as adaptation, so to involve his audience in art's perpetual and necessary regenerative spiral, transcendence:

> 'transcendental deduction [...] requires a true reasoning process rather than a simple judgement' [...it] does not stem from observation but from logical requirements; it rests on a relation between concepts no longer bound to external reality but connected 'according to their compatibilities and incompatibilites in the architecture of the mind'50.

It is not sufficient to be aware of the conventions and clichés exploited in the postmodern text, and as I shall show it is central to Harrison's project to show them at work, so show where they come from, to whom they 'belong' and how they perform. Their underlying structures are within each of us, their sources surround and effect us, and their deconstruction and re-appropriation effects us all; only when we all enter the rethinking of the structures and interests of language and art can change be effected.

[1]See Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, for the genesis of this analysis.

[2]This process endures in fairy-tales and pantomime; *Cinderalla, Puss in Boots* are shown to be exemplars of this 'use' of traditional oral texts in Opie & Opie, *The Classic Fairy Tales.*

[3]An example of this European use of the folktale is *Youth Everlasing and Life Without End*, in *Romanian Folk Tales.*

[4]Levi-Strauss, cit Maranda & Kongas-Maranda, eds., *The Structural Analysis of Oral Tradition*, page xvi.

[5]Mukarovsky, "Art as Semiotic Fact", in Matejka & Titunik, eds., *The Semiotics of Art - Prague School Contributions*, page 5.

[6] In Maranda & Kongas-Maranda, eds., *The Structural Analysis of Oral Tradition*, page 4.

[7]Bigsby, "The Politics of Poular Culture", in *Approaches To Popular Culture*, page 7.

[8]In folkloric terms, interweaving the structure of the text with that of the Christian appropriation of Paganism which it cites, we can see the transformer[8], 'Pagan Peasant' as 'Christian 1', in the free intermingling of belief-systems in the central section, and as 'Christian 2 Urban' in the final movement, as Christianity becomes the dominant force. *Organised* religion frames all beliefs in its symbolism at the close, the restored church bell being paralleled with awareness of 'community', a formerly un-speakable concept, lacking referent, in the opening, isolationist staging, to which we are returned, but at a different 'latitude'. The 'agent term' of the folkloric structure of the text likewise undergoes set stages of transformation; from 'Caleb Raven', with its Pagan associations of 'black' and 'supernatural evil'[8], through the 'Bad 'Un' - a 'Christian 1' conception of evil, yet invoking Celtic personification, who is despatched finally as a general, mythic, evil presence. Finally, the 'object term' changes from 'abduction of shepherd' (and associated material loss) through the semiotic, 'Christian 1' equation, 'absence of hero = absence of light', to the symbolic 'Christian 2' mode 'abduction of goodness' which is made apparent on its restoral, a *received* good.

[9]Maranda & Kongas-Maranda, eds., *The Structural Analysis of Oral Tradition*, page 2.

[10]Organized thematically, the following selected motifs from Stith Thompson's *Motif Index of Folk Literature* demonstrates the range of cultures on which Harrison has drawn in composing *Yan Tan Tethera* (I am indebted to Prof. John Widdowson for first suggesting the presence in this text of folk-motifs):

S140	cruel abandonments and exposures	India: Thompson-Balys
L111.1	exile returns and succeeds	
R131	exposed or abandoned children rescued	
S314	twins exposed	Italian novella:Rotunda: Greek:Grole I:103
D642	maltreated children transformed	
S414	woman abandoned when with child	Buddhist myth, malalasekera
S441	cast-off wife and child abandoned in forest	India: Thompson-Balys
L113.1.4	Shepherd as hero type 922	Jewish: Newman
M217	Bargain with devil	Spanish:Italian (M211 Eng)
A315.1.1	twins as culture heroes	India: tales (280n.35)
D563	transformation by encircling object 3 times	N.A.Indian
D1273.1	magic spells mixed with Christian prayers	Irish myth
D1273.1.1	3 as magic number	Irish:Jewish:French-Canadian
D1273.1.3	7 as magic number	Irish:English:Jewish:French-Canadian:Siberian
D1273	magic song	Africa:Greenland:Irish: Chinese

(other motifs are of increasingly indirect borrowing)

[11]Maranda & Kongas-Maranda, eds., *The Structural Analysis of Oral Tradition*, page 1.

[12]Folklore-studies reveal that he folktale-narrative, applied to folktales-proper or mundane stories, is the first learned by children (J. Widdowson, personal communication)

[13]Personal communication with the author, 23.5.88

[14]As identified by Peter Harrop; see "Towards A Morphology of The English Folk Play", *Lore And Language*, vol. 5, No. 2. Interestingly, the 'Old Tup' theme, of slaughter and resurrection, properly of the ram, ('Old Tup') is displaced from the symbolic into the personal realm: it is Shepherd Alan who is abducted, 'killed', then restored. The symbol of fertility and regenerative power is so embodied in

the shepherd, as is indicated in 'reality', in the fertility of his wife and his flock's rapid increase. Harrop identifies the basic theme of such plays as 'bringing fertility to the places and people visited'[14], though in *Yan Tan Tethera*'s human sacrifice, this is reappropriated from this Pagan/archetypal analysis to the Christian implications of 'multiplication', Christian 2 'goodness'.

[15]A.C. Cawley, "A Modernised Version of The Wakefield 'First Shepherd's Play'", *Transactions of The Yorkshire Dialect Society*, vol. ix, part LI.

[16]This divergence-as-joining is Derrida's 'law of the law of genre'; see my chapter on Harrison's *In Loving Memory*, which is in part a discussion of the author's persuasive uses of this 'law'.

[17]The third strand of the text, equally important though of its nature harder to isolate, is music; it unites all elements, re/defining their structures and rhythms from those of prose (folktale), to poetry (folkplay, mysteryplay, masque), to song, it sets the tenor for the performance, adding shade and nuance to the purposively 'simple' text. This opening sequence's Pagan/ritualistic framing of the opera, for example, is signalled by 'bells, drums and harp', reminiscent of Celtic folk instrumentation, with the conventional *orchestral* instruments coming in later with scenic 'sophistication', animating the received nature of the invoked mythicism as contemporary classical music. This music sets a solemn mood, never 'overtaking' the source-material, but creating a contemporary *background*, the opera's 'real' context, with low-pitched 'pp - mp' crescendos 'behind' arrangements of percussive instruments, underlining, echoing, the air of expectation the staging creates. The ebb and swell of strings and woodwind plus the increasing pace through cyclically changing time-signatures musically enacts the unnatural 'dawn', the Arcadian element being followed by the bird motif (bar 25) of the flute. Set against its selfconsciously contemporary musical background of threatening, atmospheric, but non-naturalistic tones, however, the representational motif becomes unnerving - particularly as the barren landscape finally revealed also seems devoid of all 'natural' elements, and the 'out of place' (invoked) bird, in its natural and conventional associations, conversely comes to signify the *artificiality* of the opera's structure as a whole.

[18]Mukarovsky, "Art as Semiotic Fact", in Matejka & Titunik, eds., *The Semiotics of Art - Prague School Contributions*, page 8.

[19]"Semiotics in The Folk Theatre", in Matejka & Titunik, eds., *The Semiotics of Art - Prague School Contributions*, page 44. This obviously serves Harrison's non-separatist aims, as his choice and foregrounding of the folktale-structure in his combination of genres does not exclude the working class from comprehending it, although *scio*cultural barriers make unlikely their seeing it - *Yan Tan Tethera*'s televising (even though more accessible than the text's intentions, in ignoring Harrison's masque-elements in favour of naturalism thought propre to its folkloric theme) stands as no more than a token of 'mass-accessibility' of the kind Harrison's later struggle with propre television forms for poetry attempt to transcend; *especially* in a television context, a television-viewing class would not choose to watch an opera.

[20]See Thompson, *The Folktale*. The Hindu source of this 'talking animal' convention in representational deities has here been in part overlaid with Christian overtones - the 'good shepherd', reversed, leading his flock astray - just as the Bible's parabalistic form is shown to be a dialectical borrowing of Eastern folk structures. The sheep's singing is constrained by the number associated with the disciples at the last supper (Waring, comp., *A Dictionary of Omens and Superstitions*).

[21]See Perrault, in Opie & Opie, *The Classic Fairy Tales*.

[22]Birtwistle, notes to *Silbury Air*. This peice is an expansion on the prehistoric mnound/artificial landscape theme of *Yan Tan Tethera*.

[23]A.C. Cawley, "A Modernised Version of The Wakefield 'First Shepherd's Play'", *Transactions of The Yorkshire Dialect Society*, vol. ix, part LI.

[24]Lonsdale, *Animals And The Origin of Dance*, page 181. Typified for contemporary audiences by the pied piper of Hamlyn, this figure has also come to literature in from Norse mythology in Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*, and is found in Native American folklore ("The Night Escape of The Flute-Player") and in some of the oldest Chines myths ("The Daughters of Ho Lin, King of Wou, and The Crane Dance") (Lonsdale, *Animals And The Origin of Dance*, page 38-39).

[25]Campbell, "The Importance of Rites", in *Myths To Live By*, page 46.

[26]van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*.

[27]Silverman, ed., *Piaget, Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, is a collection around the similarities between adult, linguistic, development, and childhood transitions, as processes of individuation.

[28]"v.", ll.1-2.

[29]This is Hervey's definition of 'sign': Hervey, *The Science of Semiotics.*

[30]Christopher Reid, *TLS* 15.1.82, Blake Morrison, *London Review of Books* 14.4.82.

[31]The musically-inspired tableau is reflected in the staging. The mounds revolve, Alan's clockwise, Caleb's 'widdershins' in a mark of evil, and the sheep group and regroup in an elaborate formal dance. Harrison is again evoking masque (*Comus'* dance of the bottles), but also the folkloric use of dance as forum of aggression and confrontation, a primitive articulation of power-struggle in which the victor continues dancing alone, adding humiliation and spiritual defeat to his opponent's demise. As Caleb ceases, 'breathless', his sheep, being too few now to count, stand still.

[32]Birtwistle, notes to *Silbury Air.*

[33]A fundamental 'type' of folktale structure. Thompson, *The Folktale.*

[34]This use occurs is cited in Harrison's earlier drafts of the opera where Alan is a sailor, and his wife uses the counting charm while awaiting his return, knitting sweaters:
She counted stitches under her breath
like someone repeating a charm against death-
Yan, Tan, Tethera......
In Harrison's working draft notebooks, unpublished.

[35]Opie, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes,* and Opie & Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren.*

[36]Barry, "Yorkshire Sheepscoring Numerals", in *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society,* vol. xii, part LXVII.

[37]Opie, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes,* page 12.

[38]Ellis, "The Anglo-Cumric Score", in *Philological Society Transactions* 1877-79, page 322.

[39]Barry, "Yorkshire Sheepscoring Numerals", in *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society,* vol. xii, part LXVII.

[40]Ellis, "The Anglo-Cumric Score", in *Philological Society Transactions* 1877-79, page 322.

[41]Witty, "Sheep and Sheepscoring", in *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society,* vol.xi, part LXVI, pp 41-49.

[42]Ellis, "The Anglo-Cumric Score", in *Philological Society Transactions* 1877-79, page 322. Ellis's 'phonetics' are 'paleotypical', predating the I.P.A.

[43]Opie & Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren,* page 8.

[44]Thompson, "Celtic Place Names in Yorkshire", in *Transactions of The Yorkshire Dialect Society,* vol. xi, partLXVI. Celtic names are assimilated *because* 'rivers and their valleys form a natural means of penetration into new territory and therefore are likely to have been of sufficient interest and importance to the English Settlers for them to have discovered and preserved at least some of their names' (Thompson, ibid.)

[45]Personal communication with the author, 23.5.88

[46]Hawkes, J. Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian Society Transactions, Old Series, Vol III, 1877, page 10; in Tony Harrison's working-draft notebooks.

[47]Cutting pasted in Tony Harrison's working-draft notebooks.

[48]Barbu, "Popular Culture - A Sociological Approach", in Bigsby, ed., *Approaches To Poular Culture,* page 48

[49]Barbu, "Popular Culture - A Sociological Approach", in Bigsby, ed., *Approaches To Poular Culture,* page 48

[50]Miranda (citing Levi-Strauss's *Mythologies*), in Maranda & Kongas-Maranda, eds., *The Structural Analysis of Oral Tradition,* page xv.

WRITING AGAINST SPEECH: THE SUBJECT OF "*FROM* THE SCHOOL OF ELOQUENCE"

> *You're supposed to be the bright boy at description*
> *and you can't tell them what the fuck to put!*
>
> I've got to find the right words on my own.[1]

3.1 FOREWORD: LANGUAGE SPEAKING *PROPRE*

Within the open-ended sonnet sequence "*from* The School of Eloquence" can be traced a discrete series of poems dealing specifically with the use and limitation of language, its performance as at once linking and separating people. This network reflexively engages with the problem of communication and form, utilizing the rhetorical sophistication *propre* to the sonnet structure to provide a means of incorporating the marginalised varieties of language that, defying easy formalization, lack a medium of expression and pass into the 'silences' and aberrant traces that underwrite the logocentric, interested version of History.

This group includes "Heredity", "The Rhubarbarians 1", "On not being Milton", "A Good Read", "Book Ends", "Marked With D", "Bringing Up", "Wordlists" and "Blocks", but operates the open-endedness propre to the sequence and its ethos of nonexclusivity, so infects several sonnets ostensibly dealing with other subjects, and demonstrates that the marginalized voices speak to some extent in all poetry. The argument of the group takes the form of a deconstruction of the nature and segregating interestedness of 'eloquence'. Harrison's 'eloquence' is the poetry's double-bind; it is specifically eloquent as selfconsciously propre - the poems of the sequence are sonnets, and of a being-crafted, in-process variety - and, generally, it speaks the 'received', 'standard' form of English that Harrison finds he is bound by, which alienates him socioculturally and communicatively from his parents. Harrison's linguistic dexterity, in taking this eloquence to its limit and juxtaposing it with his stammering, 'ineloquent' origins, extends the formal boundaries of the sonnet form; at the same time, he uses the sonnet's position as literary and social icon to provide a body of tradition against which to demonstrate the inarticulateness of his own silent 'history', the web of unheard voices of his working-class family and background.

Inevitably, the operation deconstructs its own premise, as while generating a poetry

that acknowledges the intrinsic fluidity and expressiveness of *spoken*, or oral, working-class speech, allowing the awkward, non-standard language of urban Leeds to achieve a grace and eloquence its original speakers felt it lacked, the 'translation' process itself points to the depersonalisation inherent in 'eloquence'. This situates the poet's voice as emergent, coming from 'orality' *through* 'literacy', but not resting in its ease, and the poet as *subject-in-process*, produced by the struggle to engage with the tensions of linguistic mastery in a bid to be present-to *all* of his voices. Eloquence is the poems', and the poet's enablement, of a communicative unification which generates significance in the play of languages, rather than the reductive, formal, standardisation the sequence shows ineloquence to suffer from as much as 'standard' English.

The progress towards accomplishing this aim, performed confessionally from the confrontational stance of "Book Ends 1" to the growth of self-knowledge in "Blocks", is accompanied by the regretful recognition that *linguistic* reconciliation has been achieved too late to be reproduced in the personal realm. It is only via familial misunderstandings and tongue-lashings, which the poems stand to retrospectively expiate, that this dynamic meeting of forms and cultures came to be formed. It is a painful sequence, a poetry of personal as much as sociolinguistic necessity, which enables the birth of a self from contradictory, potentially destructive elements, but one born, in personal terms, too late.

Thus an *almost* valedictory tone is encapsulated in the epigraph's symbol of the ticket *to* 'The School of Eloquence':

> [...]When arrested he was found in possession of a ticket which was perhaps one of the last "covers" for the old LCS: *Admit for the Season to the School of Eloquence.*[2]

Harrison, through his education, has gained an 'eloquence' which seemed to his family to promise admission to an elite, an éntre which was ambivalently a source of pride, misunderstanding and mistrust. However, like the fake LCS ticket, eloquence provides the experience of the *reality* of the limitations boundedness implies; the ostensive entry into one realm merely enables the ability to perceive its role as '"cover"', and to question how eloquent elite appropriate its borders as social, 'real', which the excluded respect in their reflexive constitution as 'outside'. The sequence I discuss here engages with the projected power of eloquence by those who don't

posses it (specifically the uncles, Joe and Harry, stammerer and mute, who frame the sequence), the pressure exerted on Harrison to use this to compensate for their lacks, and the paradoxical loss, of their 'voice', that Harrison himself discusses as the 'price' of his ticket to this literary/linguistic elite. The ticket-metaphor is apposite, the sequence is figured as a journey whose origin is not recognised until it is lost, and is re-thought at various stages, of which the last has yet to be reached: it is this *lack* of a prepared solution that provides the logic with which to read the sonnets. The personal is underwritten by the yet-unformed language in which it will be variously expressed. This chapter provides the basis from which to explore the body of the sonnet sequence, which attempts to re-examine Harrison's relationships with his family. The problems of growing away from his background are, the sequence demonstrates, more properly psychoanalytic than sociolinguistic, traumas of which the linguistic alienation discussed below is merely symptomatic.

3.2 INTRODUCTION: ELOQUENCE AND THE DEATH OF THE SPEAKER

"*From* The School of Eloquence" lacks the authoritative and unifying presence proper to the sonnet sequence form. The absence of a speaking subject is not only the deconstructive condition of *writing*, here, the inadequation-to-intention that the sonnets oppose to *speech* in their form and content. Rather, its insistence comes to suggest a presence, but one that is not yet at home. Repeatedly, speaking-of and performing writing's annihilation of the self, the sonnets' voice is engaged in the struggle to establish a transcendent subjectivity.

The poems retrospectively trace the development of the problem that has led to their writing: the gaining of self-consciousness at the expense of the self that one has become conscious of. They become the only possible vehicle that can arrest this displacement and allow self-knowledge a place to co-exist with what it has displaced.

Harrison's text deals with a second birth. It tells of the adopting of a new life, contrary and necessarily exclusive of his original background. This can be contextualized in terms of his re-socialization as 'middle-class' and alienation from his working-class family and community. I discuss elsewhere[3] how this cultural transition became crystalized in the poet's acquisition of Standard English(SE)/Received Pronunciation(RP), creating communication difficulties

between this 'typographic' code and the 'oral' code of Harrison's family[4]. However, complementary difficulties in respect of his new peer group arise because accent, dialectal lexiemes, and syntactic variants - linguistic traces of his former 'self' - are present in his rendition of the new 'code', the acquisition is incomplete. The sonnets relate the social experience of this metamorphosis, then, and personal ambivalence at the traces of the originary state that forbid complete rebirth.

3.3 THE USES OF ELOQUENCE

These socio-cultural rites of passage function as structural metaphors for the divided self which inevitably features as text speaker in Harrison's work; the formalization of these divisions is used to examine the supposed unity of 'eloquence' itself, the symbolic 'completeness' that is the ultimate goal of language use, the self-made-accessible, displaying no lack.

This misapprehension of 'eloquence' or elaborated-code speech (typographically based, therefore properly 'writing') is maintained throughout the sequence as a transcendental signifier to be constantly negated through the textual operations that approach it. Rather than 'correct' or replace the term, Harrison allows it to stand as always failing to occupy the space propre to it, proposed full communication through shared language. The pull towards the possibility of expression that 'eloquence' proposes is posited as betraying an interpersonal lack, which eloquence cannot supply except by a complementary annihilation, the removal of all trace of the individual from their speech; inherently impersonal, it has nothing to refer to, so is structured as a language incapable of reference to anything. It is pure structure, defined in terms of the 'actuality' it writes over, excludes.

It is through the poems' *lack* of eloquence, then, that we can read them. Rather, their ostensive celebration of this 'mute ingloriousness'[5] is readable only via the establishment-then-rupture of eloquence. That is, *in*eloquent 'mute ingloriousness' functions as dependent on its (formally 'correct') Other, and is permitted to speak as what that Other is not. This relationship exposes the rhetorical 'hollowness' of eloquence by demonstrating that language signifies as 'originality' only by going beyond its given limits, drawing on the semiotic *drives* of the purely phonic will-to-speech, of the becoming-language, which demonstrate presence through the violation of formal boundaries. The resultant tension re-energizes the sonnet as a

contemporary poetic vehicle, whilst necessarily retaining its status as marker of aesthetics and erudition against which the ineloquent plays.

3.3.1 ELOQUENCE AND REGRET

> 's silence, parries and hush on whistling hills,
> shadows in moonlight playing knurr and spell.

> It wasn't poetry though.[6]

A valedictory sadness inevitably punctuates the sequence, as the possibility of their being written is contingent on the loss that they seek to explore, the loss of an identity that can now be named, spoken; 'innocence' relies on 'experience' to conceptualize it, being only perceivable in retrospect, pre-eloquence becomes pre-lapsarian, pre-selfconsciousness, consciousness of loss. This Blakean paradigm is closely followed in Harrison's sequence, loss of innocence correlating with the speaking subject's birth into language, but here it is the Hegelian opposition, of Being and Meaning, that establishes the polarities traversed; working-class 'Being' characterized through action, symbol and image, speaking through silence as inarticulation, existing against 'Meaning', the attempt to create signification through language, eloquence. Neither is finally shown as conceptually sufficient; this is the poems' suspension of subjectivity.

The traditional working-class lifestyles are presented as outside language, a way of being to which those within are fully present, and so short the circuit used to bestow meaning and *assert* presence. Anterior to the use or need of the mediation of language, selfhood directly equates with trade

> Wilkinson farmed Thrang Crag, Martindale.

> Horner was the Haworth signalman.

> Harrison kept a pub with home-brewed ale:

> fell farmer, railwayman, and *publican*,

> [...] one ploughed his land, one squashed a rat,
> kept railtracks clear, or [...] dressed up to the nines,[7]

The 'straightness' of the 'lines' drawn in the sonnet are playing across this division of selfconsciousness - the forebears have a 'natural' directness that centres them in their role, tied to their context, geographically and culturally. The link between a person's environment and the language they use to encode concepts external to their

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immediate sphere of existence is one of the defining characteristics of 'orality':

> oral cultures must conceptualize and verbalize all their knowledge with more or less close references to the human lifeworld, assimilating the alien, objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction of human beings.[8]

This proximity to the 'life-world', or phenomenological dependency is repeatedly situated in the text as anterior to signification, yet as it is seen inevitably, *now*, through the mediating consciousness of the text-speaker, its overlay of significance is developed via the play of language. Meaning, in this case the moral reading of the 'lines', is returned to oral truisms, such as 'straight as a die' etc.., which have (and had) relevance to the 'restricted code'[9] users, in a movement Harrison will continue in dramatic and televisual genres. Here, the grandfathers' 'straightness' becomes transposed to a literary pun; the materiality of their railway- or furrow-lines is re-played, Harrison's assumed selfhood is *performed*, in a continuation of this assured lineage:

> I strive to keep my lines direct and straight,
> and try to make connections where I can -
>
> the knuckleduster's now my paperweight!

Inevitably these connections and *symbolic* lines can no longer be 'direct and straight'; the play of language scatters unitary meaning; 'where I *can*' stands as an apologia, an implication of necessary difference in the continuation of tradition. Whilst the idealization projected by the text speaker seeks to embrace the permanence, the rootedness of this manner of 'Being', keeping a weighty clout in the targetedness of the poetry and 'simplicity' of a language incorporating at least a representation of a Leeds dialect, the concreteness of the grandfathers' lifestyle, the unmediated nature of the experience of it, demonstrates Harrison's exteriority. He is rereading and giving significance, meaning; distancing himself in the tacit admission that his form of experience is incompatible with theirs, represents a break from it. As "*v.*" will remind us, if he cannot replicate their experience, he must see this 'significant' *re-experience* positively:

> 'The only reason why I write this poem at all
> [...]
> 's to give some higher meaning to your scrawl'[10]

It is in the division from the family that the poet's barrier of apprehension is made clear - the adolescent reading *material*, 'Ibsen, Marx and Gide'[11] has questioned the family structure its reader inhabits, *marking* the alienation, via criticism and selfconsciousness, the *practice* of reading performs:

> ah sometimes think you read too many books.
> ah nivver 'ad much time for a good read.[12]

The causal 'nivver 'ad much time', links the actual temporal reality - the attitude and performance (as citation) of 'real time' - of working-class life, with its idiomatic concretization of the economics of not *giving* time to something. The grudging judgement of 'too many' is semantically linked with the not *having* time - not having enough, not being the owner of one's time - to give: the son is wasting the precious leisure his father never had.

However the 'too many' also comments conotatively that their number has surpassed a limit, that now the books' constitute an economy, their imposing volume places an unbreachable gap between father and son. Books take time to traverse, and position their reader differently, in a different world with a different history. It is already too late for the non-reader to 'understand' or to attempt the traversal, so the father reciprocally cannot grasp 'Meaning'; not so much the 'meanings' of the works themselves, but their ordering of history and of their readers around the idea of Meaning, of significance. Yet in this poem, it is too early for the son, the developing Harrison, who is only here *discovering* a consciousness previously uncultivated by his environment, to realise his loss, to formalize his own position as other-than-his-father's, so appreciate his divorce from the immediacy of his father's material reality. Conscious of his different perception, he is yet unconscious of it *as* different, because he has yet to turn it on himself.

Ironically this separation can only be realized when the subject is fully born into impersonal language. Harrison characterizes himself as 'I', as opposed to his father's 'ah'; the fully formed 'I', as concretized linguistic identity, is set against the less selfconsciously resonant back-vowel, the 'ah' that does not *project* the subject as such into a preformed, grammatical identity, a perlocutionary positing of self that does not involve leaving the self to enter language's signification of selfhood. The I/ah opposition is furthered by the non-stressed positioning in the line of 'ah', its phonetic structure, //it is *de*-stressed, pulled back from the front-vowel and elided before the time-adjuncts that are thematic in the father's two lines by virtue of their

being contrasted elements; the non-formalized marker of presence effaces itself in favour of the idea it seeks to present.

This linguistic feebleness is compounded by the use of formulaic truisms, ready-made language that cannot be claimed by an 'I', and that is conventionally rejected by poetry. This failure to project an individuated presence through language typifies 'public' language. The discrete language codes of the working-class from those of the middle-class is what first opened discussion concerning the different perception of language and its function;

> The symbolism is of a low order of generality. The personal qualification is left out of the structure of the sentence, therefore it is a language of implicit meaning. Feelings which find expression in this language will themselves be affected by the form of the expression used. Feelings communicated will be diffuse and crudely differentiated when a public language is being used.[13]

Certainly, the more orally-oriented aspects of working-class speech present problems in their transcription - a complement for Harrison the poet to the pursuit of eloquence experienced by his father. The descriptive features noted by Bernstein provide the means to re-creating the 'lost' forms; the text-stylisation serves as literary corollary to the formulary used in *speech* by the father.

These forms belong to a 'restricted' community, denote a culture, and their use establishes this group identity more than it claims the so-called 'original', 'individual' thought of standard-language expression. The father's lines stress the presence of the group and the values of group identity against the individualism of an 'I' which, standing alone marks the group's negation semantically and sociolinguistically.

Having separated, having become fully individuated, Harrison-the-poet is able to appreciate the quality of the reality left behind, but can only recapture it through language. The materiality is irreplaceable, but via the operation of the signifier, it can be resummoned, integrated by the operation of the linguistic system that originated the divide. It is in the gap this division has left, in Lacan's *vel of alienation*[14], that a unity can be formed which neither system holds. Oral/symbolic materiality cannot be captured in the structure of eloquent language, and it is in this constant, consequent rupture that selfconscious identity floats, in the *struggle* itself:

> I've come round to your position on 'the Arts'
> but put it down in poems, that's the bind.[15]

Not only is Harrison claiming sympathy with his father's view, he is also textually occupying his position, his space in the text, speaking his opinion, via the mediation of a self-conscious 'I'. The 'putting down' of this stance as a naively superior grammar-school boy is reoccupied via a suppleness aware of language's auto-ironization, its expression of the other point of view, its polysemy; when Harrison occupies his former self, it is with the resonances of regret. This duality is the positive reading of 'the bind' Harrison faces here, and which I discussed in the introduction to this chapter; the text-speaker is simultaneous with the uniting of disparate halves, is born with their bonding, but this 'bind' carries with it the boundedness of his textualization, the inevitability that once entered into language both he and his past/father are 'lost'.

The father finally achieves subjectivity vicariously, captured in a poem for other people (as fortunate as him to be bound in similarly unmediated, material existences) to be too busy to read. Harrison's parting shot:

> once I'm writing I can't put you down!

explores the paradox that once fully engaged with language, meaning, the writer becomes preoccupied with his/her loss of being, and in this sonnet sequence it is the phenomenologically 'continuous'[16] being of Harrison's family that provides the material reality in the face of which this loss is felt/offset. Having realised this, Harrison realises his father cannot be derided for his stance ('put down'), but becomes fascinating in the role of Other, a structure to be 'read'; the poet exchanges the idioms with which the working class regulates its nonreading for the equally formulaic cliches of the reading class (*I couldn't put it down*) and its prioritization of metaphor. The father exists as the self that Harrison would have liked to have achieved selfconsciousness of - an impossibility which can only be perceived after the event.

This strong sense of ancestry positions Harrison within the oral history of poetry, his work expressing the ideology of a community not able to do it from within because of 'lacks' of language and power. Yet it is this link that causes the schism in the sonnet sequence. Not only does the sonnet form demonstrate always its own formality, its writtenness, but it is linked so closely to the confessional. Harrison's voice is the voice of exclusion, from the impulsive, from the spoken as adequate to

thought, his confession is of nostalgia for less selfconsciously-learned forms, his point-of-view is of hindsight as the condition of distance from his subject, the past, where there was 'Being' but individuation was unknown. The individual self is conscious of being brought to consciousness only through the negation of its former 'Being'.

3.4 "HEREDITY" AND EXPERIENCE BEFORE POETRY

The epigrammatic "Heredity", which introduces "*from* The School of Eloquence" clearly delineates the tie between the experience that cannot be encoded in poetry and the poet it forms:

> *How you became a poet's a mystery!*
> *Wherever did you get your talent from?*
> I say: *I had two uncles, Joe and Harry -*
> *one was a stammerer, the other dumb.*

The wry, throwaway single stanza evokes the oral context it cites as riddle. It works as a piece of sophistry, reliant on a reader being born out of tonguetiedness and having internalized the connection/opposition of eloquence and inarticulateness - it *echo*es the contradictory nature of a riddle, yet offers a logic that is irrefutable. Initially concerned with finding a 'voice', emerging from dumbness, the restricted nature of working-class speech which encodes group identity is a restric*tion*, a stammer to poetry, as those that struggle to achieve it are humiliated in their literal lack of 'self-expression, yet it is the struggle with too-restricted language that *is* poetry:

> you said you'd always been a clumsy talker[17]

> [...]he hungered for release from mortal speech
> that kept him down, the tongue that weighed like lead.[18]

Most of the 'voices' other than that of 'I' in the sequence are not yet born into language, are 'weighed down', silenced by it, but grope towards it with an energy, a drive, that punctuates, stammers-forth into, the classical smoothness acquired by the speaking subject. They break the framework, demonstrating their not belonging by forcing an entry, in caesura and untranscribable pauses, in disrhythmia and discordance. The sequence is concerned with both the social and the personal consequences of not having a voice, and both are represented by the two uncles, family- and class-members, whom it constantly re-presents in their specific, distinct,

incomparable but equally effective, debilitating, forceful lacks-of-voice.

3.4.1 HARRY

Societal 'dumbness' is explored in "National Trust", where the abuse of power polarizes in an act that forces the dispossessed (a convict) outside society, to breach its extremes. The poem begins,

> Bottomless pits. There's one in Castleton,
> and stout upholders of our law and order
> one day thought its depth worth wagering on
> and borrowed a convict hush-hush from his warder
> and winched him down;

Lost in a world of silence, darkness and deprivation, he becomes an embodiment of 'lack'

> ...and back, flayed, grey, mad,
> dumb.

The wilful display of power is encapsulated in the pure expenditure of the wager - an artificially generated economy of waste, which places the disadvantaged at a price beneath money, casting doubt on the 'law and order' of the society, as the ordering creates laws in the name of a false science, im-propre value system.

This creation is at the *expense* ("'the tongueless man gets his land took'" line 16) of a person whose loss is expressed in the image of pure deprivation. The convict is physically 'spent', mentally 'annihilated' and 'bereft' of the speech that could express his devastation. He is structurally sent to explore the limits, the borders of what seems limitless, 'bottomless' - how far can an individual be removed without losing all identity, already having transgressed society's *conventional* boundaries and so become a fit instrument to 'plumb its depths'?

Conventionally eloquent, the sonnet is incapable of expressing what lies beyond, and the reader is left poised at the mouth of the pit. But those ungovernable are ungovernable-by-language, the able-to-know cannot tell of this knowledge. Our ignorance remains pivoted around the caesura, the convict is

> winched down; and back

We mark his absence by our silence and find his experience has rendered *him* silent. Though he returns, he can never re-enter the world, having crossed a threshold;

knowing the answer to what lies beyond, at the 'bottom', the limit, he is unable to operate in the society that sent him there, hence his lack of conventional response to more conventional violence:

> Not even a good flogging made him holler!

As well as demonstrating symbolically the play of social forces, this act re-introduces the theme of social identity *in language*; phal*logo*centric 'law and order' linguistic control epitomised by eloquence, and the convict's transgression of its boundaries 'erasing' his linguistic self:

> On the one hand the theological encyclopedia, and modelled upon it, the book of man, on the other a fabric of traces marking the disappearance of an exceeded God or an erased man.[19]

The theological undertaking, sanctioned by the Law, in the name of Science, a pursuit of tangibles - measurement (of depth), and economy (of the wager) - is overreached by the convict's act *as act*. His dangerous knowledge makes him at once mad and dumb, which not only marks the taboo of the extremes, but presents in an extra-linguistic sense the unsayable, the inexpressible, the uncontainable; in the darkness where nothing remains hidden, he is silenced through being able to speak of everything, at once deprived of speech and beyond speech.

The double exclusion - by silencing and by marginalization of the silent - is reiterated in the sextet that likens the single dramatic act of the poem to the treatment of the whole community of Cornish tin miners, reminding us that they were silenced both through economy/law, were not 'free' to voice their protest, and via their language-deprivation; their speech remained excluded, incomprehensible and extrinsic to the theological 'eloquence' of the ruling classes.

> The dumb go down in history and disappear
> and not one gentleman's been brought to book:
>
> *Mes den hep tavas a-gollas y dyr*
>
> (Cornish) -
> 'the tongueless man gets his land took'.

The echo of the lost voice demonstrates the boundedness of the text; the words, though integral with the sonnet (their end-rhyme), need 'translation'. The text speaker plays with his eloquence to allow the dumb a voice, the other language (eloquence's Other) is *written* into (English) dialectal form to emulate *speech*.

Silence's dual sociohistory as *ironic*, silent by virtue of untranscribability, or incomprehension - as the dialect or language of the mad is 'silent' - and as *serious*, silent by virtue of being forcibly or legally 'silenced' - as the downtrodden or criminal is 'silent', is explicitly traced in "The Rhubarbarians". 'Gaffers' are distinguished from 't'mob' by having their '(exact words recorded)' [sic]. While these '(exact words)' remain for posterity, the discontentment of the masses is lost in working-class babble, the particular grievance their words gave voice becomes indistinct, absorbed in a general murmur of revolt at their disenfranchisement. This is ironized as (what it *practically* is) 'silence':

> What t'mob said to the cannons on the mills,
> shouted to soldier, scab and sentinel
> 's silence   (ll.9-11)

The theatrical cliche'of 'rhubarb-rhubarb' marks the 'non-serious' interpretation of the content of the crowds' displeasure, as not worthy or amenable of detailed record, again excluded from language/eloquence. The 'mob's' chuntering - shapeless beside the assertions of the gaffers, formless within the forms of written language - lacks meaning. The protest is marked only by its failure to function as speech, it is an enactment that signals only through its massed phonic swell, 'meaninglessly'; the silence of history overlooked is compounded both of speech not comprehended and of protest, of the mob, the grandfathers, the criminal, the baker-father, the 'barbarians', in action not words. This marginality continually *evades* language, *challenges* governance, and while History neglects to record the marginalised, their acts continue, an analogous-to-language repetition-change interaction of 'nomadology':

> It is not in terms of independence, but of co-existence and competition *in a perpetual field of interaction*, that we must conceive of exteriority and interiority, war machines and metamorphosis and State apparatuses of identity, bands and kingdoms, megamachines and empires. The same field circumscribes its interiority in States, but describes its exteriority in what escapes States or stands against States.[20]

I will be discussing the *threat* of the margin, its figuration as pollutant, and eloquence's attempt to 'fill' its defining absence, in my chapter on *The Blasphemers' Banquet*; as, in the sonnets, Harrison records the subversive ineloquence of the 'voiceless', the *acts* of the minorities can be *articulated* in his video *oeuvre*.

3.4.2 JOE

So much for the dumb, 'uncle Harry'. As for Joe the stammerer, *his* failure to engage in the language-system serves as an agonizing metaphor for the struggle to communicate. While dumbness has its own eloquence in silence's flawlessness, the stutterer is forever frozen in attempted expression, captured in a series of starts that never achieve completion; meaning is set out for, only to be curtailed mid-thought, stammered sounds repeat themselves perfectly in a temporal lock-groove and the original, half-said idea disappears in this uniquely unvarying (unsignifying) form of repetition. Not the content, but the structure of language is demonstrated, communication disintegrates into phonic bites, leaving only lectonic traces[21], movements mocking desire, the body's drive, the *will* to express. These meaning-less units do express, then, saying more in their punctuated staccato meta-language *about* ex-pression than could be encapsulated in mere eloquence.

The history of individual struggle to force meaning to emerge against its repeated suppression gives the utterance a perlocutionary force beyond semantics. This force is delivered in an urgency, a power that arrests listeners, captivating them in their wait for the suspended meaning to re-emerge, completed; what *is* uttered has added weight, a seriousness of intent, as it demonstrates its cost to the individual as it emerges from him. Eloquence's ease connotes sophistry, a preformedness, unoriginal recitation that performs an entry into available ideas; it convinces superficially, 'rhetorically', without the *presence* implicit in the stutterer's 'speech-act'.

This connection between the stammer and life-force is explicated in "Study". The silence of the 'best' room in a house is broken only for emergencies, formal occasions that utilise its reigning silence's propre gravitas, and the dying. The stammerer fights for life here, seeks to cut through the thickening silence:

> Uncle Joe came here to die. His gaping jaws
> once plugged in to the power of his stammer
> patterned the stuck plosive without pause
> like a d-d-damascener's hammer.

The qualification of the ambiguous temporal adjunct 'once' discusses the arrest of time, dividing around possibilities: the 'once' refers to a past in which the stutterer, no longer 'plugged in', signalled his acquiescence by his silence; the struggle to emerge in language abandoned, he joins uncle Harry in the real silence of real

history.   Alternatively, 'once' Joe has started a stammer he suspends time, 'stuck [...] without pause', cheating death, which is infinitely deferred via the power of his involuntary drive, dying and not-dying even as the poem itself defers its meaning via the stammered foot, 'd-d-damascener's', the mimetic force continuing to signify as meaningfulness ceases, is held immobile.

This paradoxically catalytic influence of impediment is further analysed in "Self Justification", appropriated in the act-of-will of breaking through barriers.   This appropriation becomes important to Harrison's poetry, his articulation of the impetus of desire; constraining limits provide the means to achieve a concretized, prefigured Otherness.

> Me a poet! My daughter with maimed limb
> became a more than tolerable sprinter.
> And uncle Joe. Impediment spurred him,
> the worst stammerer I've known, to be a printer.   (ll.1-4)

The affirmatory breaching of the supplement's negativity is enacted, as the self-defining lack becomes the means of forging identity, encompassing the deficit and nurturing its signatory absence as the possibility of expansion.   That which was 'wanting' becomes *supplied*[22], so it overflows the boundaries of the originary space which remains as a corollary to its completion, an 'against' that is contained in the individual who has taken it as a spur, a goad:

> It seems right that uncle Joe, 'b-buckshee
> from the works', supplied those scribble pads
> on which I stammered my first poetry
> that made me seem a cissy to the lads.
>
> Their aggro toward me, my need of them   (ll.9-13)

The possibility of being a lame sprinter, an inarticulate poet, of being at once '*a*' and 'not *a*', fills the sign with an enabling plenitude that overcompensates for residual weakness, creating a strength of self-presence.

Again the Meaning/Being division is enacted between the sonnet's 'I' and stammerer Joe. Excluded physically from the stream of language, continued partial entry is overcome by the mastery of language's textual field. Language ceases to be *self-*expression, as the Self repeatedly fails to be born, to 'go forth', in Husserl's formulation of identity-in-language[23]. Instead, words become fetishized as the icon for 'limit', for human boundedness, and in what is a vicarious mastery, therefore, Joe

symbolically transcends this limit while ever he performs his daily, working, struggle. Language remains for Joe, then, a system - extrinsic to him, but experienced by the stammering interjections into it of his 'handsetting' - of eloquence, of completeness, of mastery. That which he succeeds in expressing is definitively not his 'self'. Rather, he is concretizing other peoples' words, recognising the meaning of entry into language but never performing it 'for himself'. Because his inability to express with ease is physical, his act of *aufhebung*[24] is likewise tangible, tied to the lifeworld, to Being. He 'is' what he cannot 'mean'.

> He handset type much faster than he spoke.
> Those cruel consonants, *ms, ps,* and *bs*
> on which his jaws and spirit almost broke
> flicked into order with sadistic ease.

Language is the 'breaking' point, physical and spiritual, the border where the self struggles to emerge. As this breaking out is blocked and a limit imposed, self-definition is likewise curtailed, Joe is continually tagged as 'stammerer', his failure constantly defines him *in* language (the power of the name)[25], and *through* his own language's arrest and his subsequent obsession to master it; he is arrested at 'becoming'.

Harrison's individuation in writing, his achieval of eloquence, spurred by its having been withheld from his heredity and environment, is shown in the sonnet sequence to be a *loss* of individuality, of a 'Being' self, but for Joe the "others'" printed word maintains the promise of completeness, an illusory quality that dazzles those outside its parameters. This can be seen via the anthropomorphicization of the letters as 'cruel', their domination a battle to maintain 'order'; as much as "The Rhubarbarians'" History, its law that we must agree to or be silenced by, language is a rule-governed universe where textual fascism is the price of lack of vocal expression.

This stammering at the point of linguistic production is mirrored in Harrison's attempt to express his selfhood. The poet's 'self' has been gained through the attainment of 'eloquence' (his logocentric schooling), and finding the words (unlike Joe) but not the voice, the *adequate* form of expression. This is the problem which haunts the body of his poetry, but as a dynamic, a muscular pull away from occupied conventions, investing it with a strength and suppleness as the lack is explored, exploited as the propre site of an identity. Framed by eloquence, the poem is a

gesture towards Joe and Harry's structural breakdown of its surrounding, originating conventions; they are specific absences in language, which Harrison *is* the movement to fill.

This tension is captured in the final pair of couplets of "Self Justification" :

> Their aggro towards me, my need of them 's
> what keeps my would-be mobile tongue still tied -
>
> aggression, struggle, loss, blank printer's ems
> by which all   eloquence   gets justified.

The energizing dynamic keeps expression poised, breaching eloquence and overreaching it in an aggressive act of overdetermination. The acquisition of eloquence presents Harrison with the possibility to disappear into language's stream, to efface his 'self' in the form and contours of rhetorical anonymity, but the pull of heredity places a constant demand on the need to express, to convey meaning about and for those excluded. The formalism is continually pressured to fill new boundaries; new sonnet-forms must be coined. It is the impossibility of this task that keeps Harrison 'tongue..tied', his writing-tongue's newfound mobility (derived via social mobility) captured, in a mimesis of his uncle's arrest, formalised in the halting of the final line's flow by a novel '*concrete* poetry', which in turn breaks its 'meaningful' bounds, re-calling the printer's Being, words-as-materials. Silence emerges as the new, intrusive sound we must give the *ems* surrounding 'eloquence'; Joe's presence invokes Harry's (interdependent syntagma, like the purity and filth originating *The Blasphemers' Banquet*), the wordless expression of the omitted, excluded. The struggle for expression is inevitably captured and bound by form, but the drives it seeks to convey 'justify' this formalisation; the line that describes its own typesetting enters an enlarged economy, one of discourse with the printer, in which the poem, like the order 'justify', contains its own governance. This is the movement that will characterise Harrison's TV and theatre works, an invaginated preface[26] containing its addressees and telling them what they are to do with the work.

3.5 THE TABOO OF ELOQUENCE

Having 'become' a poet as performative speech act - 'Me a poet!' (the constative declared in the act and so challenging contestation, even by his own mockery)

Harrison goes on to unfold the tenuousness of his claim. There is no role, area, 'Being', that he can occupy, no bounded space to inhabit. Poetry makes a wider space on the inside than it seeks from its external projection of closure. Only in *gaining* classical structures does it become possible to realise their limitations; their boundaries function as boundaries to be traversed.

Yet, for the oral community poetry presents itself as a controlled space exceeding the individual, as a translation of the personal into flawless beauty, an icon of purity that outlasts and outvalues that which it reflects, holding itself apart, aloof[27]. This notion takes the Romantic power of beauty and the Classical effacement of the subject to their extremes in a way perhaps unimaginable to a classically educated person who, whilst *admiring* them, reduces poetic vehicles to artistry and construction. Poetry can seem an impenetrable hermeneutic aesthetic that speaks in a parallel language but discloses no 'Meaning'. In mastering the classical forms, the eloquence of the sonnet, Harrison is left with the realisation that there was, and is, poetry in the struggle for expression in all language, not merely the selfconsciously crafted. In the rupture, breakdown of restricted-code speech, meaning emerges by demonstrating the inadequacies of the form it attempts to harness as vehicle. Yet in understanding that language effaces being, swallows the individual utterance into a web of iterations that speak themselves through the mass voice of the already spoken, the drive towards univocality is subverted. The individual can only seek to signify via difference, in the gaps of what *is* being said.

The consciousness of this limitation lends unease to the explicit inclusion of 'poet' into Harrison's genealogical set:

> butcher, publican, and baker, now me, bard
> adding poetry to their beef, beer and bread [28]

As though 'poet' could ever be the link to self-identity in the same way other, more traditional, working-class occupations have been. If in the materiality Harrison has confirmed in his poetry - its *concreteness* as sociocritical document and in the literary-critical sense - he has confirmed also a 'working' role for himself - not occupying a form but 'working' on it, a wise apprentice to his uncles - in the end the poetry acts more as a designation of statelessness than of a state, a Being, it is a work specifically *without* an author. Yet to his family and old community, the power of naming means a control, a skill with ones materials (as with dough for the designated 'baker') that could never, in fact, be claimed for this most intangible of

occupations.

3.6 UNBUILDING "BLOCKS": POETRY BECOMING (AUTOANALYSIS) BEFORE ELOQUENCE

The failure of language when it is needed to express the personal, when the poet's vocation would be propre to his community, is linked (in "Blocks") to the failure of working-class families to even attempt to express emotion. The social norm to repress feelings, leave things 'unsaid' both through a need to portray 'strength' and hide vulnerability, and because of the unease with language, has left Harrison an inheritance beyond both the epigrammatic riddle's solutions ('apprenticeship' and 'heredity'): a psychoanalytic need to exorcise pent-up emotions, the last acquisition of which the self can become aware. The desire to break out from social restriction, confront the 'taboo', creates contingent difficulties, as the emergent poet has no means of expressing what was hitherto *in*expressible by virtue of its eternal repression beneath language:

> A droning vicar bores the congregation
> [...]
> All the family round me start to sob.
> For all my years of Latin and of Greek
> they'd never seen the point of 'for a job',
> I'm not prepared to stand up now and speak.   (ll. 1, 5-8)

'Prepared' resonates with personal, social and psychological meanings, as the poet is surrounded by both misused eloquence and wordless grief.

In moving from his community's stoic silence to the self-examining 'chattering classes', the embarrassment of feeling deep emotion should be relieved by available autoanalytic forms. However, in Harrison's case they do not have a referential vocabulary; the now-clichéd neologisms of analysis would not communicate successfully across the education-barrier between Harrison and his parents, being largely bereft of relevance in their constant iteration of a *mutual*, group identity. Nor can Harrison speak the language he 'used to', which specifically omits such concepts and areas, 'speaks' emotion through silence, gesture, act, spiritual empathy that breaks through the ache of pent emotion to touch another, the Other, in a resort to semiotic drive[29].

This double linguistic disablement prevents speech at the 'event' via the poet's need

to make language oversignify - at the funeral of his mother, his speech is returned to silence, the inability to deliver the oration performs as a regression to the dumbness of his 'parent(s)' community, the shock of the personal loss (and unrepaid debt: 'the poetry [...] that began, when her lap was warm, with ABC', ll.11-12) re-forging the mute bonds that tied individual to group as their now physical separation is enforced.

> [...] misquotes *Ecclesiastes* Chapter 3.
> If anyone should deliver an oration
> it should be me, her son, in poetry.   (ll.2-4)

Coupled with this psychological re-identification is the situational relevance of Harrison's lack of 'faith' in the power of words to 'act'. To oral communities steeped in superstition and belief, the unbearable emotions of life and death are eased by a set text which orders existence and formalizes events; for his family, the biblical references, even 'misquoted', serve as a marker of transition - the dead are separated, living can go on. The power of words to have a 'rightness', a fitness, is evidenced by the massed release of emotion as the truisms appropriate personal significance, 'All the family round me start to sob' (ll.3-5).

Because the high style of the biblical language is unfamiliar, outside the secular lifeworld they for the most part inhabit, its contextual and textual sonority create space for individual projection of relevance, it *expropriates* their significances. They attach to this particular person the 'universal truth', that 'unites' in its universality beneath the consciousness of individual interpretations. The oral-communal truisms (*'A time to ...'*) bring the family together in their collective identity, and the 'foreign' words are subconsciously linked with fitness to describe the unknown. Speaking from beyond the abyss, these words are allocated the possibility of discussing what their audience would never discuss, making death a little less frightening in that it is not inherently 'beyond', it is comprehended by those vested with the (linguistic) power to comprehend it. It is precisely the naiveté of their belief in the power of language to say 'serious' things of practical relevance that makes possible this act of closure. As with their designation of Harrison as 'poet', for the linguistically 'restricted' class, selecting the vicar to speak the 'oration' here constitutes silent consent to a form of ordinance, that some form of authority can express the unspeakable.

This satisfaction, that all that 'needs' to be said *has* been said, is unavailable to the

poet, for whom the power of the bible as mystical text is lost with the mastery of the language it hides in, and in this reduction of totem to text, the anger at not having access to this 'faith' (Christianity and language sutured as theocentricism) is compounded in its failure of presentation, the 'droning...misquot[ing]' vicar making a mockery even of the orthodoxy of the high church ritualism, reducing it in effect to the 'job' that Harrison continually resists with *his* eloquence in poetry.

The pull of the tired verses evoke Harrison's first steps in language at his mother's knee; the nursery rhymes that link generation with generation are the verses that begin life-in-language - the same textual pattern running through all heads at the threshold of existence - as the bible contains those that end it. In '*a time to*' return thoughts to 'origins', death, the linguistic and the maternal are closely tied. Despite the subsequent individuation that lead Harrison away from his family, nostalgia for childhood kindles the desire for a return to the language of phenomenological consistency. Structural effacement in language links too closely with the death of the *particular* subject, his mother, loss of life and of language resonate together and only by overcoming the 'blocks' that hold expression back can both mother and voice be somehow returned. The pressure to display his erudition in a gesture that repays the support of a mother who enabled him to reach this point is symbolic of the expectations of his community. Yet were he to do so, he would 'lose' his mother afresh, she would disappear into the given structures of language. To 'deliver an oration [...] in poetry' would be for Harrison to perform the loss of the uniqueness of his mother's being; his grief would be translated into poetry's available age-old platitudes, that would mock the actual primitive, raw emotion that, if it is to maintain its authenticity, must evade expression, except in a form-less cry[30].

It is later, in the re-forming of the experience after crying and the platitudinous clichés of King-James-edition eloquence, that the 'blocks' begin to be moved. In the a-posteriori performance of the poem, emotional barriers can be scaled and a new re-appropriation of language, mimicking the child's exploration of words via building bricks ('blocks'), can deconstruct the acquired formulas that Harrison was involved in, in the church, in a bid to communicate retrospectively. It is too 'late' to say farewell, and the text can ultimately only contain the mother as that part of the son he is now realising she 'built'; it is *this* mother, stripped of the universal that the bible-reading and her culture have buried her with, who is internalized, re-written as acknowledged provider of the language of his individuation, producer of the feelings

that allow the poem to exist. As his mother's *subjectivity*, by contrast, is therefore never actualised (nor is it anywhere in the sonnet sequence), Harrison avoids her misrepresentation and loss (unlike his father who is actively chased through language). Rather, shot-through with this overwhelming indebtedness to his mother for the poet's humanity and its association with words, the sonnets become a confessional dialogue, performed in tribute, her presence informing the text that encircles 'her'. The psychology of his associations explicated, Harrison makes a gift of his language to the one who first joined giving and language.

This treatment of his mother can be clarified "Timer's" more direct treatment of her death still presenting only her extrinsic details; clothes, discarded language, and ashes. His family lived in a material world, as I have shown, and so the poet, who 'signs for' them in language, realizes them in the text via indexical *items*, their propre milieu. Elsewhere, Harrison has demonstrated the significance of his uncle's printer's type and his father's cloth cap and brilliantine, here,

> I signed for the parcelled clothing as the son,
> the cardy, apron, pants, bra, dress -   (ll.9-10)

The details are intimate, but detachable, evoking a solid background image, but leaving the personal realm unspoken.

In explicit contrast, Harrison is present only as voice, *his* extrinsic, personal property; he appears as a continuous, fully-formed consciousness that comments on his past, his family life, his feelings, but never enters the sonnets as physical character in the way his family does. It is this selfconscious critical distance that provides the means of reading the impact of linguistic division in the relationships discussed - Harrison is only language, his family only *concretions* - as the two halves never directly engage *in* the poems any more than they do in the writing of the poems.

The personal *cost* of the irreconcilability of the two types of speech, the two opposing conceptions of the function of language, is most clearly discussed in "Book Ends I & II", where his father's expectations are most clearly delineated, the familial pressure placed on the son to 'perform' marking the strain Harrison's unconventional profession places on a relationship traditionally built upon continuity, and the manly fraternity of labour (physical, not 'sedentary' 'toil'). As the unfamiliarity of Harrison's milieu leaves an unbridgable distance between father and

son, the aggression of insecurity aggravates the typical competitive relationship. No common ground for empathy, the death of Harrison's mother leaves the two men with no point of mediation; the breakdown of language results inevitably in an uncompanionable silence:

> Back in our silences and sullen looks,
> for all the Scotch we drink, what 's still between 's
> not the thirty or so years, but books, books, books.
>
> ("Book Ends I",ll.14-16)

The traditional taciturnity of Northern working-class males cannot be broken in time of need; the lack of communication is expressed in 'silences', the plural disseminating not only occasions but participants. Each is not saying something in a different way; the shared Scotch doesn't lead to a fumbling towards expression, towards bonding, precisely because Harrison seems in his father's eyes to possess the capability of saying what he himself (Harrison, too, if he could but communicate it to his father) feels unable to, and this resentment grows over a lifetime of being silenced and never finding release when it is most needed.

This unspoken-unspeaking barrier is challenged in the second sonnet, as the 'clumsy talker' expels his bitterness in an attack on the son he believes could speak, provide the lack of eloquence, overcome the deficit, but wont. The derisory comments leave the frame of the artefact, taunting the text speaker, Harrison-now, challenging him again to express 'properly', formally, what his father could not. The thwarted desire to pay tribute to his dead wife emphasises the father's double lack, of his eloquence and his son's; the searched-for completeness is withheld, the comfort of knowing that his wife had a 'proper send off' rests in the filling of *all* the necessary formalities, achieving a respectable closure, and thereby ensuring dignity in grief. The belief in a 'correct' form, the possibility of words to have a single unitary, undisseminable meaning, and of choosing the 'one' word with the 'one', 'true' meaning that accurately expresses an intangible concept is contained in the sarcastic taunt:

> *You're supposed to be the bright boy at description*
> *and you can't tell them what the fuck to put!*
>
> ("Book Ends II", ll.11-12)

As if writing were just 'description', words adequate to every subject; as if a person might be described by language in such a manner that the words evoked them, uniquely, and faithfully, if only one studied hard enough, as the erudite 'bright boy' poet ostensibly has. If the father's language-abilities prove inadequate to

encapsulate his deepest feelings, he is realizing the truth of the situation, however unconsciously; that he cannot immortalize his wife within the stone's inscription, and the unfamiliar forms he stumbles to assemble serve simply to mark the passing of his wife 'beyond' him, a *final* loss, his 'Flo' becoming irretrievably separated in the formalism of 'beloved'. His 'clumsy' calls for language reflect a desperation that language *as such* cannot supply the loss of the individual subject, that the tablet of stone cannot live:

> There's scarcely room to carve the FLORENCE on it[31] -
>
> ("Book Ends II", line 2)

In effect, Harrison's father is reaching for a vocabulary of emotion that fossilizes, that turns-to-stone, its antiquated sombreness enforcing a separation that transposes human love and loss into a finite remote concretization.

It is against *this* that he is railing, demanding beyond *this* language that his son provide the language that will revive his lost wife, make her live as poetry is said to make its subjects live. He has, so far in the sequence, been portrayed as unable to comprehend what he is now offered as unwilling to accept; that language divides, separates, effaces. The failure of Harrison to perform linguistic alchemy separates father and son, as the refusal to act for his father is misunderstood (inevitably or purposefully) as refusing him the possibility of restitution, leaving Harrison to cope with the double isolation - emotional and linguistic:

> I've got to find the right words on my own.

The differential readings of 'got to', acknowledge a *resignedness* that he is outside the family unit that normally binds people in times of grief, sharing platitudes and generalities that evoke a reassuring collective ethos; he is forced to achieve a similar means of expression alone, unsupported. But more strongly, 'got to' marks a *will* to separate, expresses the need to therefore be bound by *no* language restrictions, not to compromise by occupying an empty form to satisfy those who do not know the self- *and* subject- effacing consequences of so doing.

The crux of the sonnet lies in Harrison's celebration of his father's linguistic 'failure', his 'clumsy' phrases that have groped for a dignified way to express his love and hurt, that have formally been kept *un*said, publicly. It is in his father's breakdown of language, the naive mixture of styles, phrases, registers, that true significance emerges - the will-to-express bursts through the gaps where the form wasn't tight

enough to restrain. Where the poet's eloquence has been characterised by reduction to forms ('has been', because now, in forming this sonnet, Harrison overspills sonnet-restrictions), by conciseness, his ineloquent father's love finds form in overspilling conventions of cohesion, originality, spelling:

> I've got the envelope that he'd been scrawling,
> mis-spelt, mawkish, stylistically appalling
> but I can't squeeze more love onto their stone.   (ll. 14-16)

The act, the drive to actually use language when it has for so long been a hindrance, demonstrates the force of emotion more strongly than eloquence could: in the scene of the poem, Harrison is left bound by his learning, unable to either harness his own emotion in a gesture of overcoming or to reduce his feelings to the impersonality of the 'proper' forms. This is the way in which the entire sonnet sequence serves as this overcoming, or rupture; the form is always being challenged by its content, the 'right words' lie not in simple vocabulary but in the enacted tensions of different language types. The sonnets are never free of the problematic of the ineloquents' inexpressibility, and so mark its presence as the unspoken centre of the text, the thing that is said by being highlighted as not being (capable of being) said.

3.7 Facing Propre Difference: The "Fire-Eater" And 'Own' Voices

Harrison's awareness of 'deceit' at the realization of the impossibility of occupying the role his parents conceive in 'poet' (or at least his understanding things differently without being able to explain the misconception, realizing the misconception lies in differing language-uses) structures "Fire-eater". Here the form of his father's speech is metaphorically represented as a conjured string of scarves hauled from his gut. The crux of the image lies not simply in the awe Harrison felt at the array of language dragged out from deep inside his being, but the fact that it was not illusion. What Barthes calls the *punctum*[32] of the act-as-act is that it makes the audience - in this poem's evocative term - 'gag' at what they feel *is happening* at the same time as they are aware that it is only representation. Harrison's father really was dragging his soul forth in an attempt to express the stuff of his being, an effort of will that reduces 'eloquence' to the base trickery of the 'professional' magician who has nothing 'inside' - it comes merely, easily, from the mouth, impressing only with its 'silken' ease:

> Coarser stuff than silk they hauled up grammar

knotted together deep down in their gut.

> Theirs are the acts I nerve myself to follow
> I'm the clown sent in to clear the ring.

Harrison's father attempts the impossible, to replicate illusion as actuality, to produce 'Being' in the forms of 'Meaning', in language that only allows signification in the *negation* of self-expression: the material of his vocabulary is 'coarser', rougher than the '*smooth*' mimeticized 'original'. This attempt to chase down the 'Platonic ideal' in the belief that it is attainable, and is in fact possessed by those whose life is spent creating the illusion of having captured it, in their mastery of eloquence, is symptomatic, for Harrison, of the tragedy of the oral community's view of poetry, of his father's view of him.

Poet-Harrison is again the child, immobilised by this knowledge in his *poeticizing*, as he was when standing in horrified admiration as language's 'trick' was attempted as a reality. An 'act' that breaches the limits through ingenuousness is impossible 'to follow' demanding a corresponding degree of commitment, of 'being present' to ones 'act'. Harrison faces the choice of acting with the ease of the original conjurer and so insulting the *authenticity* of his heredity, or to likewise attempt to say the unsayable but differing/being separated from his heredity in having no true belief in this act. He must emerge in the poem as turning between these choices, facing them both from his transitory position for which their is no adequation in either language.

In effect, he must achieve a *post*-eloquence by eloquently portraying his position as pre-eloquent; he defamiliarizes the 'tongue-tied' poet who featured in but nonetheless produced "Self Justification", developing and revivifying the figure of the tied tongue as one of succession, of *descendence* (the riddle does not 'decide' whether the poet learns from or descends from Joe and Harry, pointing to the unravellable aetiological strands of Harrison's personal and sociocultural indebtedness):

> Theirs are the tongues of fire I'm forced to swallow
> then bring back knotted, one continuous string
> igniting long-pent silences,

Harrison is a fire-eater, downing the 'tongues of fire', as their 'lost' voices re-occur in the sonnet text, attached to, dragging behind, and articulating his own. Having first separated from his background-language, as the 'conjurer', he re-internalizes it, swallows it as memory, which becomes the system of consciousness of origins and

their infinite recession, the *conscious* appropriation in the poetry of the echoes of voices that would conventionally inform it from the poet's unconscious[33]. The nature of Harrison's descendency of voices, I have shown, do not allow them this casual, invisible, conventional intrusion; they are too 'other' to poetry itself. So he assimilates them forcibly - a force that speaks in violent images of conjunction - *invaginating* with the magician's careful technique significant silences and transgressive stammers that hurt his 'vocal cords'. The evident pain of his poetry's broken forms is their propre, constant reminder that what this magician produces is not the smooth silk of metaphor but the 'real', abrasive silk of experience.

From the classical form of the sonnet to its grammatical, phonetic or typographic rupture, from the eloquence that emerges to the body from which it emerges, he is involved in a constant turning-in that the poetry involves the reader in; the 'scorches', the stuttered attempts, the ungrammatical half-said statements, and the silence of frustration, are all found within and brought out from what would silence them, a poet.

> [...] bring back knotted, one continuous string
> igniting long pent silences, and going back
> to Adam fumbling with Creation's names.

3.8   CONCLUSION: "THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH" AND PARTING CONNECTING

"The Queen's English" provides a sort of final compromise between the two warring factions of eloquence and the silenced. Significantly, this sonnet and it's 'twin' "Book Ends" each open with a shared meal between Harrison and his father, with the symbolic language of food. These openings operate as citations of the non-verbal communicative strategies of working-class families, refer to the 'original' link with nurture, sustenance. It has been contained in 'that last apple pie' of the suddenly-departed mother in "Book Ends", a final sharing of the taste of the emotional 'milk' that bound the family together by those left bereft in an act of bonding.

Here the 'Last meal together' again marks a threshold, emotionally and physically.

> Last meal together, Leeds, the Queen's Hotel,
> that grandish pile of swank in City Square.
> *Too posh for me!* he said (though he dressed well)
> *If you weren't wi' me now ah'd nivver dare!*

CHAPTER THREE

I knew that he'd decided that he'd die   (ll.1-5)

The food/provider idiolect has progressed from the domestic to the urban, and with this the balance of power between father and son has shifted, from the aggression towards Harrison's foreign 'occupation', to a kind of dependency, expressed by the self deprecatory *'If you weren't wi' me now ah'd nivver dare!'* The earlier belligerence and 'centeredness' that characterized the Harrison ancestry is destabalized in the bewildering changes in modern society, and replaced with a sense of inadequacy outside the familiar environment. The dismissive 'too posh', that keeps the lifestyles of Leeds people running on their demarcated class-lines, contains unfounded inferiority, the sense of being 'out-classed', despite no actual, material differentiation. The boundaries being taught and internalized, his own, makes their transgression more of a violation than if they had been simply physical, breachable by a change of dress. The transgression is, he acknowledges, made possible only because his son has made a path first, challenged the taboo.

It is in the context of the meal, the tacit admission of Harrison's success as a son (he has made it out of his father's provision), that other barriers can now be dropped. The non-verbal attempts to say last good-byes without admitting that this is what is taking place all centre on the loosening of boundaries. 'Lingering' in the bar instead of 'getting off' points to an awkwardness, a postponement, of something waiting-to-be-said, but never-to-be-spoken; it is silence in the poem that again signals the communication of the incommunicable via the situation, the slightly increased body contact, minimal units of difference, in which the silence has arisen. In a universe tightly demarcated by its propre gestures, their increments achieve a disproportionate significance, never collapsing, freeing emotion (to be 'cissy' now would be unthinkable); moving towards, instead of the more usual away, is a gesture of concealment that hides less, a way of 'not saying' a single thing - the decision to die - rather than not saying everything..

These signs are made explicit in his father's gift, *'Poems from the Yorkshire Dales'*, its token signalling a truce with Harrison's 'identity'. It is a touching attempt to leave his son with a 'fitting' momento, something he can understand in his life of words and eloquence, meshing his past and present. The one with 'no time' for 'good reads'·

signals their division in an act that is supposed to draw them closer. The hopeless formulism of the crass dialect poems, fossilizing language in the way Harrison fights to avoid, that would have been an easy option for him so many times in the incidents of these sonnets, demonstrates the wealth of misunderstanding that lies between them, his father's final failure to find an identity in language captured in the plea for remembrance (linked in kind to the desire for his wife to be remembered, or refound, in oratory and epitaph) on their terms. "'[O]w us gaffers used to talk'" already marks him as dead, as past. Unaware of his specific rôle, and his wife's, and his brothers', in vitalizing his son's poetry beyond that of the book he 'picked up', his 'used to' passes on the line, the language, to Harrison to continue, to 'remember' in his apparently discontinuous, new verses.

His acknowledgement that the old ways are lost, in Leeds as much as in his son's poetry, is compounded by his identification with the pastiche of dialect. The polyglot 'Northern', more familiar than Standard English, marks his projected otherness at last into a language that defines itself by *not* being the formal eloquence he spent his life failing to achieve. But it is the failure to be able to apprehend a textural corollary which marks his (and his linguistic peers') entirely separate perception of language and what it structurally enables - and limits.

Not only does the giving-act's concretization of his father's view of language ultimately leave Harrison with the knowledge that his father never understood what he was working for, with, towards, but this giving-as-separation gives his struggle for expression an added impetus, urgency: there existed no book that his father could have given to accurately satisfy the parameters of its implied token. It is this lack which made Harrison the voice that struggled to supply the need, taking the emptiness of his own unsatisfied communications and forging a language that discusses the ideas he lost in gaining language, the lost emotions of his forefathers' Being, and pointing the way for others.

The final line of the sonnet, quoting from his gift:

> *wi' skill they putten wuds reet i' his mouth.*

encapsulates for the poet the entire problematic - how to give a voice without translating and effacing the subject in the process. The 'skill' with which one can 'speak' for another is the question that has pervaded the sonnet sequence; the demands from the family to use the skill to make up for their lack of language-

precision and efface their trace from what they say, the putative positive-loading the quotation carries for such a sanctified view of language, is one that Harrison has to override. The poet's father could never understand how *his own* words had value, force, meaning, and the son is left with the task of taking the 'wuds' back out again, freeing the unspoken discourse from even this specious formalization, this cliché of Northernness, and evading the closure that destroys subjectivity. Through poetry, Harrison is, in "*from* The School of Eloquence", rediscovering his family via the positive engaging of the power of the signifier, and in so doing, is beginning to create the conditions of his own subjectivity in uniting the two disparate spheres - of eloquence, 'Meaning' and gesture, 'Being'.

3.9 AFTERWORD: THE MAN'S PAST AND THE POET'S TEST OF ELOQUENCE

This use of poetry as a vehicle for *finding* self-expression rather than achieving it, is defended in "Confessional Poetry", where Harrison justifies his degree of self/family textualization against an alter-ego that challenges his precepts in a way that his family never could:

> But your father was a simple working man,
> they'll say, *and didn't speak in those full rhymes.*
> *His words* when *they came would scarcely scan.*

Mi dad's did scan, like yours do, many times!   (ll.5-8)

This alter-ego is his 'eloquent' scholar-half, questioning via a self-examining regulatory schism the representational, non-linguistic half. The fallacy of referentiality is attacked, as textual determinacy is shown to be misleading, to use a dual signification that blurs what it apparently seeks to describe. While this is an inevitable consequence of translating phenomena into signifiers, the questioner demands how knowing this can be squared with the aim to be textually 'sincere', as the writer/artist must properly know that the 'truth' of his poetry is always a fictionalization of the reality from which it is drawn. How does Harrison's mode of representation go any further towards dealing with this problematic, for if it isn't adequately addressed, then his 'art' is as formally-bound and 'empty' as the structures he refuses to occupy in so many of the sonnet-debates between him and his family?

This is answered in part by the assumption that informs the question,

Does knowing it's himself beneath the paint

> make the Rembrandts truer or less true?   (II.3-4)

The answer lies 'beneath' the surface.

It would be a misrepresentation to see the textualizations as concealed hermeneutic, or even in terms of a transcendental signifier - the question is one of the fabric of language. The text portrays a person painted, written, so the truth lies not in the accuracy of the representation but in the manner in which they are transformed. So the poet in his text says - in these sonnets 'linguistically', about the philosophy of their language - something about their being, whilst accepting it remains text and so using it to the full extent of its properties.

This must involve some form of re-writing, re-presentation, but what is true is the truth *of* the given media. The risks, and consequences, and offensiveness, of loss-of-subject, discussed above, are, then, more grave if - as with Harrison's forbears - the subject did not reside, was not originally lost, in language in the way that the poet is. Through the nature and restrictedness of their (once-)shared philosophy of language, Harrison could not have originally misunderstood his family, so he knows what is at stake in subjecting them to structures that 'lose' all referents, to dissemination, to structures that are designed for the *re*formalization of those, like him, already lost, by virtue of their everyday eloquence. This is Harrison's original defence, that is, against the accusation of depersonalisation that will recur throughout this thesis, that what is lost in his subjects is no more than must be lost in the transference-to-language, and that what survives does so because it has already, *originally* survived in him, the poet inheriting it.

So the accusation of translating his father's speech into 'full rhymes' and scanning, is justified in so far as it takes a version of reality within the boundaries of the form, the time when the speech *did* scan, though not with the regular stresses, perhaps. Harrison's boyish retort is, then, a defence of words of his father that 'leant' themselves to eloquence and its system, ones most easily made into textural corollary, 'belonging' to the textual logic, and marking its division more subtly than simply failing to cohere with the whole. The textual interrogation forces Harrison back into boyhood dialect, into the defensive (uz) position, but this disjointed rejoinder *enacts* the scansion of his former stammering.

In the end, the lack of Harrison's presence in the same physical sense as his father is challenged, as creating a one-sidedness, *his* 'taunts' on the occasion the poem

describes remaining as the silence, letting the father appear as culpable in his insensitivity in many of the sonnets. The rejoinder makes explicit the subjectivity present in the sequence, points to it more perhaps than the shifts-of-register and its specific absence as described-character have - the admission of guilt at the event is contained within the poem, its presence marks the unit as a way of 'making up', of coming to terms with the division and finally being in control of the words that evaded him at the time. The 'words' of Harrison to his father could not signify in the same way as his father's, as it was their boundedness, their being-silenced by language that allowed the conflicts to build. Now the use of the sonnet form as confessional allows the voice to answer within its own chosen structure, it is Harrison's propre place to say what he wished he *could have said* at the time:

> We *had* a bitter quarrel in our cups
> and there *were* words between us, yes,
> I'm guilty, and the way I make it up's
> in poetry, and that much I confess.   (ll. 13-16)

[1]"Book Ends II", lines 11-13, in "*from* The School of Eloquence". ONE.

[2]"*from* The School of Eloquence", First Epigraph, credited as 'E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*'.

[3]See chapter four for a discussion of the speech codes and communities represented in "*v.*".

[4]Ong. Walter J., *Orality and Literacy: The Technologising of the Modern World*, page106. Ong bases his codes on Basil Bernstein's 'restricted' and 'elaborated' codes.

[5]"On not being Milton", line 12, "*from* The School of Eloquence", ONE.

[6]"The Rhubarbarians", ll.11-13, "*from* The School of Eloquence", ONE.

[7]"Lines to My Grandfathers", ll.5-8 I, 9-10 II.

[8]Ong, Walter J., *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World*, 1982, page 35. As this thesis maps, Harrison's engagement with orality has led him to progressively free his work from the static, printed text-form and bring his poetry to its more traditional 'origins' ('traditional' as in propre-to the (communicative) traditions of the oral community, the sense in which TV is 'traditional', not the hyperreal re-creative sense of the nostalgic 'folk-poets' Harrison reads in the parting gift from his father ("The Queen's English")). This movement of reconciliation with the oral community begins with pub readings in and around Leeds returning *this* sequence to its communal roots, situating the poet as spokesperson, giving the poems 'interaction', addressing the audience who are invaginated as subjects - the alienation poems and poet discuss is addressed by the event of their coming-into-being in this way.

[9]The terms 'restricted' and 'elaborated' codes originate in Bernstein. For the usefulness of the parallels between the 'restricted code' and Ong's 'orality', see chapter four.

[10]stanza 53.

[11]"A Good Read", line 1, "*from* The School of Eloquence", ONE.

[12]"A Good Read", ll. 3-4, "*from* The School of Eloquence", ONE.

[13]Bernstein, Basil, *Class, Codes and Control Vol 1: Theoretical Studies Towards a Sociology of Language*, page 38.

[14]Lacan, cited in Tavor-Bannet, *Structuralism and the Logic of Dissent*.

[15]"A Good Read" lines 11-12, in "*from* The School of Eloquence" TWO.

[16]'Continuous' is both a sonnet from "*from* The School of Eloquence" and a separately-published sequence.

[17]"Book Ends" 'in "*from* The School of Eloquence" TWO.

[18] "Marked With D" in "*from* The School of Eloquence" TWO,

[19] Derrida, "Ellipsis" *Writing and Difference*, p294.

[20]Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology: The War Machine*, 1986, page 17.

[21] A lectonic trace is a semiotic drive of the body expressed as phonic meta-language. Lectonic traces are discussed in Julia Kristeva's essay "Ellipsis on Dread and the Specular Seduction".

[22]'*Suppliéer*': the logic of the *supplément* 'replacement'/'addition',

> The *pharmakon* is that dangerous supplement that breaks into the very thing that would have liked to do without it yet lets itself *at once* be breached, roughened up, fulfilled, and replaced, completed by the very trace through which the present increases itself in the act of disappearing. "Plato's Pharmacy", page 135.

[23]See Husserl., *Speech and Phenomena.*

[24]The Derridean reading of the Hegelian concept *aufhebung*, which "literally means 'lifting up' , but also contains the double meaning of conservation and negation" (fn 12 in "Différance", trans Alan Bass) necessarily takes into account the expenditure that underwrites the lifting, which via the play of différance marks its sense of 'relieving', replacing itself in the act of superceeding.

[25]Derrida, see "Signature Event Context" for discussion of naming and signing-for. Also "Tele-types (Yes, Yes)" :

> Nor can the proper name itself, which a signature does not merely spell out or mention,

be reduced to the legal patronym. *A Derrida Reader*, page 586.

The power of the act of naming, and signing for is dealt with extensively in my chapter on the video sequence *In Loving Memory*.

[26]Derrida:

> Invagination is the inward refolding of *la gaine* (sheath, girdle), the inverted reapplication of the outer edge to the inside of a form where the outside then opens a pocket. Such an invagination is possible from the first trace on. This is why there is no "first" trace. "Living On - Border Lines", page 265.

[27]See chapters seven and eight.

[28]"*v.*" line 4. The set is reiterated in *Yan Tan Tethera*.

[29]He could not 'switch' back to his parents verbal or nonverbal language sincerely or convincingly, anyway; Labov finds people who have gone from restricted to elaborated code lose 'the ability to switch 'downwards' to their original vernacular' (1964, cited in *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, ed. J. Gumperz, D. Hymes, page 240).

[30]In "Them & [uz]" the cry of anguish is formed, but a-semantically, 'meaninglessly', as 'ay ay'.

[31]Demonstrating the projective intertextuality that I discuss in my chapter on *In Loving Memory*, the vidoe of "*v.*" will show that 'FLORENCE' waas *not* carved upon Harrison's mother's grave. A close-up of the grave reveals 'Florrie Hrrison', that is, not 'Flo' which the sequence suggests she preferred, nor the 'proper' form of the name.

[32]Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. A 'punctum' is a supra textual signifier that 'occurs in the field of the photographed thing like a supplement that is at once inevitable and delightful.' page 47.

[33]This is the form of the facility of memory which will become precious to his poetry in the long poems, again both socioculturally, in *The Blasphemer's Banquet*'s indictment to remember the fates of Rushdie's descendency/instructors of literary 'blasphemy', and personally, in "The Mother of the Muses"/*Black Daisies for The Bride*, where he associates the decay of memory and recall with the loss of individuality.

'THE *AUTRE* THAT *JE EST* IS FUCKING YOU': "*V.*"

4.1 THE PROPRIETY OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The divisions explored by Harrison in "*from* The School of Eloquence" are the starting point for his controversial long poem "*v.*". In this poem, the linguistic barriers which prevent the social 'underclass' from expressing their anger, so rendering them politically powerless, are incorporated in the form of an entire personification. The mythical 'skinhead' whom Harrison supposedly met at Beeston cemetery, who articulated the frustration that led to such vandalism as the Harrison family plot underwent, is re-created as 'speaking subject', using Leeds' working class dialectal forms. Instead of being the voice that ruptures the classical form, as in the sonnet sequence, the skin's narrative is the catalyst for the entire poem, enfolded into its form, such that it is his assimilatibility that becomes the issue. Both his ineloquence, which leads to the poem's symbolic reduction to pure sign, the sprayed 'V' around which Harrison's counter-narrative, the elegy, is poised, and his aggressive, 'stammering' function as dialogic persona, recall Harrison's formative 'others' of the sonnet sequence, re-presenting them as the discontented masses who through unemployment and strikes experience dispossession, but through the social discrimination of a bad education are unable to express it *linguistically*, therefore effectively.

Paradoxically, in order to represent this group, Harrison has to translate their 'voice' into a form that can be comprehended, such that the presence that is included cannot be a fully believable ('dramatic') portrayal of a skin. As with the sonnet sequence, Harrison uses 'restricted speech code' patterns, and markers of 'orality' to re-create an archetypal speaking subject, using generic features that signify a generalised class, attitude, sociological set. Testimony to the accuracy of this undertaking is the breadth of public outrage upon its televising, its violation of politeness codes which govern both poetry and broadcasting underlining its success in targeting a voice that has been socially suppressed. The coarse 'realism', then, the inclusion within art of a 'vulgar' voice, but not a 'real' presence ("*v.*" is not a documentary or a drama, the skin is always a part of Harrison, as the poem's *dénouement* reveals) reflected its 'two tier society', the punctuating expletives enacting a rejection of the values and mores of the community that had *reared* the 'No Future Generation'. Inevitably, though, it was this *language* that generated the adverse publicity, and not the social malaise it signified within the poem and symptomised without.

As a response to the pre-broadcast criticism, Harrison said:

> If we want to debate some of the obscenities in our culture, including the way graveyards have been outrageously graffitied by four-letter words and swastikas, we must represent them.
> Language of that nature ought not to have been daubed over a grave where my parents are buried. I was appalled and wanted to write about it.[1]

This statement sums up not simply the justification for the poem, but how and with what it engages. Although it situates itself within a specific socio-political milieu, commentating on the miners' strike and the growth of fascist minorities, the poem ultimately deals again with the appropriability of language, who it represents. While ostensibly defending the 'representation' of 'four-letter words', the key phrase 'we must represent *them*' also refers to their speakers; the *cultural* 'obscenities' are a way of inscribing their originators as index of the *propre-ly* obscene inequalities that give rise to their expression in graffiti.

This dual agenda highlights the problem of the divided audience, on the one hand concerned with *language*, on the other with the *act* of vandalism and what it implies. While here Harrison seems to address both, this division, developing Being-acting v. Meaning-writing from the sonnet sequence, ultimately 'splits' the two representations of himself, the poet and the alter-ego 'skin'. In 'representing them', the cultural others, he is bringing them under (linguistic) governance, yet the literarisation necessary to inset the discourse of his Other within the text conversely makes it elude his control, the defining characteristic propre to the skin and his community is the *refusal* to deal with the society that excludes them, even in this gesture of inclusion. What is literary in language is im-propre to the skin (as to the 'oral' muslims, in *The Blasphemers' Banquet*), and his presence deconstructs it in a perverse testimony to Harrison's success in evoking him, *literature's* alter-ego. In writing him, representing him, Harrison represents the Other *he* avoided becoming through his classical education, in an authentic dialogue between self-affirmation/justification and self-destruction, which degree of interest makes the fictional relationship a psychoanalytic exploration of the self that has been repressed but that has re-emerged periodically in the sonnets, as an idealisation, the working-class rebel, fighting from outside, he never was.

This ultimately frames the representation as auto-presentation in the language from which the poet feels alienated, the stylisation of the skin narrative being a necessary mimetic ploy that constructs the skin through the person Harrison is now, his gesture of individuation. The features that make the discourse accessible are those that mark it as overdetermined, as irrevocably belonging to a speech community other than the one he is 'representing', the ostensive project of communicating cross-culturally being in effect a justification for the manifest inability to re-possess his lost roots, illustrating

Labov's finding that upwardly mobile people usually lose 'the ability to switch 'downwards' to their original vernacular'.[2] This can be seen in stanza 54, which I cite in the title of this chapter:

> 'You piss-artist skinhead cunt, you wouldn't know
> and it doesn't fucking matter if you do,
> the skin and poet united fucking Rimbaud
> but the *autre* that *je est* is fucking you.'

The claim to incorporate both halves is accompanied by a tacit admission of its exploitation, the skin's *ignorance* of Harrison's project defines him as forever Other, and in inscribing him within a form that is not propre to him he becomes the property of the poet, whose move away from his working class background inevitably results in a form of exploitation in this subsequent re-incorporation. Harrison as fictive *autre* not only represents the establishment view in the skin/poet dialogue, but the personal other; the appropriation of the speech codes places him as the apparent voice of the working classes, but his distance from them makes the attempted representation a violation, the undecidability inherent in claiming identification *with* the skin ('fucking *you*), and the textualisation process itself metaphorically 'screwing' the socially alienated in purporting to represent them by a *self*-interested gesture that grants Harrison a poetic platform through his vicarious allegiance. '*Fucking* you' becomes an ironic performative carried out within the poem as it frames each of its participants within an im-propre ideological perspective; in "*v*.'s" most authentic appropriation of working-class language, both Harrison and the poet are 'fucked' - ruined, made impotent, by the(ir) other.

I intend to look at these conflicting aims in the section of the poem where Harrison actually confronts his Other (stanzas 41 to 68), tracing how the linguistic 'representation' of the skin, and his ideological self-justification betrays the governance of Harrison-as-poet, and how Harrison's auto-presentation likewise inscribes his need to maintain a link with his working-class background, in its divergence from the poetic persona as narrator. This section carries with it 'oral' encoding patterns; it is discourse, *spoken* language, and so its translation to typographic form relies upon the retention of oral features to free it from the dictates of text. The oral/typographic divide is a recurring concern in Harrison's work, indeed it prompted the broadcasting of this poem, to allow access to it by the non-literate communities it represents. This decision re-situates the poet as voice of a community, making poetry a shared experience that deals with collective truths, woven from a fabric of common language and motifs, a reversion which ironically signals Harrison's Classical education; as in *Yan Tan Tethera*'s learned use of folkoric method, or *Medea*'s re-*reading* of 'lost' versions of the myth, he is invoking no longer extant norms - here the Homeric

tradition - in the characteristic movement of re-positioning that marks his exteriority to those he represents in retrospectively filling a need, a lack, they do not feel.

4.2 THE TYMPAN: A CONNECTION THAT BETRAYS A DIFFERENCE

The difference between the skin's primary orality and Harrison's re-use of its structures through its historical preservation as the art of rhetoric serves to bring the two linguistic codes closer whilst emphasizing the gap in their perceptions of language. Harrison's 'rewriting' is a self-conscious, text-based 'refinement' of the non-literate skin's anti-writing. This division has been linked by Ong with Bernstein's codification of speech communities:

> Writing developes codes in a language different from oral codes in the same language...The restricted linguistic code is evidently largely oral in origin and use and like oral thought and expression generally operates contextually, close to the human lifeworld...
>
> Bernstein's 'restricted' and 'elaborated' linguistic codes could be re-labeled 'oral-based' and 'text-based' codes respectively. Olsen (1977) has shown how orality relegates meaning largely to context whereas writing concentrates meaning in language itself.[3]

It is around these two poles that the text situates its narrative, the oral marking its textual framing in italicisation (as in "*from* The School of Eloquence"), semiotically signalling its role as 'other' within the printed text, while the video which allows the utterance freeplay, conversely foregrounds the written, via superimposed graphics which connote typographic permanence.

The stylized opening of this key section foregrounds the inherent 'literariness' of Harrison-as-poet's text, marking his discourse as *role* governed. It's overt rhetorical patterning uses rhetorical questions to frame the ensuing debate, and parallel reiteration, or *copia* ensures readers/viewers follow its outline, citing antecedent oral structures, though tending towards amplification, rather than 'restricted code' redundancy:

> What is it that these crude words are revealing?
> What is it that this aggro act implies?   (stanza 41)

This repetition also allows Harrison to code-switch[4]; the re-phrasing poses the question in a subtly different form, its change in register and grammatical subject targets each audience group, ensuring they are engaged as participant in the ensuing discourse. The transformation shifts *from* focusing on 'crude words...revealing', a formulation which is destined for a typographic encoding, as the graffiti is seen as *language*, a second-order codifying system that needs interpreting, its inability to directly function as ecriture being vested in its 'crude' form, connoting 'ineloquence', as well as the more obvious 'vulgarity'. It shifts *to* emphasizing 'aggro act implies', the

slang coinage harnessing 'restricted code' structures and vocabulary, alliteration fixing the *graphic*, language-as-thing icon within a memorable *verbal* form. The reference to 'act' enforces Olsen's construction of oral communities' view of language as context-based action, the graffitied 'United' on the Harrison plot being seen as an act that 'implies' frustration, in its inability to express concretely, 'eloquently'/consciously, its underlying causes. This embedded difference shows the perceptual discrepancies which allow the societal divisions to continue unchallenged, the different registers serving as 'metaphoric extensions of the 'we'/'they' code opposition'[5].

Such divisions are openly demonstrated in the first skin/poet exchange:

> Giving the dead their xenophobic feeling
> or just a *cri-de-coeur* because man dies?
>
> *So what's a* cri-de-coeur, *cunt? Can't you speak*
> *the language that yer mam spoke. Think of 'er!*
> *Can yer only get yer tongue round fucking Greek?*   (stanzas 41-2)

The poet's (elaborated code) speculation concerning the skin's motivation excludes his subject's hypothesized community, as the loan words 'xenophobic' and *'cri-de-coeur'* enact a secondary code-switch, away from the oral, linguistically enacting the perceptual distance between classes in that the philosophical construction of the 'act' is as incomprehensible to the perpetrators as their *physical gesture* is to the middle classes. This degree of abstraction, framing the token as universalised type, attributable to *'man'*[6], rather than 'vandal', is bathetically undercut by the skin's parallel response, that reduces the rhetorical mode to the particular, *'yer mam'*, demonstrating Ong's observation that:

> oral cultures must conceptualise and verbalise all their knowledge with more or less close reference to the human lifeworld, assimilating the alien objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction of human beings.[7]

Harrison is again inscribing the divergent perceptions of the vandalism, the literary or educated response is to see the act as part of a socio-psychological pattern, whereas the actual enactors inevitably perceive each instance in terms of a unique, specific causality, each nihilistic gesture contextually governed.

This difference can again be partly attributed to the oral/literate divide, the structures of writing encouraging a logical, syllogistic form of abstract reasoning against the linear, additive causal attribution of the primary oral[8]. This distinction is not simply a question of reading and writing, but of internalising the philosophical structures of language, such that the *impersonality* of ecriture provides a measure of critical distance that forces the individual to experience their splitting from the 'I' of the text, and so treat language as a structure to signify meaning rather than directly contain it. Such a conceptualisation is not available to people whose lives centre mainly on

conversation, derive their information from television and radio, Ong's 'secondary orality'[9], and still believe in the possibility of 'saying what they mean'.

This implicit linguistic structuring of the 'written', is shown in "Harrison's" discourse, the balanced iambic pentameter mimicking elaborated code speech, neatly occupying its classical poetic vehicle. Its reiteration by the skin ruptures this balance by inserting an extra stress mid-line, breaking the rhythm and foregrounding the vulgar 'cunt' which undercuts the conventional poetic diction, its chiming with 'coeur' emphasizing the register-switch from 'romantic' French to blunt Anglo-Saxon, again invoking the historical framing of the poem as suspended between the written and the oral traditions. This invagination of English oral tradition is marked in the skin's discourse structure which uses midline division and consonantal alliteration to provide an alternative rhyming scheme embedded within its (textually) classical form:

> So what's a cri-de-coeur, *cunt? Can't you speak*
> *the language that yer mam spoke. Think of 'er!*   (stanza 46)

This diglossic shift is also emphasized in the skin's use of the copular 's' to allow the opening iambic scansion which mirrors Harrison's metrical form to throw the attention on its subsequent fragmentation, and the *lexical* variance necessary to replicate the formal 'What is it that...' of Harrison's overtly rhetorical text, stylisation undercut by stylistic naturalism.

Significantly, Harrison invests his 'alter ego' with the demonstrated power to wound he attributes to his 'restricted code'-speaking family, the ridiculed pretention of 'learning' signalled through 'his' discourse's loan-words echoes the taunts of his father in "Book Ends", and the confession in the sonnet sequence of it being too late to 'bone up' on his mam's language. The reflexive irony of ostensibly *using* his 'lost' language to challenge his typographic-based speech marks the 'skin' narrative as psychologically governed, the language structures themselves connoting division and conflict which their re-occupation seeks to assuage. Such overdetermination marks the narrative as literary construct, the etymological joke of investing a deictic literality in the commonplace insult *'fucking Greek'*, inadvertently referring to the previous stanza's foregrounded code switch 'xenophobic', before shifting back to the generality of 'all foreign languages' in the skin's iteration of the French loan, *'cri-de-coeur'*. This implicit interest shadows the entire portrayal of the skin as Other, Harrison's antagonism to his background informs his representation such that his desire to 'give ungrateful cunts...a hearing', is mediated by the need to justify his divorce from their community, to answer their criticism within the structure of its generation.

This self-justification is a defence against Harrison's appropriation and writing of the oral, of which the alter-ego skin indicts him:

'Listen, cunt! *I* said, 'before you start your jeering
the reason why I want this in a book
's to give ungrateful cunts like you a hearing!'
A book, yer stupid cunt, 's not worth a fuck!

'The only reason why I write this poem at all
on yobs like you who do the dirt on death
's to give some higher meaning to your scrawl.'
Don't fucking bother, cunt! Don't waste your breath!   (stanzas 57-8)

The rhetorical figures of copia and amplification are once more present in his reiteration of the argument, but again, the two stanzas constitute a form of code switch in their repositioning of the subject as 'book' and 'poem', oral and typographic. The first framing of the justification specifically addresses the literary establishment, its textual representation of a reality they would avoid attacks their lack of social awareness in positing a *need* for his project, while ostensibly addressing his skin counterpart. The ideational failure of this exchange as discourse[10] is signalled in the skin's immediate rejection of the proposition, 'books', being entirely redundant within the oral communities, serving to enforce the message of cultural disparity to the text readers themselves who are deriving their information concerning this social group through a medium that is in no way propre to this group.

The parallel statement in stanza 58, "The only reason why I write this poem at all', foregrounds 'poem' in its metrical positioning, the diphthong forcing attention to the change of object. Poetry is a spoken medium within oral communities, from recitations and rote-learning at school to its continuation of balladeer tradition (in which Harrison situates himself, giving performances and readings in local pubs and schools); specific to the poem's historical context, the movement of skin-poets[11] who gave readings of their politically-motivated work also informs this perception. This conceptual shift is echoed in the skin's *'Don't waste your breath!'*, a refusal to be represented still, but not a dismissal of the validity of the project inherent in the previous stanza.

Inherent in these divergent encoding strategies is the notion of the 'book' giving the vandals a 'hearing', juxtaposed with the *writing* of the poem, a seeming confusion of oral and literary markers. However, it is the ability to read a text and constitute a separate *speaking*-subject that paradoxically defines a typographically-oriented subject, and the conception of poetry as *act*, as a production that links writing with its author-governed reading that defines the oral;

> despite the assumptions of many semiotic structuralists, it was *print*, and not *writing*, that effectively reified the word, and with it, noetic activity.[12]

Without the perceived closure of *print*, the skin is portrayed as conceptualising poetry as a personal production, rather than an icon belonging to a taboo field, as with 'book'.

Again, the dual interest is apparent in this attempt to communicate with separate reading/speaking communities, but the claim to give 'higher meaning' to the skin's 'scrawl' points to the gesture of appropriation inherent in Harrison's project: properly, the meaning must be invested in the skin's act itself, otherwise Harrison is misrepresenting a group who have no access to any media to defend their portrayal. This ambiguous phrase iterates the exasperation of the eloquent, typographic speech communities who dismiss the graffiti as mere desecration, and its insertion at this juncture, while accurately targeting the discourse he seeks to inhabit, devalues his own allegiance with the literary classes; the radical stance of articulating an anger that productively defeats verbal expression, is re-framed as a use of this frustration to construct a fictional exposition, moving towards Harrison's desire to extrapolate his 'personal' Other, rather than the socio-linguistic construct.

4.2.1 THE SEPARATION OF HISTORIES

Coupled with these dialogic exchanges which frame Harrison's communication with his viewers/readers in terms of a fictional discourse, are the longer 'personal experience narratives', which provide separate anecdotal stretches that frame the different speech communities represented by poet (stanza 57-61) and skin (stanzas 47-51).

4.2.1.1 AN UPBRAIDING: THE SKIN'S 'MONOLOGUE'

The skin's narrative demonstrates Bernstein's classification of 'public' or 'restricted code' language, as it contains:

> a high proportion of short commands, simple statements and questions where the symbolism is descriptive, tangible, concrete, visual and of a low order of generality, where the emphasis is on the emotive rather than the logical implication.[13]

The opening statement, *'Ah'll tell yer then what really riles a bloke.'* classically engages the reader/viewer in a storytelling situation, sympathetic circularity[14] framing the proceeding narrative in invoking the performative 'telling', while deferring the story until the appropriate listening context has been generated. This use of formulary also marks it as issuing from the oral domain, as does the use of commonplace such as *'riles a bloke'*, *'I'll croak'*, *"ard birth...almost killed 'er'* , the personal narration paradoxically situating the discourse within a universalised tradition, constructed of pre-existent 'blocks' or chunks that are reassembled to construct a story that mirrors the lives of the speaker's community.

The oral raconteur expresses the personal in language that focuses on external, physical reality, signalling inclusion and not individuation. In choosing to situate the skin's narrative within this framework, Harrison is again pointing to the lack of

proprely personal expression available to the ineloquent, the dated slang is not propre to the initial characterisation of the aggressive, obscene skin, but this inability to 'write himself' conversely enacts the communicative incapacity more effectively than a fluent, and so necessarily textualised, narrative might. While the phraseology reflects a Leeds vernacular of perhaps fifty years ago (similar to that spoken by Harrison's father, positioning already Harrison as the teenage skin), characterised by the coinage 'dole-wallah', its colonialist overtones lacking relevancy within a contemporary society, it shows the slow rate of linguistic change in oral communities. The reliance on existent formulas to *represent* the inexpressible present finds the skin powerless to convey the modern phenomena of long-term unemployment within a vocabulary that deals with a conceptually distant past. Havelock's research into the constraining features of orality points to the need for static linguistic forms to enable the maintenance of a coherent communal identity; the formulaic nature of individual discourse is a necessity that aids memory and retrieval:

> Your thoughts must come into being in heavily rhythmic patterns, in repetitions or antithesis, in alliterations and assonances, in epithetic and other formulary expressions, in standard thematic settings..., in proverbs which are constantly heard by everyone so that they come to mind readily and which themselves are patterned for retention and ready recall, or in other mnemonic form.[15]

So the sociological exclusion from the parent community in being denied a job, and therefore a role, an identity (as discussed in chapter 3) can only be phrased in a language that is embedded within the communal structure he seeks to distance himself from:

> *'ard birth ah wor, mi mam says, almost killed 'er.*
> *Death after life on t' dole won't seem as 'ard!*
> *Look at this cunt, Wordsworth, organ builder,*
> *this fucking 'aberdasher Appleyard!*   (stanza 48)

The invocation of the past is represented in the contextualisation of the discourse within the graveyard[16], the 'lost' community of stability is dead along with the crafts that maintained it (a theme to which Harrison returns in his documentary sequence *Loving Memory* - the phrase *'fuck off to the void'* is reiterated in a film-title in that series), their symbolic demise paralleled by the skin's attempt to express his 'lifeless' existence in terms of the topic-governed formulary that deals with life and death unsentimentally, reductively[17].

The rambling style, its redundancy and circularity, reflects the depersonalizing effect of this linguistic code, the literary markers that structure it, such as the chiasmatic linkage of the skins "ard birth' and his mother's near death 'almost killed 'er', with his 'death' not seeming 'as 'ard'. The ironic conversational reiteration serves as rhetorical

undercutting, connoting an aggressive nihilism contrary to the framing of the graffiti as a marker of communicated positive anger.

The high incidence of performatives[18] in the skin's narrative section again signals the inherent orality in its structuration, the idea of 'language as action' is literally embedded as the poem exhibits its function as 'act'; the inscribed violence is incorporated into its reading so that the skin's personification works through the actuality present in the different language use. As a 'praise song' constitutes praise in the event of its performance, so the skin's threat of violence is realised in the text as actual violence:

> *Ah've told yer, no more Greek...That's yer last warning!*
> *Ah'll boot yer fucking balls to Kingdom Come.*   (stanza 59)

The performative speech-act of 'warning' or 'threatening' is necessarily linguistic, yet invokes the violent physical act in conventionally framing its occurrence. The non-verbal structuration of violence is clearly linked to the semiotic, the gestural, the implicit meaning of which words are part, an element of the ritual, but not its sole operant. They indicate 'real' violence by being a marker of its approach, each progressive stage is a marker not to be transgressed, its violation necessitating the next speech-act on the hierarchy, before words run out and their semiotic drive is released. This ritual structure is typographically marked by the pause between having 'told' and 'warning', '[...]'. The first stage is reiterated from stanza 46, 'telling' having been initially linked with a milder threat *'Go fuck yourself'*, which Harrison 'ignores' by his code switch to French (stanza 58, carrying over the joke of French being specifically designated Greek), necessitating the 'warning' which contains a more direct threat of violence. This supplementary non-verbal element present within language demonstrates that for oral cultures the structure and type of discourse is perhaps of greater importance than its content, *what* is being said is a function of *how* it is said. Gestural and phonic signification compensate for the lack of semantic eloquence in the de-personalizing reliance on formulary and commonplace, the personal emerges in the presence-to the world of (violent) action. This 'expressive symbolism'[19] can only be effectively incorporated into a written text in the form of performatives, language at the height of its semioticity. This, coupled with the frequent swearing that re-enforces the perlocutionary force of the act, captures the *immediacy* of oral discourse, the 'over use' of obscenity signalling it as semiotic drive inscribing propre anger and frustration via the harnessing of the force vested in swearing without actually 'meaning' what is literally (semantically) said; Harrison's *'autre'* is 'fucking' him in a far from literal sense. As Kristeva points out:

> The obscene word [...] mobilizes the signifying resources of the subject, permitting it to cross through the membrane of meaning where consciousness holds it, connecting it to gesturality, kinesthesia, the drive's body, the movement of rejection and appropriation of the other.[20]

The (speech) act is present during its production, then 'lost', but its re-inscription within the typographic medium means the threat is maintained, its violation of politeness codes operating within the genre of poetry creates an anger that is genuinely 'shocking'. This is testified to by the publicity it generated, and the 'translation' of the swearing into asterisks, or deletions, as with *The Star*'s 'quotation' of the skin's discourse:

> [...] To ----,----,----- and (mostly)-----.
> Aspirations,----! Folk on the -------- dole   [...]²¹

The semiotic force transcends the semantic - the word is deleted, but continues to signify in its 'absence'²².

The outrage of the tabloids derives from their 'oral' textualisations, their use of 'public' language structures, pictures and graphics represents the oral structures of their readership, such that the common swearing that the majority of their readers will encounter daily becomes unacceptable in written form;   text is *given* a specious prestige that is exclusive of recognisable 'reality'. This problem is exacerbated in the televized performance of the poem, which allows the performatives to be *enacted*, the ineloquence which is unable to occupy appropriate language structures (graphically demonstrated in the awkward attempt at vernacular transcription, embedding the dialectal within conventional representations of 'Northernness' - *'t'same nowt ah do now'* etc.) so rupturing the expectations implicit within poetry, is given the freedom to express its own *oral* complexity in performance, the variation in tone, volume, and accompanying non-verbal gestural language demonstrating the expressive potential of a signifying structure that communicates via its extra-linguistic elements.   The perlocutionary²³ force of the utterance is maximized, the confrontational investing a realism that is genuinely disturbing in that it presents - makes present - a contemporary reality that the majority of readers/viewers would rather ignore.

By *separating* the narratorial voice into skin and poet, rebel and establishment figure, other and self, Harrison 'performs' the unity he projects as a solution to the aggression and unrest in society:

> It was more a *working* marriage that I'd meant,
> a blend of masculine and feminine.   (stanza 65)

The two halves are never fully reconciled, but the energy that their dissonance creates provides a positive output that uses the eloquence and facility of the Classicist to articulate the passion and frustration that goaded Harrison to acquire them. It is this very interdependency that shapes the two 'discrete' speaking voices, the skin's half-aggressive, half-plaintive demand *'Don't treat me like I'm dumb'* (stanza 55) presenting a societally-curtailed intelligence, the 'poet' *as if* denied access to the education that enabled Harrison to give *effective* voice to the inequalities and limitations of his

working class upbringing. Likewise, Harrison's *poet* persona shadows the vernacular of his skin interlocutor, emphasizing that this half remains intrinsic to his more public, establishment role; the skin's allusion to being 'dumb' iterates the central problem explored in the sequence "*from* The School of Eloquence"[24]. It also marks the oral/typographic division that underlies this poem: the inability to 'write' the anger that can only be partially verbally-expressed results in the transferential expressive symbolism of the graffitied 'V's; 'restricted code' speech's reliance on a deep-structural meaning that is signalled through the limited choice of formulaic language is mapped onto the typographic form, the simplified mark signalling a complexity of unexpressed emotion, that is in turn encoded by those possessing eloquence as the semantically reductive sign it would function as within their linguistic system. What begins in the sonnets as the tragedy of the effective 'silence' of the oral community (denied expression in a language which therefore proves not to be universal or choosing expression in a 'restricted' language that is designedly local), their 'going forth' via gestures, work, actions, becomes "*v*.'s" central irony, that the skin's loud, aggressive gestures constitute his 'silencing', and will become, in *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, a danger, that in evermore energised attempts to break this silence, the oral community is beginning to confront the literate community with 'real' violence, that still fails to 'speak'.

4.2.1.2 A Confession: The Poet's Story

Harrison's parallel personal experience narrative (stanzas 56 -71) is a blend of 'elaborated code'[25] structures and mirrorings of the preceding skin-narrative, a combination illustrating the thematic divisions, while providing a plausible discourse strategy in the narrative, accommodating the structures of the 'skin'-Hearer in the code switches that mediate between the discrete codes. While demonstrating a socio-political point in not representing a 'pure' form of any one code, but showing that language use is practically varied, the prestige and dialectal forms each exhibiting a poeticity and suppleness that subverts any categorisation, deconstructs any imposed dichotomy, this intermixing of registers also ensures that each half of the potential audience follows the discourse without being 'lost' in its role as linguistic 'Other'. Thus the 'literarizing' of the skin's narrative makes it as accessible, and *acceptable* within its presented media as the coloquialisation of 'Harrison's' narrative makes this more TV-friendly, the foregrounded aim of *communication* being paramount if 'representation' is not to become 'appropriation.

Harrison's anecdotal relation of his own 'bits of mindless aggro' (stanza 56) focuses on the unselfconscious ambivalence that motivates such acts of vengeful frustration. The

designation 'mindless' is a direct citation from newspapers, middleclass criticism of a nihilistic stance that acts 'unthinkingly', framed in this poem by the public outrage against specific incidents of vandalism. Yet the poem acknowledges a just cause for these acts, while not condoning their violent expression, re-presenting 'mindless' as a lack of self understanding, a not-*knowing* one's mind. Harrison's own 'mindless aggro' gave vent to frustration 'inappropriately' by the first point of view, but 'proper-ly' in that it adequated an inability to comprehend the underlying causes and structures of personal discontent 'symbolically' expressed against their nearest representative.

As Harrison's narrative situates him as a child, pre-Grammar school education, and so still belonging to a working class community like the skin, these propre actions follow a similar pattern. The demonstrated inability to target the cause of his anger leads to a gesture that releases *his* frustration, but is an ineffectual protest; it incurs a reciprocal anger, his 'victims' go unchallenged:

> 'Herman Darewski's band played operetta
> with a wobbly soprano warbling. Just why
> I made my mind up that I'd got to get her
> with the fire hose I can't say, but I'll try.   (stanza 57)

The lack of analytical logic-structures within the 'restricted code' means that its speakers are unable to conceptualise extended abstract relationships with their environment[26]. The obverse of living so closely with their lifeworld is an inability to perceive social networks or political structures as distinct from their specific, material representations within this sphere of experience. This has been instanced by the skin's vandalisation of workers' graves, the burden of unemployment expressed as personal vengeance against his communal selves (being) refigured as 'Others', the socio-political institutions that were more directly responsible being too removed to be apprehended and targeted. Similarly, the boy-Harrison is angered by the parade of class superiority and invoked wish-fulfilment at Gaitskell's election campaign; a form of deceit he is unable to conceptualise or articulate still - 'I can't say'. Thus he targeted the immediate situation, 'spraying' the audience in a parallel gesture to the skin's contemporary mark, attacking the token instead of the type.

The thematic and ideational similarity presented within an elaborated code framework allows a clearer picture of the motivation behind a seemingly 'mindless' gesture. The use of personal qualifiers and individual expression makes the event more communicable, presenting an identifiable feeling subject who responded to his environment ('the singing angered me[...]What I hated[....]I tell you'), as opposed to the skin's account which is so embedded in oral, formulaic structure that the individual is lost within the communal language that structures all experience on a universal pattern. The evocative use of metaphor also marks it as elaborated code, 'wobbly

soprano warbling' and 'prick-tease of the soul' demonstrate a linguistic facility that is lacking in the skin's narrative, yet while betraying this uniqueness, they are situated within a register accessible to a restricted-code audience, the slightly naive mind-set they indicate framing the retrospective ability to articulate these feelings, maintaining the cultural distance of the child in the dismissive ironisation of the unfamiliar.

This is particularly marked in the 'wobbly...warbling', the ridiculing of opera through its structural 'Otherness' being breached by the *poet* persona Harrison now occupies as librettist, husband (identified in the poem) to the opera singer Maria Stratas. The coinage 'prick-tease of the soul' maintains the restricted-code structure of obscenity-as-insult, though its abstract vehicle again points to a blending of codes and registers, and its function as articulation of the unexpressed inherent within the restricted code. This particular phrase can be paired with the skin's offensive dismissal of Harrison's 'aggro': *'Yeah, ah bet yer wrote a poem, yer wanker you!'* (stanza 56), the 'appropriate' insult to practitioners of 'high art' being to accuse them of *self*gratification (wanker/prick-tease), poetry or opera being embedded within the language of eloquence and self-expression, and so a personal form, diametrically opposed to the communal nature of 'oral' art, it is proprely, literally 'exclusive'.

The logical complexity of this narrative section also places it within elaborated code structures, the indeterminacy of the initial subject, and its deferral through listing what the cause *wasn't* seems to mirror the skin's episodic circularity, but the overt rhetorical structuring marks this as a device to maintain interest while engaging sympathy in the performed 'conceptual ineloquence'. The antithetical balancing of 'jeering' and 'cheering' structurally mimics the division of the people, separated around the cause of the rift, 'smooth Hugh Gaitskell, our MP' ('our' marking his duplicity in being linked to both, opposing, sides, 'smooth' referring to his eloquence, as adjective, and its ability to 'smooth over' the rift, as verb).

Harrison's anger is expressed in abstract metaphorical terms, and then code-switched into more concrete imagery, the singing first signifying 'uplift beyond all reason and control' (stanza 59), evoking a non-literal escapism that seemed inaccessible in its remoteness from the concrete-based perceptions of oral/restricted code speakers, then a more material evocation: 'high notes that rose...straight from the warbling throat right up my nose' (stanza 60), again a complex metaphoric structure built from oral commonplaces, allowing articulation within the vocabulary of the ineloquent.

4.3 A DISCOURSE TO INVOLVE ITS PARTICIPANTS

The specifically 'oral' framing of the discourse works as a strategy to engage the 'skin' and the restricted code speaking audience; the skin's formulaic *'Ah'll tell yer then...'*

stanza 47) that enacts its origins in tale-telling, is paralleled by Harrison's 'Ah'll tell yer 'ow...' (stanza 56), the register and structure mimicking the previous narrative, showing how as poet Harrison has incorporated *his* other within his eloquence. Likewise, the closing stanza (61) again switches to restricted-code structuration in its episodic relation of events, short sentences and linear causality. It's inconclusive end ('...') again foregrounds its non-didactic function, illocutionarily divergent from the skin's, which ends on a categoric statement, a specious appropriation of the 'high' form in its childish mimicry of the formulae of control ('a crude four-letter word.')[27]

The apparent failure of the skin/poet discourse is signalled by the skin's undercutting of Harrison's gesture of reciprocity, the personal experience bathetically parodied as the symbolic is recontextualised as parable. While this maintains an antagonistic tension between the two speakers, it also demonstrates the limitation of abstract communication between the two codes/classes. The personal analogy is mis-encoded as anecdotal formulary, Harrison's expository of *his* own frustrated ineloquence is misconstrued as a condemnation of the skin's, the emphasis being towards reformation rather than 'revolution'. The re-incorporation of the personal into the 'oral' is effected by the closure of commonplaces which negate the potential signalled in Harrison's conclusion ('...'), the litany of

> And then yer saw the light and gave up 'eavy!
> And knew a man's not how much he can sup... (stanza 62)

reductively places his attempt to engage within the structures of the 'other' as subject to reappropriation, an inverse gesture of denegration that reinscribes the literary within the originary oral folk-structure from whence it derives. This 'misunderstanding' can also be seen as a purely linguistic failure, the tendency of orality to reduce elaborated-code structures to their restricted-code 'equivalents' means that fresh conceptual structures are difficult to communicate. The linguistic structure demands a simplification of 'formal, expressive' language to make it available for encoding, yet in framing it within this language that is structured around the already-said, the formulaic, the speaker runs the risk of 'losing' the fresh signification in the semantically familiar.[28]

The influence of domain[29] structures the discourse, the graveyard giving rise to the interpretation of Harrison's anecdote as 'sermon', engendering the mock-liturgical response of the skin, Greenfield's notion of 'settings' being realised in terms of the thematic commonplaces tied in with domain-specific topics that create expectations concerning what is to be discussed and how. This structuring of discourse in oral communities can be seen as the origin of rhetorical *loci communes*[30], the link between the two maintained in the positioning of the skin and poet as antagonist and protagonist, a structure embedded in oral transaction today[31], which antithesis remains within the 'agonistic roots' of poetry via its connection with oratory[32]. The skin's direct

invocation of these origins subverts the literary dialectic, the conventional structuring of the poem to make the *un*conventional accessible is shown to be that which makes the project unconvincing and unsuccessful as discourse.

The inverted truisms of oral wisdom demonstrate the linguistic boundedness than confines the skin, and the oral community he represents here (*The Blasphemers' Banquet* will demonstrate the separation of Muslim orality and typographic thinking by 'shared' signifiers); the 'High' or elaborated forms he manipulates are specifically the oral counterparts of a spoken textualisation, religion spanning both registers in its contextual framing as 'written', yet accessible for emulation precisely because it derives from oratory, using similar formulary and antithesis to 'low' or restricted code language.

> *Covet not thy neighbour's wife, thy neighbour's riches.*
> *Vicar and cop who say, to save our souls,*
> *Get thee beHind me, Satan, drop their breeches*
> *and get the Devil's dick right up their 'oles.* (stanza 64)

Again context determines the topic around which the skin focuses his obscenity, the 'poet' having revealed his outrage at the violation of the graves, the linguistic continuation of this 'blasphemy' becomes an inevitable progression. Yet this response also uses the prestige forms of language, that connote 'control', to challenge their governance; in subverting their linguistic structures their theocratic will-to-truth is likewise undermined.

Perhaps more importantly, this occupation-and-negation process marks the speaker's desire to distance himself from *both* social groups: the ridicule of the controlling classes is implicit, but the refusal to perform the (religious) obedience proper to his 'class' also speaks his isolation more eloquently than 'his' language could. This is because the formulary and commonplace that characterises 'oral' forms specifically prevents a verbalised dissent, the linguistic unity that binds a community by speech structures limits the expression of disunity except through the same structures' negation. As Ong points out:

> Formulas help implement rhythmic discourse and also act as mnemonic aids in
> their own right, as set expressions circulating through the mouths and ears of
> all...in oral cultures they are not occasional. They are incessant. They form the
> substance of thought itself. Thought in any extended form is impossible
> without them, *for it consists in them.*[33] (my emphasis)

This dual reading of the skin's response to Harrison's narrative again inscribes the poet's *self*criticism, the fear of becoming an '*old fart*' who '*live*[s] *wi' all yer once detested...*' as his projected communication failure within the poem underwrites the 'real' anxiety which leads him to attempt the inclusion of all the 'voices' he has left behind in his pursuit of eloquence.

Yet this critical alter-ego also demonstrates that the closure of ineloquence is ultimately more limiting and ineffective, as the skin's subversion of the discourse structures available to him does not express the personal frustration inscribed within the gesture, validating Harrison's perceived need to represent them. The skin's ultimate rejection of the project and reappropriation of his self-representation through the continued vandalism indicates the areas where public poetry cannot provide an alternative, the individual need cannot be answered by a communal exorcism of the problems as it is the failure of the (oral) community structure that has created a stratified social network of workers and unemployed, the unifying strategies ill-equipped to incorporate those placed outside its collective-historical identity.

> *Don't talk to me of fucking representing*
> *the class yer were born into any more.*
> *Yer going to get 'urt and start resenting*
> *it's not poetry we need in this class war.* (stanza 72)

As Harrison is no longer a representative of his 'original' class, his representations of its members are informed by his external perspective, the ability to 'write' the oral structures and incorporate the non-verbal elements that contain the emotional force of the formulaic semantic utterances of that class through the rhetorical manipulation makes him uniquely able to 'translate' the oral into the typographic, but in doing so he marks his position as outsider, and marks the representation as a framed typographic secondary orality.

Psychoanalytically, in manipulating this socio-linguistic Other, Harrison can control the anticipated criticism by projecting what the 'ineloquent/uneducated' alter-ego *might* say, but in so doing he represses the vitriolic strength present against 'The Establishment'. The dated slang *'Yer've given yerself toffee, cunt'* (stanza 73) finally positions the skin as an interested textualisation, the ostensive aim to provide a linguistic platform for the ineloquent becomes at this stage another means of excluding genuine disaffection, of incorporating and emasculating a perceived threat. While the resultant blending of cultures and forms utilises the linguistic tension generated by the incorporation of an antagonistic voice, Harrison once more realises that his project is a personal need to retain the 'roots' he was once eager to escape.

This is indicated by the text-skin's signing both *their* name on the graffiti; not only pointing to the skin in the poet, but showing that the poet has metaphorically inhabited his 'skin'; the act of *writing*, of signing-for an utterance moves the framed subject from oral to typographic, is evidenced by the challenge to claim authorship for graffiti which is (was)[34] properly anonymous.

> 'OK!' (thinking I had him trapped) 'OK!'
> 'If you're so proud of it, then sign your name (stanza 69)

Harrison's 'discovery' that he has the skin trapped within a typographic system that is not propre to him demonstrates the obvious fact of his textual governance; the skilful manipulation of codes to create personified speaking subjects is a gesture of incorporation possible only through his acquisition of eloquence. However, in finally subverting the dialectic, conflating the 'self' and 'other' to the single narratorial voice, the 'real' Other has been more effectively excluded in this *seeming* representation than within other monologic poems.

> He took the can, contemptuous, unhurried
> and cleared the nozzle and prepared to sign
> the UNITED sprayed where mam and dad were buried.
> He aerosolled his name. And it was mine   (stanza 70)

While the poem finally concludes with a personal conceptualisation of 'unity' over the initial exploration of its societal possibilities, "*v.*" *and* Harrison continue to situate themselves as offering social critique, embracing an 'anti-intellectual elitism' stance that is governed by the appropriation of a discourse no longer propre. The possibility of including a 'foreign' structure within the poem-form is not possible, as the genre is defined by their specific inclusion, and while this was the valediction of Harrison's forbears' presence in the sonnets, 'damaging' them, it becomes stifling again when this damage *becomes* the poetry, and the ineloquent disappear finally, addressed in the illusion of their living presence. In *seeming* to rupture the classical forms by inserting the excluded, Harrison opens the debates over governance and control; when the voices and codes he 'includes' have *real* signatories, when appropriating their enunciations means *ex*propriating from propre sites, in the TV poetry and documentaries he increasingly utilises to represent orality on its own terms, these so-far abstract debates take on not only legal but moral implications.

[1]Harrison, Tony, quote from *Daily Telegraph*, Tues, 13 Oct. 1987, in 'v.', page 43.

[2]Labov, 1964, cited in *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, ed. J. Gumperz, D. Hymes, page 240.

[3]Ong, Walter, J. *Orality and Literature: The Technologzsing of the World*, page 106.

[4]Gumperz, J. *Discourse Strategies* page 56: 'Conversational code switching can be defined as the juxtapositioning within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems. Most frequently the alternation takes the form of two subsequent sentences, as when a speaker uses a second language to reiterate his message or reply to someone else's statement.'

[5]Gumperz, ibid. page 93.

[6]The 'maleness' of Harrison's 'universe' is the subject of chapter 5 - Medea, but it is present throughout his work as *a priori* limit on the possibility of involving 'other' voices in it, limiting, that is, their difference from him, his maleness, his middle class position of specious authority on the working classes. He introduces the Bloodaxe Reader on him (*Tony Harrison - Bloodaxe Critical Anthologies I*, ed. N. Astley, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Bloodaxe Books, 1991, p.9),

> I prefer the idea of men speaking to men to a man speaking to a god, or even worse to Oxford's anointed,

despite having cast his theatre works increasingly for *women*. He is performing the truth that 'his' women, like his 'working class' are not propre, but appropriated, their mouths filled with his 'speaking' in a *specious* doppleganger of themselves.

[7]Ong, ibid. page 35.

[8]As demonstrated by Malinowski's research discussed in Ong, ibid. page 32.

[9]Ong , ibid. page 171.

[10]The exchange seems to function, but the hostile response which is modified when the proposition is re-framed in the following stanza demonstrates its failure on the grounds of disparate concept codification. As Gumperz argues: 'Effective communication requires that speakers and audience agree both on the meaning of words and on the social import or values attached to choice of expression.' page 417, Social Meaning in Linguistic Structure: Code-switching in Norway.

[11]Specifically, *Seethin' Wells* a notorious skin-poet from Leeds continued doing readings up to the late 80's, and punk poets such as John Cooper Clark appeared on records, continuing its situating as utterance. Separate to this youth movement, the success of popular poets such as Pam Ayres and Roger McGough with a wider working class audience is directly attributable to their *readings* on television.

[12]Ong, Walter, J. citation from 1958, in *Orality and Literacy* page 119, my italics.

[13]Bernstein, B. *Class, Codes and Control Vol.1* page 48.

[14]Bernstein, B. *Class, Codes and Control Vol.I*, page 38, Notes no.2.

[15]Havelock, 1963, cited in Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, page 34.

[16]Significantly, Harrison situates this discourse within the conversational domain proper to the graveyard, the anomie reflexively commenting on the text's overall citation of the elegiac genre, nostalgia set against a trenchant demand for a meaningful life. The extended metaphorical sequence involving the projected continuation of alienation in a heaven peopled by 'workers' draws on the formulary of religious discourse '*pipe up to St. fucking Peter*' '*Then t' Alleluias stick in t' angels' gobs.*' [...]

[17]Bernstein, B. ibid. page 50: '[public language] is a linguistic form which will tend to elicit 'tough' responses either through vocabulary or through expressive style or both.'

[18]Performatives are 'a class of utterances, linguistically quite heterogeneous which have in common that, in virtue of non-linguistic conventions, to issue them (happily) counts as doing this or that.' Warwick, 1973 in Coulthard , *Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, page 13. The use of performatives is characteristic of all Harrison's poetry, the direct engagement of the reader giving it a confrontational quality that paradoxically makes it personal, performing *his* ambivalence with the role of poet. This is most effectively used in "Them & (uz)", where the threat of reappropriating the oral/folk-art structures is framed by its positioning within a sonnet form, the 'promised' occupation becomes a reality brought about by the act of reading:

> So right, yer buggers, then! We'll occupy
> yer lousy leasehold Poetry.

[19]See Bernstein: 'Relationships are made by the use of an individual selection from a public language, and by gesture, tone, change of volume and physical set etc., that is, by *expressive symbolism*. Thus the child early learns to respond and make responses to cues which are immediately relevant. Expressive symbolism of this order has no reference other than to itself.' *Class, Codes and Control Vol. 1*, page 33.

[20]Kristeva, Julia. "From One Identity to Another", in *Desire in Language*, page 143.

[21]*The Star* Tues. 13 October, 1987, reproduced in *'v.'* page 45.

[22]See also my discussion of Muslim oral based writers' avoidance of swearing in print, in chapter 8 discussing *The Blasphemers' Banquet.*

[23]Austin, 'The perlocutionary act...is the causing of a change in the mind of a listener, so that he becomes 'alarmed', 'convince', 'deterred'. The act is the effect of the utterance on the listener but this is not an effect governed by convention...' Quoted in Coulthard, *Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, page 19.

[24]See Chapter 3, where the polarities of dumbness and eloquence are explored.

[25]Bernstein describes 'formal' or 'elaborated code' language structures as '[being] ...sensitive to a particular form of indirect or mediate expression where the subtle arrangement of words and connexions between sentences convey feeling...The language use of the middle class is rich in personal, individual qualifications, and its form implies sets of advanced logical operations; volume and tone and other non-verbal means of expression, though important, take second place.' In *Class, Codes and Control Vol1* page 28.

[26]In support of this claim I would like to cite Bernstein for linguistic evidence: 'public language... provides a language use which discourages the speaker from verbalizing his discrete relationships with the environment...[and] orients the speaker to a relatively low causal order, to descriptive concepts rather than analytic ones.' in *Class, Codes and Control, Vol 1* page 47. For the different conceptual encoding strategies I follow Ong's citation of Malinowski's fieldwork with oral societies that showed their different logical structures via an inability to comprehend abstract syllogisms.

[27]See Gumperz's study of code switching from Low language to High at the conclusion of a narrative:
'1) use of the High language to make an utterance more authoritative;
2)using the High language to give the 'point' or reason for telling the story that had been narrated mostly in the Low language'. in Fasold, *The Sociolinguistics of Society* page 203.

[28]As Bernstein's research pointed out: '...when a more appropriate formulation is pointed out to the user of a *public* language the latter may insist that this is precisely *what he meant*. In a sense this is true, for what the individual wished to characterise, he did. The reformulation represents a second order characterisation (that of a *formal* language) which is alien to the original speaker who will attempt to reduce the second order to the first.' in *Class Codes and Control Vol 1* page 44. Thus the reverse is true, an elaborated code utterance might be mis-encoded within the strategies proper to restricted code, the differences in subject being mistaken for a function of the linguistic difference.

[29]Fishman: 'Domains are defined... in terms of institutional contexts and their congruent behavioural co-occurences. They attempt to summate the major clusters of interaction that occurs in clusters of multilingual settings and involving clusters of interlocutors.' *Domains and the Relationship Between Micro- and Macro Sociolinguistics*, page 441   I have extrapolated the diglossic code switch of the skin from restricted code, to pseudo-elaborated code as a response to the setting of the discourse situation.

[30]See Ong, *Orality and Literacy* page 110.

[31]Ong, 'By keeping knowledge embedded in the human life-world, orality situates knowledge within a context of struggle' -such as proverbs, insults etc. page 35.

[32]Ong, ibid. page 111.

[33]Ong, ibid. page 35.

[34]The poem's setting in 1984 places it pre-graffiti *artist*, graffiti still being generically an anonymous act of defacement.

CALLING WOMEN TRUTH: *MEDEA: A SEX-WAR OPERA*

5.1 PROLOGUE: ORCHESTRATING THEIR OWN VOICES

Harrison's Medea myth, *Medea: A Sex-war Opera*, frames the drama in terms of the different historical voices which have inscribed an interested version of the 'truth' of woman. It directly engages with 'traditional', accepted versions[1], by using these as a meta-text to write against, their citation as implicit frame reflexively making *their* phallogocentric boundary apparent as that which has been breached in the act of re-reading. This dialogism re-appropriates the structure propre to myth, as signalled by the play's epigraph:

> *'A myth is a polyphonic fuge for many voices.'*[2]

In creating a space where all the versions circulate, Harrison is attempting to free the myth from its male governance; the historical closure which has 'written out' female versions is challenged, the 'truth of the origins' that underwrites logocentricism is shown to represent a *lack* in the male discourse of control which the *Sex-War Opera* destabilises by re-inserting the 'discourse feminine'.

In analysing the success of Harrison's project, I will be tracing his *mediation* of the feminine; the 'giving back' of the myth from the misogynist inscription of Woman by 'new-man' feminism is still a male discourse, *inherently* prescriptive, its un-writing/re-writing showing the fresh, self-conscious, conception of woman, constructed in the light of contemporary socio-feminist critique, yet also showing this awareness as inevitably limited, and *limiting*. This duality can be clearly delineated in the opera's summation:

> GODDESS 3/1.
> Medea's a murderess in the history
> of *men* who plotted against the great SHE
> and that's the version that's now most rife.
> The truth's much older...   (445);

the vilification of Medea is confronted as symptomatic of male appropriation of 'history', but in the move to negate this effacing gesture, Harrison erects a separate restrictive structure, a competing version of *'The Truth'*, which once more invokes theocentricity. His new discourse of origins is contrary to both myth *and* the operation of the feminine. Further, in constructing female characters who assign themselves this 'truth' and so enact the masculine, the issue of genderisation within fiction must also be addressed.

To analyse this 'Woman'-'Truth' equivalence, I use Derrida's reading of Nietzsche's engagement with this pairing[3], in which he interrogates the undecidability of the constitution of the feminine as allegory for the undeterminability of 'Truth'. As Harrison's opera explicitly sets out to tell "Medea's" 'truth', countering the slander of other, male-instigated myths, I propose to trace how his various truths are framed, constructing a separate, but equally determined, male-governed space for woman, and how Derrida's *refusal* to assign a prescriptive women's-place conversely delineates the textual areas that evade the legality of the Logos. In the opera, the 'truth of the lack of truth' of woman *can* be found; where the text writes its silence, the feminine gives itself to be heard.

The opera's Overture encapsulates an initial presentation of the 'sex-war'; characteristically, Harrison uses a 'separate' masque to present the arguments and stratagems of the following text, a semiotic 'dumb-show' fulfilling the same function as his promo videos[4] and, citing the formal staging techniques operating in *Yan Tan Tethera*, constructing an allegorical figure that proposes the text's interpretation.

The motif of the *construction* of the feminine is introduced in a grotesque effigy of 'murderous Medea' as target for the Chorus' multi-lingual/textual hatred. Armed with a knife, she terrorises her children, situating the historical discourses as founded upon the psychoses of male fear and hostility against empowered women, as old as the myths prompted to explicate the dis-ease with things feminine. The Overture's 'vast female figure' clearly represents the archetypal Mother, whose act of murderous betrayal confirms the castration fear embedded in this configuration of her 'power'. As a collective projection of the psychoanalytical fear of separation from the mother, characteristic of the dependency experienced during the abject stage - the fantasized rejection that the child is powerless to arrest - this surrogate Medea's murder of her children serves as a means of acting out this fear, providing a legitimate space to express the anger of dependency without betraying the weakness it implies.

Significantly, this vilification can only be articulated *after* the individuation process, where the son is separated from the maternal body and enters the symbolic realm. Again the mother represents a threat, in being the object of desire in her constitution as Phallus. Her placing as 'lack' the son is forbidden to supply invokes the fear of castration transferentially figured as anger, hatred, which displacement is expressed through the divisive practices of language, divorced from the semiotic, the maternal. The established *textual* insults, from Seneca (AD226) to *Euripidova Medeia* (1878), not only demonstrate the recurrence of this relation throughout history/literature, but

underscore its positioning within the phallogocentric hierarchy, the authority of the written word providing an appeal to the sanctity of originary truth.

This 'original' portrayal of Medea introduces the framing of the feminine within the order of the Phallus in its realisation of the projected phallic Mother. Her *knife* structurally supplies the 'lack' constitutive of the feminine, it is the agent of castration, through the symbolic killing of the children *and* the representation of hermaphroditic completeness, rendering the male (son)'s phallus redundant. This totemic representation parodies the phallogocentric universe that constructs its Other in terms of its self-image. The androgyny of the effigy is suggested by its erection in the midst of the sublimated male passion: when the chorus 'reaches a *climax* of hatred' (my emphasis) the 'knife plunges down'; the symbolic Mother's phallus not only links her with power, enables her direct access to desire's fulfilment, unmediated by a second order relation with a phallus, it also signifies the fear inherent in the mother/son relationship. Killing the sons to prevent their generation of lineage, Medea effectively castrates them, prevents their becoming of age, claimis them as part of the maternal body before they begin to separate.

The totemic effigy collapses, spent after climax, and the 'hostile circle' of the male chorus is likewise displaced, its cross-gender feminine formation promising a more problematic treatment of gender issues that the simple socio-politics projected by the text.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

The complex portrayal of 'women' in *Medea: A Sex-War Opera* centres around the generational triumvirate of 'VIRGIN, MOTHER, CRONE' (p. 372), linking this structure with the structure of myth itself. It draws on the creational 'Earth Mother' (Gaiya) myths, and on modern, Jungian-archetypal extensions of these projections of the essence of the feminine. Specifically, it shows the roots of the 'virgin-mother-crone' structure to lie, like the mythology that textualizes it, in the Greek tradition; the image of the female Goddess[5] as self-devouring serpent links women in a unified symbolisation, positing the male heresies of dissimulation, evil, treachery alongside the traditional female attributes of regeneration. The circle symbol - eternity, completeness - of the female is used repeatedly in the masque-derived staging of the opera.

I will return to these more conventional representations of the feminine, but first it is useful to deconstruct Harrison's portrayal of the women who occupy these roles or stages within *Medea*, how they constitute an appropriation of the myth. In doing so,

one inevitably discovers that the 'positive' picture of female unity that the text seeks to project is itself a study of fragmentation and deception, leading to the question of the 'truth' of the portrayal, and how far it is woman herself who evades the dramatic simulacrum, while presenting herself within the act of declining to reveal her presence. Further to this I will briefly examine how far a male feminism is responsible for creating a similarly distorting set of myths concerning 'femininity' and its effect on its self-projections, via the movement of the *copula*.

The ideological framework that positions each of the stages of womanhood constituting the 'GODDESS 3/1' will be interrogated in terms of Derrida's reading of Nietzsche's three propositions concerning women and truth:

1: 'Woman as Truth'. The figuration of the feminine entirely determined by the phallogocentric hierarchy, hence the naming of an 'originary truth' that inscribes woman as its object.

2: 'Woman as Untruth',. Woman as dissembler, playing with the established male order to achieve an autonomous goal. This is also ultimately male governed, maintaining the relation with truth - in manipulating the *existing* structures of power the feminine is ultimately bound with the male, defined against it, so complicitous.

3: 'Woman suspending relation with Truth'. Final, affirmative stage, woman as evading the definition of her 'un/truth'. In refusing to deal with the concerns of the 'masculine', a form of the truth propre to the feminine is approached, in its constant deferral and veiling which gives-itself as the truth, without committing itself to the truthfulness of this truth.

Within this pro-feminist re-reading of the myth, women's silenced voice can be traced against the inscription of the male-discourse of Harrison, who enables the myth's invocation of its 'origins' as multiple, yet adds its own definitive trace as his textual governance writes this freedom within a fresh site of closure.

5.3   THE DRAMA'S WOMEN/THE DRAMATIST'S WOMEN

Perhaps the first thing to note in the opening's symbolic groupings,

> 'Virgin: Woman 3 (Creusa, Hypsipyle), Mother: Woman 1 (Medea) Crone: Woman 2 (Nurse , Old Woman of Lemnos and Queen Arete of Macris)'[6]

is that the opera we assume will explore these identities 'loses' one of their embodiments - the 'old woman of Lemnos' fails to materialise, and by the close of the opera the Goddess-serpent has been conjured with no reference to her[7]. Through the absences of its women, the opera's project gives itself to be restructured, its *pretence* at unity allows the portrayal of its hierarchical incompleteness, the deceit of the 'authoritative' voice. Its lack of space for some groups is as grotesque a demonstration

of its claim of the Medea myth's appropriation by male interest groups as its denial of speech to others - Creusa herself while a catalyst for the drama never justifies her 'unsisterly' actions, so, as she becomes a sacrificial victim of the phallocentric ordering, she is passively vilified and annihilated.

These problematics - exclusion, silencing and vilification - cover the operations of the phallocentric hierarchy with which the opera seeks to engage.

5.3.1 IN-DEPENDENCE AND DEPENDENCE: THE TYRANNY OF THE PROPRE

The opening murder of all males on Lemnos establishes the motif of women-as-revengers, and the symbolic exchange of torches and knives links all three women as accomplices. This brief exploration of infidelity and woman-as-castrator is unbalanced - the condemnatory male account is distorted, the presence of Harrison's pro-feminine trace within it implicitly justifying the women's actions:

> MALE CHORUS:
> they were *driven*
> to kill fathers, husbands, sons   (p.374).

Already, genderisation of the '*Sex-War*' combatants is problematic, the dialectic subverted as the thesis contains its own conclusion, making the women's response not their 'own', but structurally supplementary. What marks the supplement as more than repetition is the women's apportioning of blame to the men -

> If that was *my* husband with his concubine
> snorting from swinish coupling and wine[...]
> I too would hack off his wandering cock[...] (p.374)

The egocentric viewpoint is concerned only with re-empowerment through a gesture of disablement, the political economy of usage and abuse that is inherent in the infidelity with '*slave girls* from Thrace' is overlooked, its machinery remaining intact, if inverted. Ultimately, this 'blindness' to wider inequalities shows the women to be victims even in their assumption of power.

Meanwhile, in appropriating intact the male 'truth' of domination, the women *reinscribe* themselves as male. The 'stuctural inversion as structural continuation' is explicated, then, as sex-role *reversal*; the Argonauts, unarmed, semi-naked, exhausted are forced into the complementary role of supplicants to the women, who are disguised as warriors. This ironises the men's discourse in the *destination* of its 'truisms', performing male 'closedness' in the face of female experience:

> You know how it is when a man needs a lay
> when a man's in want of a screw?   (381)

The identity of the 'authors' of these truisms is reflexively thrown into question; can the women assume this discourse without assuming the hierarchical position which 'authored' it? Seemingly making the requests inappropriate, the women's assumption of phallocentric structures makes the Argonauts' discourse target its receivers via its assumed inversion; possessing the structure, the women refute its conventional presuppositions and re-interpret it to suit their propre needs:

> QUEEN HYPSIPYLE & WOMEN OF LEMNOS.
> Welcome, Argonauts, yes, come ashore,
> you may have water, fruit and sleep, but not before
> you've given us what we need, and more!
> (......*with eye on Jason admiringly.*)   (381)

Predatory male sexuality is matched by the women's. However, their presented Pre-Lapsarian pairing-off (accompanied by the '*Delizie Contenti*') shows the failings of this feminist agenda; in appropriating its discourse, the *economy of usage*, to which the women have already proven their blindness in overlooking the position of the Thracian slave girls, is sanctioned.

Allowing the Argonauts entry marks the departure from the original extreme separatist stance; *its* 'utopia' inevitably failed as its creation brought with it the trace of what it seeks to negate, the mark of the phallogocentric order was inscribed through its absence, its lack - literally, the absence of all men made their non-presence an issue. But the women's replication of the male power-structures they originally 'attacked' has predestined the outcome of this meeting. In satisfying the men's sexual needs, the women again make themselves slaves, a classic dialectic structure parodied in the stichomythic exchange between Jason and Hypsipyle:

> Jason: They have things to do this chosen crew.
> Hypsipyle: More interesting than what I do for you?
> Jason: The ARGO has a solemn mission.
> Hypsipyle: Love always lags behind a man's ambition. (388)

The appropriation of the male economy of desire leaves the women stranded; the structure inevitably works to the advantage of those who assembled it. The Argonauts celebrate the women as exotic fruits; the feminine has become as adjunctive to the *proprel-y* masculine desire as the wives' account of their murderous acts was to the prefatory, structuring, male one.

5.3.1.1 NIETZSCHE'S WOMEN 1 AND MEN

This 'Woman as Truth', commandeering the Phallus and so perpetuating structural inequalities, then, gives rise to Nietzsche's 'castrated woman', who seeks to occupy the power structures defined *against* her, so maintains their 'truth' without realising their

specious claim to governance. The phallogocentric myth is preserved, though, in ascribing to its 'truth', the feminine is ultimately as impotent as the masculine whose false belief attempts to define her as subject-to its truth.

> For it is man who believes in the truth of woman, in woman-truth. And in truth, they too are men, these women feminists so derided by Nietzsche. Feminism is nothing but the operation of a woman who aspires to be like a man. And in order to resemble the masculine dogmatic philosopher this woman lays claim - just as much claim as he - to truth, science and objectivity in all their castrated delusions of virility. Feminism too seeks to castrate. It wants a castrated woman. Gone the style.[8]

This targets *not* the feminists seeking to gain equality within the existing political structures, but men's perceptions of women who are seemingly engaged in this process: Derrida/Nietzsche's exploration of 'Woman as Truth' hinges on the ambiguity of this 'equivalence' which, then, rather than freezing the subjectivity of the feminine within a philosophical framework, *un*freezes truth itself, as an undecidable that works through its own constant deferral, likened to the veiled nature of women.

The double-action, negation and affirmation, of this process plays within the offered textual readings: it is not the opera that offers the 'truth' of the wives, but the wives' fragmentation of their 'true', given, rôles that challenges the original siting in them of 'truth'. The Argonauts believe the 'truth' of the Lemnos women's adopted stance, its apparent mirroring of male mores reflected in their assumption of the sexual initiative makes them co-actors in a union that is actually unequal; the women only *appear* to occupy the same ethical space. The women, convincing themselves of the 'rightness' of their right to participate within hierarchical structures that are propre-ly male, are ascribing to the unitary myth of origin that holds 'truth' as decidable, and decidable as the phallus, by which they are excluded, and which they lack. Their 'maleness' thus doubly castrates them.

The male myth of 'truth', or centre, rests on an equivalence between woman, as other, and truth, an equivalence their *actual* performance highlights as mutable, which mutability is inconsistent with the male notion of 'truth'. The wives articulate Derrida's demonstration of this myth as flawed by the existence of women.

This strategic failure marks the disjunction between the existing hierarchies and Derrida's explication of the non-delimitable nature of the feminine, which Hypsipyle enacts at her moment of being reborn, the event of her *re*naissance as Creusa. After her lament over *men's* fickle nature, it is Hercules who comes closest to understanding this dissimulation, this 'women's style' -

> Don't let her fool you. It's all women's lies! (389)

Inhabiting the conventional male sexist discourse, this statement also discusses the 'truth' of women in this text, their imperfect, impossible, 'lying' occupation of the masculine, 'truth' system. In the rupture between form and act lies the nature of the truth, half-revealed, but only designating the site without demonstrating its presence.

This text also explicitly seeks to right the wrongs of a male mythico-hierarchy by filling that hierarchy with the women's discourse, yet in re-instating past female deities it re-inscribes systematic closure, effectively perpetuating the male dominance. The signature of Harrison assigns a gender to the textual strategy which can inevitably be *traced*. This raising of the question of women's truth shows that the textual logic subscribes to the continued possibility of that truth's existence; it is indeed *committed* to demonstrating its existence. However, this pursuit of the inaccessible origin, derived from the male investment of the Women-Truth axis, highlights the space left by its object's continued absence. What the male discourse thinks it can see, having placed it there in a gesture of renunciation, is constantly given the 'lie' by the voice of the feminine:

> The feminine distance abstracts truth from itself in a *suspension* of the relation with castration.[...] It is with castration that this relation is suspended, not with the truth of castration - in which woman does not believe anyway - and not with the truth inasmuch as it might be castration. Nor is it the relation with truth-castration that is suspended, for that is precisely a man's affair. That is the masculine *concern*, the *concern* of the male who has never come of age, who is never sufficiently sceptical or dissimulating. In such an affair the male, in his credulousness and naïveté (which is always sexual, pretending even at times to masterful expertise), castrates himself and from the secretion of his act fashions the snare of truth-castration.[9]

So it is the designatedly male concern with the 'truth' of the women of Lemnos that at once claims the women as 'liars' and, by the double invagination of their 'lies' as beyond masculine philosophy (the special, veiling quality of *women's* lies'), marks them as 'truth'. The subsequent vilification of things male, of which the homosexual (uncontaminated-with-the-feminine) Hercules is the archetype, inverts his judgement while re-stating that of the prevailing phallogocentric economy.

If Hypsipyle is 'lying' in her apparent occupation of male structures, the truth concerning woman is that she is a dissembler, which 'truth' draws on the historical placement of women as *secondary*, encapsulated by the Medea myth itself. Textually, the change from sexual predator to victim projects Hypsipyle as only *seeming* to embrace the masculine structure of desire, evidenced in her subsequent reversion to a traditional, (male dependant) female discourse:

HYPSIPYLE.

> And the sailor's heart is lifted by blue skies
> and he sniffs the sea-breezes and he's ready to depart
> and he doesn't give a fig for the girl's
> broken heart
> or the tears that start welling in her eyes   (398)

Otherwise the 'truth' is that 'woman is truth', the past vilification and years of suppression can be simply inverted and the 'truth' re-instated, as this opera suggests, via a reversal of roles[10]. The ambiguity surrounding these possible readings of the feminine is perhaps partly brought about by the impossibility of determining a role that might be propre to the feminine, as the act of its delineation would be contrary to the operation it seeks to describe. Consequently, the foregrounded attempt to present a positivist reading of the mythical women's actions confounds its own gesture in attempting to determine the indeterminate. In supporting women's right to sexual assertiveness (a stance replicated in *The Common Chorus*), Harrison removes his justification for attacking *men's* sexual exploitation of women, the co-existence of both positions within the text ultimately seeks to derive its validity from an implied external social-text.

3.2. WOMAN 2: WITHIN THE PHALLOGOS

The failure of "Woman 2's" incarnation, as Old Woman of Lemnos, to develop beyond the brief *mime* within the Overture, and her subsequent eradication from the figuring of the GODDESS, raises and keeps present the question of her absence. Does this portrayal of the 'Crone' tell us something of the political economies from which she is silenced, excluded, or indeed absents herself? Silence is again a gesture of complicity to the production of woman-as-truth:

> her muteness is a refusal to enter into complicity with men, a token of her indifference to them, but it is also what enables her to occupy the position of truth. [...] Thus the narcissistic woman silently grounds the discourse of the philosopher or psychoanalyst who verbally interprets the truth that she bears.[11]

In this 'unwritten' area of the feminine, the limitations of Harrison's promotion of women's assertiveness appear - the celebrated sexuality is reserved for the young; the old, in their ceasing to function as either (sexual) threat or challenge become facilitators for those still actively engaged within the economy of desire. As vengeful matriarchal figure, her opening role shadows Medea's, yet the *re*portrayal of the Women of Lemnos as appropriators of male power-structures cannot incorporate her convincingly - the order of the Phallus is symbolically allied with the strong, the possessors of power, and - age equated with impotence - there is no 'pairing' for the old woman, except with Butes and *his* isolation.

5.3.2.1 WOMAN 2'S PRODUCTIVITY: WITHIN THE MALE ECONOMY

This structure can be elaborated in terms of Heidegger's Nietzsche, that draws on the pairing of productivity-as-masculine ('a productive mother is a masculine mother'), and the philosopher who produces nothing:

> 'he is a woman - and what is more he is a sterile woman and certainly not the *männliche Mutter*. Before art, the dogmatic philosopher, a maladroit courtesan, remains, just as did the second-rate scholar, impotent, a sort of old maid.'[12]

This 'productivity' recurrently relates women to their fertility - Medea's is prematurely halted (she is prevented from bearing the projected 'seven times two' sons), 'virgin' Creusa/Hypsipyle's has not yet arrived, and the Crone's has ceased. The opening murder of the men and the children arrests the possibility of the (manlike) 'productivity' of motherhood for all women, and, for the aged, represents their forgoing of heirs in an irreversible gesture. The Old Woman of Lemnos can not reappear as a 'manly mother', as do the females disguised as warriors. Her impotence leaves her to the old order, and in the transformation to stage two infiltration-and-incorporation feminism she is displaced, the writer has overlooked her, left her out. This symbolic rupture with creativity situates Woman 2 in between the conceptions of Woman and Truth.

Significantly, the 'Crone' is repeatedly the matchmaker/Madam, acting in response to Medea, but maintaining the hierarchies, working within their confines to bring about a solution that does not jeopardise the system she inhabits. *Dramatically*, as Nurse, she acts as Medea's messenger, facilitating Jason's winning of the fleece and their subsequent escape by passing on the potency of her mistress' magic, and *textually* the continuity binding 'virgin' and 'crone' is stressed via her additional stanzas confessing 'their' helplessness in the face of love, the ambiguity of the 'I' speaker evoking the 3 in 1 of the Goddess, though her *vicarious* access to the feminine marks her as 'old maid'.

> NURSE. I can help you win this fight
> and drug the Dragoness
> but love is quite beyond my might
> with love I am powerless. (398)

This confinement within the established Law is demonstrated by Queen Arete, her next incarnation, as 'courtesan', ensuring Medea's escape from the Law of the Father. This female role works within the system to ensure its preferred outcome, but does not challenge the establishment - 'possession' is transferred from father to husband via the economy of the hymen, but her role remains passive; the sexual transaction she facilitates for Medea is prefigured by the lullaby with which she quietens the King, implicitly signalling her complicity with his governance:

> Dream, dream of when you took me first to bed
> dream of when you took my maidenhead! (407)

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The hymen is the mark of possession - a gift from the female that signals her investiture within the economy of the phallus - by both male and female characters. The chant 'Jason must bed Medea by dawn!' (p. 407) is 'taken up' by the female chorus. That this is still enacting governance, suppression, is semiotically suggested by the need for secrecy and silence. The Queen situates her actions within the boundaries of the 'Law', and in this sense overrides the potential of the feminine to evade governance. This assumption of Law gives rise to the concern Lacan has shown at

> the way in which the mother accommodates herself to the person of the father, but also the way she takes his speech, the word (*mot*), let us say, of his authority, in other words, of the place that she reserves for the Name-of-the-Father in the promulgation of the law.[13]

The King's referral to 'law' and 'truth' passes unchallenged, the Queen ascribes to the paternalist economy, Nietzsche's 'incompetent courtesan'. The relation with the 'Law of the Father' is continued as it is 'reduplicated in the place of the Other' (ibid.); having escaped one manifestation of the 'Law of the Father', Medea is delivered via the governance of a second (the King) into a reduplicated hierarchy under Jason. Her escape becomes a demonstration of her entrapment within the Law.

This seemingly artful arrangement by Arete embodies the second feminist strategy discussed in relation to Hypsipyle:

> Similarly, in the second proposition, the woman is censured, debased and despised, only in this case it is as the figure or potentate of truth. In the guise of the Christian, philosophical being she either identifies with truth, or else she continues to play with it, to her own advantage. Whichever, woman, through her guile and naïveté (and her guile is always contaminated by naïveté) remains nonetheless within the economy of truth's system, in the phallogocentric space.[14]

By investing her operation in these 'reduplicated' relations, her 'power' is seen to derive from them, from her treatment - manipulation and appeasement - of the male[15]. This complicitous role is figured in the *name* of Arete, the Derridean notion of the arrêt, the mark of arresting, closing the action, maintaining events within a fixed boundary, facilitating only within the logic of a pre-ordained closure:

> we must pause to consider *[on devra s'arrêter sur]* translation. It brings the arrêt of everything, decided, suspends, and sets in motion... [16]

The guile of the 'Crone' is ultimately limited to, dependent on, the old systems she grew up within; she *has been* defined, and her changes are returns to the Law.

5.4   MEDEA'S TRANSCENDENCE OF 'TRUTH': THE THIRD STAGE

The 'truth' of Medea's positioning within the play offers a much more complex portrayal of the feminine. Her first appearance 'at a high level behind a kind of zenana

grille' (SD, p.395) satisfies Nietzsche's preliminary discoveries concerning the 'positioning' of Woman and Truth, those of 'distance' and the 'veil'. Harrison's Medea is distanced from Jason, her truth is not revealed but kept apart, deferred, maintained on the horizon. Further, the grille acts as a veil, a layer that conceals as it displays, allowing the 'truth' to be seen in the process of being obscured, making it more alluring in its tantalising opacity:

> A woman seduces from a distance. In fact, distance is the very element of her power. Yet one must beware to keep one's own distance from her beguiling song of enchantment. A distance from distance must be maintained.[17]

This distance is 'maintained', as Medea's love is declared through the offices of the Nurse. In what, after Nietzsche, masculine philosophy sees as the necessity of woman-truth's mediation, linguistic veiledness, she voices the 'truth' of her emotions via the dissimulating textual 'I' which shifts indeterminately between the voice of the Nurse-as-messenger and nurse-as-surrogate-lover in her adoption of the role left vacant by the operation of distance, so the truth becomes multiple via the play of the feminine:

> NURSE.
> Medea, my mistress also told me to say:
> The herbs I cull from hidden vales
> can't cure my desperate case.
>
> *The NURSE then adds stanzas of her own [...]*
> Why if I can make you like Hercules
> is there one thing I can't do [...]
> I can't help loving you.   (398)

Through the effect of distance the truth comes to be spoken, but not by its speaker; it is not *her* truth she enacts in this gesture of appropriation, yet nevertheless the truth about truth is voiced in its ambiguity and dissimulation. Woman's truth, that offers itself while maintaining distance, presents the truth while cloaking it in another guise, the truth of woman being that she knows there is no [woman-]truth, and this lack is the truth that is veiled, maintained at a distance:

> Because, indeed, if woman *is* truth, *she* at least knows that there is no truth, that truth has no place here and that no one has a place for truth. And she is woman precisely because she herself does not believe in truth itself, because she does not believe in what she is, in what she is believed to be, in what she thus is not.[18]

The effect of 'simulation' attributed to Woman by Nietzsche allows the male hierarchy to impose a truth on woman, on Medea, but the dyonisian affirmative character of the third proposed type neither refutes nor complies-with this closure of identity. The audience's initial conception of Medea derives from King Aetes' amazed soliloquy at his daughter's apparent change of heart, the truth pertaining to the feminine maintains

its distance, Medea is indicted without being drawn into the logic of the proffered dialectical structure. The King can tell her what she is, while the truth of what she has *given herself to be*, the phallocentric outline of her rôle, *actually* profiles that of Nietzsche/Derrida's second type, as occupied by Arete:

> AETES:
> Medea, you've always been your father's daughter,
> a daughter after my own iron heart [...]
> But now you seem squeamish, why?
> I didn't think my daughter knew how to cry.   (399)

Woman is defined in terms of man, and it through her successful assumption of his characteristics, acquiescing to the paternalistic construction of the feminine, that freedom within the theocracy is 'allowed'.

The catalogue of brutality that the king and his daughter have watched, as hapless adventurers perished in pursuit of the fleece, underline the king's claim to have witnessed the truth of Medea's heartlessness. His movement of appropriation in claiming the daughter and taking her for - the 'truth' of her - that which is claimed, is a narcissistic inversion, showing the appearance of Medea within the male metaphysical structuration of Truth/Presence.

Yet the change in the King's attempt to delineate Medea's truth - from the past affirmative to the conditional modality of 'seem' - shows the operation of feminine distance. It allows the projections of truth and falsity yet understands them as being introjections of the masculine concerns, needs, to establish the Truth, manifest as the truth concerning women. In evading interrogation, Medea eludes both previous entrapments, allowing neither that her behaviour was truthful (making her subject to, the subject of, the phallogocentric agenda of western metaphysics), nor that she is or has been 'false', which would present a concomitant 'verity' around which the theocratic structure builds its governance (that the truth concerning women is that they are un-true). Further, her one reply 'veils' the truth in seeming to satisfy her father's demands, attributing a concrete cause to her 'dissimulation':

> MEDEA:
> The seawind's blown some grit into my eye![19]   (400)

The potency of 'distance' is further evidenced via the operation of Medea's magic to secure Jason's victory, initially attributed by the crowd to 'Some god or goddess' (p.401), and only indirectly linked with Medea. Upon her father's final naming of 'my daughter',

> *MEDEA is nowhere to be seen, she has vanished.* (SD 401)

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She has 'distanced [her]self from distance', the truth has lost itself in the multiplicity of veilings and artifices. In attempting finally to name Medea as truth, in claiming to have discovered the truth concerning his daughter as a dissembler, and having access to her as woman, the king loses sight of her, she disappears *over his horizon.* The phallocentric projection of *'his'* daughter is dramatically revealed to be absent; Medea no longer gives herself as this and in the withdrawal of the truth the 'woman' also 'vanishes'. Medea, swathed in the veils of truth, had been taken to be present, just as philosopher's assume the presence of truth midst their projections of its distant existence; *'nowhere to be seen'*, she has, propre-ly, been neither present nor absent as these conditions are not *propre* to the feminine.

In this manner the male readings of the Medea myth, including Harrison's, all project the site of woman-truth, but as Medea distances herself from King Aetes' prescription of her role, so this textual portrayal of the feminine withdraws from its male delineation. This refusal to be written centres around the hymen-symbol, a graphic whose 'undecidability' inscribes the trace of the signatory who attempts its specific determination. Within this text, Harrison's use of the libidinal economy as the site of women's empowerment ultimately returns the truth of women to their fertility, or lack. In contrast to the 'barren' woman, Woman 2, who is devalued, Medea and Creusa are both valued in terms of their 'maidenhead', the hymen, propre to woman, appropriated by man as a gesture of possession.

This system of exchange inscribes women as defined by *a series* of men (a positioning Harrison ironizes through the inversion of the final wedding scene), but it is only through this (hetero)sexual network that the women perform their radical gesture of renunciation, in either the rejection of maternity (the women of Lemnos), its exploitation (the militant EarthMother/Goddess - 'It's to HER all men belong, living, loving, dying.' p.434), or its subversion (Medea's murderous act figuring her as an 'un-natural' mother). The textual celebration of woman continually invokes the mark of the masculine as constitutive of her empowerment. While this re-writing of the Medea myth challenges the misogyny and mis-representation of the historically prioritized versions cited in the Overture, denying the paranoid projections of the opening masque, it maintains the feminine as constituted through the masculine.

Medea, demonstrating the third position of the feminine, refuses to enter the contract. The undecidability of the notion of the *'propre'* is not poised around the divide virgin/wife, the male-governed fertility-division which *seems* to govern in the court of Alcinous, but around, from the opening dumb show onwards, what is given and what is taken. Medea takes her 'truth' away from the male, in a gesture of Derrida's third

stage that will ultimately mark the freedom of 'woman' from the governance of even this text, which has claimed (wrongly, for it still inscribes the male) to be performing this re-appropriation for her.

This is Medea's propre act, as woman as simulator; giving herself and giving herself *for* (109), at once surrendering to possession yet surrendering only a simulacrum of what is taken, what she is taken to be, she ensures nothing is 'possessed' of her in the act of propriation. The idea of the hymen as marker of possession, perceived by the phallocentric hierarchy, the presence/absence arbitration concomitant with its projection of the truth/untruth division, is in reality more complex. 'Hymen', signifying structure of both 'virgin membrane' and 'marriage', denies the possibility of both conditions existing at the same time; the hymen does not have its own existence, it is a *marker* - of the taking place, or not, of an *event*. This concept engages the *propre* - the hymen *cannot be* possessed, 'no*thing* is taken and no*thing* is given'[20]:

> Should the opposition of give and take, of posses and possessed, be nothing more than a transcendental snare which is produced by the hymen's graphic, it would then escape not only dialectics, but also any ontological decidability.[21]

This re-framing of 'maidenhead' exposes the interestedness of the Law of the Father in maintaining the validity of the idea of the *propre*, as it underpins the theocentric universe which He governs via His propriation of the Truth, of Woman, and the truth of woman. While Medea *seems* to give herself for possession in compliance with the *propriety* of the court, her access to her truth allows this dissimulation in knowing that this is another instance of the feminine 'giving itself *for*' - appearing to stand for the truth of - the transaction, whilst knowing its condition as undecidable, therefore suspending relations with truth.

This mutuality of the hymen-graphic is textually realised via the textual "I's" lack of demarcation between giving and taking in "Jason/Medea's" pre-nuptial duet, :

> JASON/MEDEA:
> [...] where I shall make you mine
> the Golden Fleece that has been spread
> to furnish us a marriage bed,
> the Golden Fleece all night will shed
> the truest light on you and me
> and sanctify our unity.   (409)

Semiotically, the hymen's graphic ("/") divides the pair at its start; its commencement signals the hymen-as-marriage within the opera, creating a unified 'I' and other. The reference to the 'truest light' emphasises that the truths concerning giving/taking are mediated in this act, they exclude the closure of the Truth that initiated the marriage.

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5.5 THE HYMEN IN AND OUT OF HARRISON'S HANDS

This *undecidability* of the hymen is redoubled; the textual membrane that joins Acts 1&2 marks the passage from one sense of the graphic to the other. As the hymen, the division cannot be stated with respect to a 'truth'; in performance, the continuation of music and action pass over the textual/graphic *arete* that suspends the proceedings, the performed is transgressing the (control of) the written. Since the 'break' and its non-occurrence are at the moment of the wedding, where the event and inversion of the hymen's rupture are taking place, it enacts this rupture in the experience of the audience, focuses us upon it and makes it refer beyond itself.

The 'truth' of Medea's hymenal transformation remains, necessarily, 'distant', its symbolic corollary, enacted by the disrupted union of the 'downstage man and woman', anticipates the seeming temporal inversion; the Wedding Hymn is heard a second time at the start of Act 2. Hymen-as-virginal-membrane has gone, hymen-as-marriage appears. Yet in this double operation the performance of the transition posits the graphic's 'lack', which the second half of the opera will be discussing - the loss of virginity invites its reinstatement as Other.

Medea's other is Creusa, poised around this hymen we have Medea, wedded, no longer virgin, situated against Creusa, virgin, unwed; the logic of the hymen places the women in perfect opposition. The Phallogos inscribes them in the male-female hierarchy as fighting over possession, that is, for *them* as they are understood, over the right to be possessed. However, in establishing the undecidability of the hymen, and its function of dismantling the operation of Truth and Being within this purported metaphysical tradition, the two women, for *themselves*, as they establish themselves, are fighting over no*thing*, and are not divided.

So, dividing them on separate plinths, the dramatic organisation of the opera reveals its 'male conception'. The 'truth' of (each) woman is written as veiled from the other, each challenges the simulation of truth their Other presents, thus they each confront the phallogocentric projection of the Truth of woman, and 'reveal' (though still through the operation of veils, this truth about women's truth is never directly stated, as its necessary condition) the truth about women's suspended relation to truth in attacking its non-presence.

This oppositional dialectic, established through male hierarchical machinations, is finally subverted as the logic of the hymen allows the 'marriage' of the women into a unified conception of Woman that can only be projected through the destruction of both *as simulacra of male truths*. As Medea 'vanishes' in Colchis, absents herself in

declining to participate in the Law of the Father, so Creusa and Medea annihilate each other in a gestural marriage that is anterior to the logic of the hymen around which they were suspended, separate, 'virgin' in their own truths as women, and consummated in the shared 'freedom' from Truth's dominion as Woman.

Significantly, this aporia around the breach of the hymen is figured in the 'gift[22]', linking the idea of woman giving herself (as Medea on her wedding night) and giving herself *for* (appearing as, seeming to agree to Jason's re-marriage) to the idea that the token of her gift demonstrates her truth-as-woman. This act of breaching *and* giving involves the *pharmakon*, poison and/as remedy, the gift-act as undecideable in its purpose, the superficially blatant act of murder, (gift as poison), becoming subtly intertwined with destruction as 'remedy' for the untenable situation.

> The gift, which is the essential predicate of woman, appeared in the undecideable oscillation of to give oneself/ to give oneself for, give/take, let take/appropriate. Its value or price *(coût)* is that of poison. The price *(coût)* of a *pharmakon*.[23]

Like the Being of the hymen which is constituted as no*thing*, the 'gift' is the act or gesture that ceases to exist at the moment of its instigation. For there to be a 'truth' of giving, the donor must not expect recompense, including the act's intrinsic satisfaction, leading to the double bind that no gift can be given as the *desire* to give brings with it the impossibility of the transaction: it must be constituted as a gesture of pure expenditure, incurring no debt.

This condition is satisfied in the adestination of Medea's gift. In giving *herself* to Jason she would become subject to (male) reconstitution, what he receives is not what she gives, so there is no debt as the gift propre does not arrive, but what is *taken* (through the economy of the hymen) is, in Lacanian terms, the very nature of the gift-of-love, the supply not of the self but of the Other's lack, the gift/love being the giving of what one does not have:

> man manages to satisfy his demand for love in his relationship to the woman to the extent that the signifier of the phallus constitutes her precisely as giving in love what she does not have [...][24]

Through the operation of Medea's inverted gift as death/'blow', Creusa gains *life* - she is *'burnt alive'*: the *coup* liberates, frees her from phallocentric determination, the gift acts as its own 'impregnation' - of fire, the Sun/gold/sex image clustered around the event of Medea's wedding night. At this 'hymenal' moment the women embody the breaching of their mutual division: Creusa's impregnation with invisible fire marks her as virgin while engaged in the marriage-event's symbolic breaking of the hymen; Medea's sacrifice of her sons and renunciation of her husband metaphorically reverses

her marriage event, positions her as virgin, as virgin *re*-positioned outside masculine governance, her immanent fertility her *own*, to annul.

Creusa/Medea's gift follows the path of the gift of love: the giving of what one does not have which is figured as 'the Other'. In effect, Medea gives herself, sacrificially - the theocratic counterpart of the gift entailing its symbolic return as death - but also as the Other of the hymen: in swathing Creusa in the interdependency of both of the pharmakon's senses, Medea frees her from the condition of desire, from constituting the Other. This necessarily brings about death; the end of desire is the death of the subject, the return of the divided subject to itself, self-cancellation, and it is this that is performed in the 'melting', Creusa's disappearance into the symbolic well, leaving a 'trace' of steam!

> [SD] CREUSA, *as in* Act One, *runs back and forth, and finally leaps into the Pit, now the well of Corinth, in the hope it will cool her anguished body. There is a great hiss and a cloud of steam. The stage is empty.*   (429)

In Creusa's absence, Medea too loses her Other, undergoes the same process. Hence the text's play with the moment of death being cross-attributed in the opening dumbshow, Medea's electrocution being displaced by Creusa's burning.

It is this displacement that is in itself the ('true'/propre) 'mark' of the hymen:

> But that there is a loss, that anyway is ascertainable, as soon as there is a hymen. [...]
> He was, he dreaded this castrated woman.
> He was, he dreaded this castrating woman.
> He was, he loved this affirming woman.[25]

The linkage of truth with castration defines the three proposed positionings of the feminine by Nietzsche: the first presents woman as castrated by the phallocentric ordering of her as truth. In the second, the woman plays with the concepts of truth and castration at a distance, manipulating the categories while not believing in them, but in doing so risks self-castration, the *structures* with which she plays ultimately dominating her field of play, her strategic engagement with male fantasies of 'truth' and 'castration' ensuring she remains within their theocentric governance. The third, 'affirming woman' suspends relations with the male concerns of truth and castration:

> And no longer is it man who affirms her. She affirms herself, in and of herself, in man. Castration, here again, does not take place.[26]

The first two positions define woman in terms of the male perception of her regarding her 'Truth'. While acknowledging the necessity of directly engaging with the phallogocentric institutions as the only practical way of effecting material changes within society as outlined by the strategic infiltration and manipulation of the second

position/type, this engagement ultimately *limits* the possibilities of the feminine in tying them to the existing male economy.

The truly affirmative, dyonisic woman *refuses to become engaged* with the parameters of the paternal metaphysic, and in this radical gesture of self-determination 'affirm[s] herself, in and of herself, *in* man'. The 'truth' of the feminine is appropriated by woman in her multiple deferral of its operation, it is generated 'of woman, outside the restrictive logic of dialectics, and 'in' her naming herself as Woman - which in involutionary turn frees her to affirm this non-contingent 'self' *'in* man'.

Derrida's adjunct 'in man' has been seen as a return to male governance, by feminists positing the transcendence of the feminine as realisable only through lesbianism in that this is unmarked by the male[27]. The adjunct serves as a marker of the space to-be-occupied by the will-to-self uncontaminated by 'man'; the space is left by the rejection *of* and designed as a purposively contrary replacement *for* those of convention. In the chiasmic omission of 'of' or 'by' man, woman is no longer 'born of man' or defined by man but released from the master/slave dialectic of the governance of society *and* of the governance of language-as-logos.

5.6 THE APPEARANCE OF THE MALE AND THE SEX-WAR OF WORDS

As man is symbolically linked with woman via her given placement/signification as the phallus as repository for man's desire, in examining the framing of the phallic within this "woman's" text we can see how its theocentric linear 'male' narrative articulates these relations-to-Woman along a castration/truth axis, and how this convention is suspended by the cotextual feminine discourse I have shown emerging in Medea's *own* performance, her re-appropriation, of what is propre to her.

The symbolic transcendental Phallus within the opera is figured as the lever of the electric chair:

> The switch is a handle more out of a dream than reality and it could probably 'double' as the tiller of the Argo later   (SD, 367)

It 'doubles' as the Argo's tiller, icon/fetish that redoubles as repository of phallogocentric power. As State Official, Jason 'takes hold of the lever and seems about to pull it' (368), his command over life/death transferentially embodied within the switch; as conqueror-destroyer, he derives his potency from the wielding of the vehicle that enables his desire. This potential operation of the phallus-symbol is aligned with his relation with the symbolic: the male 'wish-fulfilment' (or 'dream') projected onto his act resides in the desire to annihilate the castrated/castrating woman

as repository of the symbolic (woman as phallus), who is feared as the embodiment of this castrating power.

Male participation in the dumb-show - writer/'dream'er Harrison's, archetype Jason's - places 'the male' as subject to desire constituted in woman. Hence his need to control, to derive the truth regarding her - as signifier of the Phallus as Truth, she contains the truth/phallus as Other of male desire.

Language, as model of the unconscious, realm of the symbolic, and site of the division between the I and Other, becomes the field of this metaphoric sex-war, between the underlying, overriding masculine assumption of Logos as repository of unitary meaning which allows a 'truth' to be fixed in the text, and the play of the feminine that punctures and deflates its phallic edifice as Nietzsche's *'spur'* in Derrida's pictogram:

> Thus the style would seem to advance in the manner of a *spur* of sorts *(éperon)*. Like the prow, for example, of a sailing vessel, like its *rostrum*, the projection of the ship which surges ahead to meet the sea's attack and cleave its hostile surface.[28]

Style as 'protection' from the 'truth' is seen as a device that *proceeds ahead* within writing. Thrusting itself forward to be seen first, it 'protects the presence, the content, the thing itself, meaning, truth'[29]. It appears before, and in place of, the subject of writing, its presence, its remaining other, covering its absence, its 'gaping chasm'. So the operation of style/spur, is as textual perforator, writing itself, as emblematically signalled in the form of the pen or stylus, thrusting the signified aside in favour of the signifier, a necessary tool to fill the gaping absence of being within language.

The operation of male 'style' within writing is to structure the play of words to yield a certain truth: either a 'certainty', immutability, words' truth 'revealed', or a *particular* Truth, Harrison's will to determine what the 'truth of woman' *will be*. This is the 'determination to be determined' that would prevent the play of the feminine in bringing it under male governance, that is highlighted in the Sex-War opera's unanticipated paradox, the 'determination' to liberate the feminine. Contrary to this male style, woman is positioned as 'writing':

> Because woman is (her own) writing, style must return to her. In other words, it could be said that if style were a man (much as the penis, according to Freud is the <<normal prototype of fetishes>>), then writing would be a woman.[30]

Writing cannot be 'pinned down', characterizes the feminine, the play of multiple truths style attempts to somehow unify, structure, but cannot because writing/woman is the over-running of borders. This uncontrollability necessitates the 'return' of style to her-propre, the final style being that which defies control, her play of truths paralleling the

undecidable truths within writing that cannot be eradicated by style's project. In this return, style abandons the phallogocentric agenda and recognizes itself within the divisibility inherent to language, it reverts to the feminine.

The style of the 'spur' is prominent in *Medea-A Sex-War Opera*'s highly - would-be totally - stylized symbolism. As marker of male independence it is correlated with the Argonauts, the tiller, and reiterated in the oar motif, life at sea being presented as, counterpart to that of/on Mother Earth, an entirely masculine domain:

> ARGONAUTS.
> [...] and only a man understands:
> the open sea, adventures and strange lands.   (375)

The crew's forays on land are styled as a quick plundering of Mother Earth, a brief encounter with 'woman', before the retreat to safety and separatism of once more setting sail.

Significantly, then, it is Jason's counterclaim to annex both worlds that marks his attitude as approaching the equivalent of Nietzsche's 'third' position:

> I'll have me a kingdom by a peaceful shore
> and I'll have all the pleasures of peace.
> And I won't need to go to sea any more
> and women will want me because I won the Fleece. (376)

His projection of living by the 'shore', inhabiting the borderline between land and sea, male and female, shows the departure from the 'spur' of the conquering Argonauts: instead of invading the land prow first, Jason's dream is of colonisation, phallocentricism's subtle, mature style, that governs the feminine as a benign 'kingdom', a 'peaceful' dictatorship that is notionally of the women's making. This different style to the Argonauts' crude macho domination seems to meet the feminine. Yet it attempts to introduce governance in the stylized site of undecidability, the ebbing and changing of the shore: the boundary is his chosen, designated 'kingdom', which betrays the inappropriateness (the non-propre-ness) of his conception of union. It becomes a cynical manipulation of feminist integrationism, apprehending the wilful union of the sexes as a structure to be controlled. This *decidable* borderline is as important in the constitution of the male as the hymen as undecidable border was for the female:

> I wish to pose the question of the *bord*, the edge, the border, and the *bord de mer*, the shore.[...] The question of the borderline precedes, as it were, the determination of all the dividing lines that I have just mentioned: between a fantasy and a 'reality', an event and a nonevent, a fiction and a reality, one corpus and another, and so forth.[31]

The-male-as-'style' attempts to define the borders of the text. The citations of male Medea myths delineate the historical enclosure of the voice of women, which governance *this* text stands to break free of, overrunning its given performative borders as Opera by framing them with quotations. These, in the performance and content of their citations, affirm the polyphony that speaks despite the style that has barred the feminine; the structure of iteration brings with it the trace of the 'silenced' female voices as having been always within the male that has sought to exclude them. But the framing - by male style - inevitably (im)poses a fresh border, a new 'truth' that delineates the male/female balance; the male textual signatory sets up his 'peace' on the shifting sands of the 'truth-of-woman'. Yet, as I have shown, woman as the surplus of 'writing' to style challenges the truth-as-fiction of this fictive-reality, and the borderline/hymen that suspends the 'sex-war' is free, continues as propre-ly undecidable.

The final use of the spur/prow/electrocution lever as that which defeats both Jason and the Goddess wryly cites the power of the Phallus as universal signifier which cannot be fragmented, challenged, in its status as the symbol of man's essential fear of his own castration:

> [SD] *The prow of the Argo falls on the head of* JASON *and* [his...] *life and sensations are shattered apart by the blow.* [...] *The dying* JASON *pulls the lever, the "electrocution" music rises to a crescendo, and the 3 strapped* Goddess *figures die in their gilded chairs.* (446)

So the female power of the Goddess can manipulate its signifiers, self-consciously play with the system which evolves around woman-as-truth/phallus, but in so doing runs the risk, as discussed earlier, of self-castration. To participate even as dissimulator is to incur the system's dominance, as it is the trace of this that determines the act of manipulation; the 'refus[al] to believe in it'[32] is not sufficient to escape its boundaries. The Goddess' mocking of the once-conquering Argo's rotting prow figures 'her' as Nietzsche's 'castrating woman', refusing to accept the gift of the phallus, refusing to give herself *as* the phallus-signifier, and so separating Jason from his transferential potency:

> We make that prick, the ARGO's prow
> wilt and fall on your head *now*
> and break your neck!   (446)

The reliance of the phallogocentric structure upon women's complicity is signalled by her power to 'unman' Jason. But she engenders her own destruction; 'power' here is derived from the Phallus, and her relationship to it - the movement to distance herself from it results in her annihilation, within the psychoanalytic order (she ceases to be constituted as subject) and the sociopolitical sphere (the theocentricity of the structure

ultimately destroys *any* threatener of its unity). In the performance of the opera's semiotics, as Jason controls the borderline, woman cannot live on after him, as she has been defined through him, yet neither can he destroy her *first* as she safeguards his link with the symbolic from where he gains his strength.

The difficulty of theorising an affirmative (masculine) man to complement Nietzsche's affirming woman, whose third stage passes beyond the limits the (male) language that speaks her apprehends, is that man is inextricably bound by these created and self-defining structures, they are 'of' man. The 'positive' way to breach this difficulty is to look to woman to extricate herself from male governance, not only enabling but expecting the male to continue *within his space* without needing the female as repository for his projected desire/identity. The impossibility of this splits the text: the pro-feminist appropriation of *style*, the male signatory's condemnatory portrayal of the socio-political inequalities characterised by *all* the men, not only does not present a 'solution' to the sex-war, but, as I have shown, in its attempted containment of women's truth, joins in.

5.7 DENYING MAN

Hercules, an 'overdetermined' male, is the figure of male-negation in all its senses. Placed at sea, he avoids land as Mother, and performs the woman-as-untruth paradigm (cf. 'women's lies', 389, discussed above). That Hercules as archetypal macho-man is gay, while serving to deflate the idealisation of male physical strength and power, genetic 'superiority' as indicator of fitness to rule, is ultimately an insulting portrayal that attempts to ridicule the markers of 'virility' at the expense of the gay community. This caricature - the blustering misogynist who secretly fears women - annexes the attributes of homosexuality to paradigmatically exclude a relationship with the feminine, in order to portray the 'truth' of woman as nontruth. In an opera that purports to deal with the sex-war it is an inexcusable oversimplification to frame this 'lack' of the sexual relationship as a marker of instant 'propre' hostility. This is the male style, seeking female approval by ridiculing its own sex.[33]

Hercules exhibits his maleness not only through physical prowess but by constant reference to linear temporality. Events, for him, are strictly ordered towards an originary/target time - from the quest for the fleece, when he 'marked time' in setting the rowing pace (and determined the length of stay on Lemnos), to the passing-on of the Law of the Father, which orders male behaviour in terms of time as a demarcated series of events: his exhortation to Medea's sons to eschew the feminine in favour of manly pursuits carries an added plausibility in that their failure to heed this warning

that it is 'Time to cut through the apron strings' (425) denies them 'time' to become individuated males.

That Hercules is brought under the governance of the Goddess not only underlines the sweep of female influence, the proposed empowerment of the female, but makes the male act-out his suppressed 'female' tendencies - the text's Jungian slant forces the macho-hero to finally admit his fury was motivated by a dread of the Mother:

> All the monsters that I ever slew
> were only the great EARTH MOTHER, you!
> The one in the end I couldn't subdue. (434)

In Freudian terms, the Mother is originally constituted as possessing the phallus. The child's desire to posses the other is generally mediated by the role of the father, whose entry into the triad causes the son to repress this desire, which is translated into the desire of the Other. The failure of this process finds the child unable to separate from the mother, and he consequently develops a fear/hatred of women as possessors of the desired phallus. This results in the desire to 'un-man' women, treat them as secondary citizens, and deny their status in an attempt to minimise their symbolic power, hence the perversion of 'beheading' monsters, castrating the Phallic Mother.

As 'punishment', Hercules is re-incorporated into the maternal body, in social terms he undergoes a re-educating process that places him within the female domain, and in death he is reclaimed by Mother Earth. The ritual humiliation heaped on him as he is dressed in women's clothes and made to sit and sew is again centred around the motif of the spur; his own personal fetish, the club, is removed, and replaced with its smaller feminine 'counterpart', the needle, marking the diminution of his virility via the shrinking of his 'phallus'. This corollary also provides a fitting portrayal of the feminine, not in that it is concerned with 'menial' domestic chores (which aspect is foregrounded in the text's parodic tone), but in the action of the needle/spur as puncturing the text, remarking its construction as weaving, Derrida's *'fabric* of traces'[34] and interlacing a separate fabric of *reality* (the function of the 'real', alien to (phallic) language - women, the ineloquent, the unliterate - in Harrison's poetry to transcend it) within the given 'unity' of the completed cloth.

Though the farcical element is clearly dominant here, in the inverted sexual harassment (the drag artist as incompetent female evoked by his lack of sexual conformity leading to male repulsion as they 'goose the spinning girl's big ass' and 'recoil from *his* rough hairy chest'), and though this makes a serious point in the demonstration of the humiliation undergone by women daily, a point which can only be shown as highly inappropriate via its inversion, the joke still maintains a male attitude in its retention of

the idealised female aesthetic. The notion of the propre *as given*, what this thesis is revealing as the limit of Harrison's ('good') intentions, governs, down to the ridicule of transvestism. The role-reversal would be less ambiguous had Hercules not been portrayed as gay, his attraction to *men* already partially situating him within the feminine, although he seeks to deny it, so the 'mocking' refrain of 'ass, ass, ass' that follows him taunts this aspect of his character while re-situating him there.

The literal inversion where the feminized Hercules is driven 'off his head' by the Goddess, and in this crazed state clubs his sons to death, again loses the moral logic within the opera, as his brutal act is used as exemplum of society's sanctioning of male infanticide:

> DOWNSTAGE WOMAN.
> He killed his children! I don't hear you
> give even a *sotto voce* boo.
> He killed his children. So where
> is Hercules's electric chair?   (437)

This inversion is at odds with the later argument that women are *driven* to kill their children by male violence and oppression, so are guiltless, social victims. Harrison shows the Goddess inhabiting the same theocratic space, and so sanctions the paternalistic *mores* that lead to infanticide, indeed replicates the injustice - the accusation of bias because the murderer is a man this time is illfounded. Hercules is *demonstrably* a victim under female governance, this whole episode ironically shows the failure of the second-type, integrationalist feminist agenda. Here the style which sanctions women's power as inevitably benevolent and 'good', 'True', deviates from its own agenda, allowing positive discrimination to overrule the systemic or structural evil that all will-to-power generates.

Unfortunately, Hercules' textual relationship with woman as 'untruth', as the 'castrating' woman, is verified in this final scene - the overriding signatory stance of women's vilification by man, or 'woman as Truth', is perverted, as the Truth regarding woman is shown to be the *same* as the truth of man. In Harrison's frame this is a necessary conclusion, as in evoking centricity, unity, Truth, the same pattern of governance must emerge, and it is only in the suspension of these relationships that an alternative, feminine mode can be posited.

The proposed textual 'Truth' framing the opera is marked as un-true by Hercules; the positive female values are eschewed in favour of the adoption of male power structures, the female claim to be 'other' *to* these is shown to be a 'myth', they are the other *of* the system, intrinsic to its operation.

On his death, in which he 'begins to burn in *exactly* the same way as Creusa' (SD 437) reiterating his femininity, and woman's masculinization, in her replication of 'male' abuses, a gift is given by his wife as a restitution of identity, of his maleness, *exactly* as the wedding dress symbolises gift of the identity 'wife'.   In the case of Hercules, desire is subverted between the giver and receiver - the re-genderisation of Hercules having symbolised his homosexuality and Deriana's 'masculization' in her theocentric portrayal as Law of the Mother, characteristic of Nietzsche's second type :

> And in order to resemble the masculine dogmatic philosopher this woman lays claim - just as much claim as he - to truth, science and objectivity in all their castrated delusions of virility.[35]

As Medea/Creusa's hymenal gift affirms the feminine, the Deriana/Hercules gift of masculinity *denies* the 'claim' of the masculine.   The appropriated dogmatism is *in*appropriate, and in showing the masculine to be something that is 'put on' (Deriana's behaviour, Hercules' *re*-genderization), *its* 'truth, science and objectivity' are shown to be similarly artificial, non-'original'.   Deriana's 'claim' is spurious not because she is a woman and woman somehow uniquely has no claim to these truths, but because they cannot be claimed - they are not available for determination, possession.   The will to their governance is that which is (negatively) indicative of the masculine, and her acquisition of this will demonstrates that the 'masculine' is no more propre to a *gender* than the 'feminine'.

The exchange, then, exists in a negation of desire - Deriana and Hercules are partnered in their common unease with their assigned gender.   The Other that each signifies is also other to themselves, repressed (hated and subsumed), so the signifier of desire within each is that which is not propre to their external identities.   Hercules' pattern of denial continues to the end; in his death-speech he resists the coming-together of his division, the healing of his *spaltung* via the process of the gift.

> HERCULES.
> At last in death I shall be free
> of enfolding Femininity!   [...]
> Don't put my body into the ground.
> I want to be smoke in the sky.
> I don't want to be ashes to be left around
> for the MOTHER still to hold me by.   (439)

Hercules' struggle against his desire - his desire not to desire (signalled by the actual existence of Deriana and his sons - the societal manifestation of repression) is channelled through his resort to a supposed, specious, 'theoretical consciousness', that

is constituted in opposition to desire, and has only to do with death[36]. In language this is effaced, and reduced to an instant:

> Its universality becomes pure singularity, its freedom caprice or hardheadedness *(Eigensinn)*. The *proper sense* of this hardheaded freedom is death *[mort]*. In order to be sure to remain (close) by (it)self and not to release its hold on it, theoretical consciousness renounces everything. It wants to escape the death of the inorganic, to escape the earth, but it remains in the air and dies all the more (beautiful).[37]

So the answering of desire that enables Hercules' death is denied at the event of its reception (via the gift), constituted by him as a renunciation of desire in favour of the 'hardheaded freedom' which mirrors the 'macho' stance he has taken in the proceedings that are 'outside' the immediate governance of desire. In embracing *this* ideal, death becomes male, and Hercules is able to become the whole of his idealisation.

It is interesting to note that Hercules' 'anti-Oedipal' gesture is caused by his being driven 'off his head' - infanticide is committed during a delirium which Deleuze/Guattari see as constituted by the effect of the state as controlling the desiring machine:

> [...] every delirium is first of political, cultural, racial and racist, pedagogical, and religious: the delirious person applies a delirium to his family and his son that overreaches them on all sides.[38]

This belief in the production of infanticide via the capitalist system that exerts pressure resulting in a delirium that necessarily finds its expression in the anti-oedipal gesture correlates with the opera's assertion that women are driven to child murder by men/the state. Linked with this, however, Delueze/Guattari posit its psychoanalytic motivation as the fantasy of immaculate conception, the desire for purity existing in relation to the suppression of the infanticidal drive, citing Miller in averring 'it is only through desire that we bring about the immaculate conception'[39]. Desire is advanced as a mechanism that distances conception from the problematic oedipal triangle by its being 'instinctual and holy' and freed from the unthinkable progenesis of the parents. This trait is manifested in Hercules' fear of Mother Earth, of being reclaimed by 'that dark place I hate/from which all Mankind emanate' (438). Infantalization is triggered by the meeting of social and sexual pressures, inducing delirium which frees the violence repressed in the name of purity.[40] Ironically, we do not 'boo' Hercules, not because, as Harrison would have it, he is male, therefore somehow justified, but because his maleness ties him completely within the socio-sexual mores that lead to infanticide - the 'complete' male, he is completely victimised by his maleness. Medea, I have shown, is *not* so contained, despite Harrison's attempt/need to contain her and contemporary

'murdering mothers', because she has that undecidability that is not reducible to male socio- or psycho-analysis.

Supplementarily, then, Medea's sons, are the object(s) around which all the different readings of truth are situated. Medea's murderous act, 'the ultimate means of revenging herself on Jason' (418), does not present a very complex motivational force - the child as part-object is constituted in terms of the Mother, and as such 'belongs' to her to destroy in vengeance. This stance, consistent with the cotextual insistence on the Earth Mother's right to give and take life, coincides with the child signifying the phallus for the mother, an external marker of her own potency, so in the murder she is transferentially destroying the *symbolic* Phallus which cannot be harmed. In the mock wedding, each son is 'married' to one of the female Chorus who wear the same wedding clothes as Medea, the gift they have just delivered to Creusa. The fantasy wedding as counterpart to Medea's regret at being instrumental in preventing its fulfilment is accompanied by the lament

> I'll never make your marriage beds
> or place the garlands on your heads
> or walk behind you with my torch ablaze.   (430)

Psychoanalytically, Medea's projection acts out her jealousy as mother by marrying her own sons, again an anti-oedipal gesture (citing Electra) that mirrors that of the male infanticides. The trauma of separation is acted out as the sons occupy Medea's fantasy of their adulthood without the risk of her losing them to its reality - both brides return the sons to Medea. In their rôle as surrogate mothers/brides they again invoke the figure of the hymen, but the sons return unclaimed, virgin, the (hymen) marriage did not take place, only its sterile similitude, its enactment whose only difference is its sterility, which 'leaves' the sons wedded to their mother.

However, following the unstructured *ambivalence* attributable to Medea, her seeming 'regret' at forgoing the ritual continuity becomes a *refusal* to allow the circularity of the paternalistic structure of marriage. Each marriage-event in the opera is in some way marred, points to the instability of its 'truth', and as Butes is savaged by the Furies for his ostensively ideal marriage, so its recitation with the sons is prevented in a gesture that recalls the establishment of the gynocracy on Lemnos.

Again, we are necessarily unable to know the 'truth' of the female text as it hinges around structural undecidability; again, the text's insistence on the 'truth' of its pro-feminist version marks the division between the framing of its unitary truth which is demonstrated on stage (the purported seven times two sons of Medea are all killed by men), and the 'truth' concerning women as elusive, veiled, and infinitely regressing (the

'real' murder takes place offstage), denying its force as originary in its lack of centricity, to be read across the logic of the linear narrative in its repetitions and arrêts. This divergence in textual strategies at the instance of the "Truth's" citation can be summated in the macrotextual statement, concerning the need for all fourteen sons to be murdered:

> D[own]S[tage] W[oman]:
> Truth needs repeating, fool, that's why.   (431)

The male posits that central Truth that can be demonstrated endlessly, the feminine that 'truths' necessarily are multiple so that the truth regarding each is undecidable, ungovernable, in-distinguishable. Repetition is as mythic as Truth, impossible because of the very nature of the structure of the mark. *Every* event being a citation of the past and containing its own divisibility, temporality is suspended as the linear time invoked by the thesis of repetition is subverted. So the chiasmic properties of the text invert; its framing as multiple, via the citation of myth as polyphony, is telescoped into a single, 'feminist' Truth, while the seemingly bound Jungian ideology of woman as Mother is deconstructed, the discourse of the feminine freeing itself from the governance of the 'given' (given by the framing of the male signatory) socio/politico/psycho-logical truth. The myths of repetition and Truth re-appropriate their propre polyphony, which could not be given, for this would demonstrate the monologism of the (male) poet, but when they emerge, it is this monologistic maleness that is highlighted, *'in'* which (recalling Derrida's preposition) they operate.

In Harrison's attempt to re-tell the truth of women, he, like Nietzsche, succeeds in telling 'his' truths, while the woman-truth that was originally constituted as his subject becomes manifest through the text's/texts' failure to create a coherent, determining unity:

> There is thus no truth in itself of sexual difference in itself, of man or woman in itself; on the contrary, the whole of ontology, which is the effect of an inspection, appropriation, identification, and verification of identity, presupposes and conceals this undecidablity.[41]

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[1]The Opera uses direct citations from Euripides, Seneca, Mayr, Cherubini, Calderon and Getna to provide the opening condemnatory frame which designates Medea as 'The murd'rous witch...' page 366.

[2]Thompson, Irwin William, *The Time Falling Bodies Take To Light* (1981), quoted in *Theatre Works*, page 364.

[3]Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*.

[4]See the chapters on *"v."*, *The Blasphemers' Banquet* and *In Loving Memory*.

[5]In positioning this figure in the symbolic realm as 'origin', the 'source' of both birth and death the Phallogocentric order is perpetuated, the regenderisation of the Origin introduces a Woman/God(dess) axis that maintains the determination of truth, and so constitutes the feminine as *properly* 'male'. This specious act of hierarchical inversion fails to not only challenge the will-to-governance implicit in the notion of 'origins', but also posits sexual difference as necessarily inscribed within this site. Contrary to this belief Derrida's reading of Heidigger traces the male myth of unitary origin to its reframing as ungendered *Dasein* that is founded on repetition:

> If *Dasein* as such belongs to neither of the two sexes, that does not mean that it is deprived of sex. On the contrary: here one must think of a predifferential, or rather a predual, sexuality - which does not necessarily mean unitary, homogeneous, or undifferentiated [...]

Derrida, "Geschelcht" in *A Derrida Reader*, page 387-8.

[6]Stage directions, p372. My conflation.

[7]See stage direction, page 433.

[8]Derrida, *Spurs*, page 64.

[9]Derrida, *Spurs*, page 59.

[10]Both possibilities seek 'a' truth, a decidable positioning of woman, the feminine, which ensures the continuation of the theostatic centricity which 'Truth' underpins. When Hypsipyle remains silent, having no part in the philosophical investment of the will to truth, and having undergone the positions outlined above, woman as liar, woman as truth, she passes to the remaining option, embodying the 'feminine distance [which] abstracts truth from itself in a *suspension* of the relation with castration'. Her engagement with the phallogocentric hierarchy is marked by its being taken out from within its structures. The feminine no longer defines itself in terms of its relation to the Phallus via a deferred structure of desire, through this operation at once taking the imposition of truth from itself, 'abstracting' it, and *gaining* its own truth. The consequences of this distancing is that the truth concerning Creusa, the re-birth of Hypsipyle as what Derrida has discussed as the third stage feminine remains inaccessible in the text. Her truth can not be told for her by the male signatory, and the textual inscription diverges from that which it seeks to present.

[11]Berg, Elizabeth "The Third Woman", *Diacritics* 12 (1982) page 12.

[12]Derrida, *Spurs*, page 77.

[13]Lacan , "On the possible treatment of psychosis", *Écrits*, page 218.

14Derrida, *Spurs*, page 97.

[15]This *topology* of governance can be seen in the spatial organisation of the wedding scene which spans from the bedroom door of the sleeping king, guarded by Arete, so linking her sphere of power to its place of 'origin', to the 'second bedchamber', where Jason is about to enter with Medea. The symbolic 'passage' from virgin to wife/mother is delineated by the chain of torch-bearing women marking Medea's transition as at once part of and symbolic enactment of the historical positioning of women.

[16]Derrida, "Living On - Border Lines" in *A Derrida Reader* page 267.

[17]Derrida, *Spurs*, page 49.

[18]Derrida, *Spurs*, page 53.

[19]Both Medea and Hypsipyle are interrogated concerning the 'truth' of their expressed emotion; 'tears' being propre to the female via their status as 'abject', bringing the internal 'out' so demonstrating the 'original truth'.

[20]Schrift, Alan D, *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation,* page 104.

[21]Derrida, *Spurs*, page 111.

[22]Discussed in Derrida's essay 'The Time of the King', Critical Enquiry, Vol 18, no 2. Additional to the conditions constitutive of the 'gift' discussed here, the condition of 'radical forgetting' is also

presented in the play - in both Jason's failure to remember Medea's wedding robes when she re-presents them, and Creusa'a death, making the memory of 'debt' impossible.

[23]Derrida, Spurs, page 119.

[24]Lacan, "The Signification of the Phallus" in *Ecrits,* page 291.

[25]Derrida, *Spurs,* page 101.

[26]Derrida, *Spurs,* page 97.

[27]See the discussion of Monique Wittig's *The Lesbian Body* (New York: William Morrow, 1975) and the lesbians' 'refusal to believe in castration' engendering an entirely female affirmation, in *Subjects/Objects* 1986.

[28]Derrida, *Spurs,* page 39.

[29]Derrida, *Spurs,* page 39.

[30]Derrida, *Spurs,* page 57.

[31]Derrida, "Living On: Border Lines", in *A Derrida Reader,* page 256.

[32]Derrida, *Spurs,* page 97.

[33] There is no lesbian portrayal, and the importance of lesbianism as the often cited radical female third stage of Wittig (e.g. *The Lesbian Body,* New York: William Morrow, 1975), et al. is passed over, the truth of woman is unvaryingly male-defined.

[34]Derrida, 'Living On: Border Lines', in *A Derrida Reader,* page 257.

[35]Derrida, *Spurs,* page 65.

[36]Derrida, "Glas", in *A Derrida Reader,* page 329.

[37]Derrida, "Glas", in *A Derrida Reader,* page 329.

[38]Delueze/Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus,* page 274 in Subject Object page 45.

[39]Delueze/Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus,* page 299. in Subject Object ibid.

[40]Harrison's self-conscious framing of the myth by the '3-in-1' Goddess results in 3 'types' of men, complementary to the 3 'Women' I have discussed, so Hercules equates to 'woman as untruth', Jason parallels Medea's undecidability. The 'third man' is Butes, whose role as a pro-woman husband is the most invidious means of controlling the 'truth of woman'. He is the benign dictator who constrains as he serves. In existing happily within the governing social structure he ensures its continuance, his complacency being posited on his gaining of the phallus/truth despite the societal contra-indications manifested via its symptom of infanticide.

[41]Derrida, "Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles" in *A Derrida Reader* page 373.

DEATH IN THE VIDEO AGE: *LOVING MEMORY*

6.1 INTRODUCTION: FORGETTING NIETZSCHE'S UMBRELLA

The four-part BBC television documentary series *Loving Memory* introduces the poet/dramatist's questions of 'framing' and the 'signature' to a new genre - who does Harrison the poet present himself as, what authority can he appropriate, within this series designed to reach the mass audience? *'Loving Memory'* is an umbrella to gather distinct documentaries examining various cultural and societal aspects of death under and mark them as sister-texts. This umbrella functions rather like Derrida perceives Nietzsche's to do[1], a *pharmakon* at once opening the separate video texts to their inner-textuality, demonstrating their literary designedness, and sheltering them from becoming indistinguishable in the general television programming. Its very structure promises this ambiguity of 'opening' out its enclosed texts; each segment is joined by a common spine, a co-textual signified which forms complete entity, a unity, the 'O' which is a *central* semiotic codification throughout Harrison's oeuvre. So the 'umbrella' also serves to mark unity, as the signatory mark of Harrison which re-occurs from text to text; yet when closed its 'folds' again mark the textual ellipses, the folding-in-on of each text within itself, and, as part of the series, *away* from the television programming from which they remain dissimilar:

> In other words, the text remains closed, at once open and closed, or each in turn, folded/unfolded (*ployé/deployé*), it is just an umbrella that you couldn't use (*dont vous n'auriez pas l'emploi*). You might just as soon forget it, as if, over your head like that, you never heard tell of it.[2]

As the pun on 'ployé / emploi' suggests, this series of folds, the folding of the series, can never simply be 'used'. Its usefulness extends beyond what it can be seen to be - as the umbrella defines the boundary of vision so the series' heading seeks to define what is contained within it, but inevitably the filmic borders are overrun, episode engages with episode, and the series can be read as not just intertextual with Harrison's other video work - "*v.*" and *The Blasphemers' Banquet* - his published poetry and plays, but other television programmes, and participates ultimately within the textualisation of life which it would design itself a commentary on. Control? - 'you might just as soon forget it', as Nietzsche's umbrella, as the structure of Memory itself, the principle theme of the sequence, how and what we choose to 'remember', or rather how we try not to forget.

6.2.1 CHEATING THE BREAKS/USING THE JOINS I: "CHEATING THE VOID" AND THE NIGHT'S TELEVISION

Firstly, I am going to examine the borders around the texts, the divisions which stand in the programmes to mark the differences between episodes, but which also signal their continuity in the programming, as the umbrella when viewed from 'inside' clearly demonstrates the spines that delineate segment from segment, whilst 'outside' the cloth seems to be a continuous surface.

Each video engages with a distinct aspect of death/memory, but the introduction, the perimeters of each, its parergon, its frame-which-names it, not only serves to mark the video's division from the other 'inner' texts, but, in the reiteration of the naming mark, enfolds the present video within a repetition that necessitates the following one to be read as *included* within the preceding sister text. This re-incorporation is semiotically signalled by a running title-sequence that encapsulates the organic continuity of the series' thematic; flowers being wrought into a funeral wreath (putative icon of finality) are shown to continue to blossom, motif of the cyclical operation of nature's continuity beyond the life span of any individual. The wreath's hieroglyph 'O' functions as signature for Harrison[3], signalling the proceedings texts' engagement with this pre-existent oeuvre, at the very 'border' of entry into this discrete sequence, inviting its running over:

> What has happened, if it has happened, is a sort of overrun {*débordement*} that spoils all these boundaries and divisions and forces us to extend the accredited concept, the dominant notion of a 'text' [...] that is no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces.[4]

At its instigation, then, the frame questions whether this introductory sequence is inside or outside the text proper, or is inevitably both, the bridge which marks the abyme and enables conjunction: can *Loving Memory* be a television programme, especially a documentary, or does this sequence's claim for the genre as poetry appropriate it?

While pre-figuring the specific material to be covered in the ensuing text, the opening sequence's metonymic function within the body of Harrison's work *foregrounds* its signification of the play between continuity and finality, the wreath marking *a* death whilst continuing to grow, live. It also demonstrates Harrison's *conclusions* on 'the big O of nothingness that swallows whole/poets and priests, queens and Ayatollahs, both the human body and the soul'[5]. His thematic notion is of the void, the absoluteness of oblivion, being encircled by life's transcendent continuity; the graphic shows their co-dependency, the void as only be delineable by its other, its status as absence needing the continuing presence to mark its difference. So, this imagery in itself discusses the

nature of boundaries, of containment and transgression, of the end of life being transcended by *the living*, as in *The Blasphemers' Banquet*'s valedictory humanism, and this reiteration of the 'O' becomes the means of reinscribing the external within the internal of each of the series of videotexts in a gesture of double-invagination, its signature effect bringing the contexts of previous citations.

The border-sequences of *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, then, present the key context; screened during the *Loving Memory* (LM) series, the "television poem's" opening circling camera shots (see chapter 7) centre on the repetition of the circle-O motif in the Omar Khyyam restaurant, its closing sequence singles out the de-construction of the name of the restaurant to a single 'O', accompanied by the background music (running performance/symbol of life-as-Being, '*Oh*, I love this fleeting life') being curtailed to a foreshortened sigh - 'Omar' becomes 'O(hhhh)' - the particular, or individual subject being lost and reduced to the universal, marked graphically as the name becomes textual hieroglyph, and the song the sigh of memory itself.

This traversal from outside the 'O' to incorporation within it as participating in the void is treated explicitly in "Cheating The Void", the third programme of the *Loving Memory* sequence, where the hieroglyph is positioned at the very edge of entrance of the spoken text:

> Oblivion is darkness - Memory , light.
> They are locked in eternal struggle   (ll.1-2)

The 'O' of oblivion is enacted by the blank darkness of the screen, the interior of the border semiotic, which is relieved by its *textual* counterpart '*Memory*'.   This illumination of the 'darkness' of the 'text' is figured by the head of Harrison as text-speaker, a subjectivity to fill the absence.   This use of the 'light motif' reiterates *The Blasphemer's Banquet*'s close, where the viewer is drawn into the circle/void of the neon 'O' as its power/light is cut off by the electrician, and the final digital transition 'swallows' its audience, claiming them in the darkness of the 'empty' screen, marking them, too, as subject to the forces of oblivion.   Here, this binary transition is enacted by Harrison, flicking the projection switch (returning light and 'life' to one of the first ever films, '*Out of the Metro*', that itself demonstrates emergence from the 'void') - the darkness/light, presence/absence motif playing around the central 'O', the held moment in the performance of the word '*oblivion*' which divides light and dark.

The delineations chiasmically share their difference; the textual 'O' signifies blankness by paper's whiteness encircled by the ink's blackness, while the video's various 'O's feature an interior *blackness*, always signifying the unnameable within the void, the erasure of knowledge, against a border given presence via light. This is demonstated by Piaf's grave, which starts the propre-ly 'internal' video and is returned to at its close,

in a diegetic circle that underpins its visual motif:

> Tours go back to where they started
> always A to A, not A to Z.
> But in this ferry boat once you've started
> Caeron chugs back empty for more dead.   (ll.288-291)

The ideational play between the circle and the straight line, 'A to A'/'A to Z' is present throughout the series, the individual's life-'cycle' leading from light to dark[6], but in this linearity supplying the circular continuity which is the universal signifier of life. In this way the borders of 'Oblivion' are shown not to be absolute, as living we experience an idea of its inside, but always enfolded by the overall awareness of being outside.

So it is that the video unsettles us by visually plunging us into what we fear, the consuming void, but having done so reassures us of our exteriority by running the credits, taking us back over the borderline of absence by re-introducing the 'frame' which positions us, to our relieved consent. This double-graphic is re-constituted in the closing word of the text, 'dead', citing the opening 'Oblivion', but its 'd's conjoining the circle to the straight line, completing the text as circle and continuing it as memory, framing, separating it as 'void'.[7]

But this border too is overrun; the void of Piaf's tomb claiming the viewers in an eternal return becomes the backdrop for the closing credits. Though citing the same movement in *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, here it is prevented from becoming a specific break by the continual chugging of a motor, echoing the advancing of Caeron's ferry to return us all to the void, as subject to the inevitable progress of time - we have escaped the textually imposed void, but are journeying inexorably towards its referent, we continue. This aural *débordement* is then re-invaginated, 'Caeron's' motor is shown to be that of the projector switched on in the *opening* enactment of the life/death, light/dark division, 'when death's doors are thrown open by a switch' (line 4).

The *mis en abyme* of the narrative is evoked, the viewer is reminded of the illusory nature of the semiotically proposed mastery of, escape from, the void of the video. The borderline of the credits refolded inside the video becomes a demonstration of the 'control' invested in Harrison, a demonstration of the previously (to the 'new' genre) undetermined rôle that 'poet' inscribes in 'video'; it is his operating of the switch that orders the light and dark so that when he turns off the projector *in* the video (*of* the enlivened figures of 'film'), he plunges *everything* into darkness, oblivion. The film-within-a-film boundaries have been violated, as the switch which initiated the screening of a film inside the video, now serves to conflate the separate filmic strands into one signified 'text', and all boundaries become again subject to the digital presence/absence of the switch, to oblivion - the poet himself is folded in, as his action marks his disappearance as subject.

This unsettling poetry re-places the viewing subject in the space of the first filmgoers who, on seeing the film Harrison has just re-projected, claimed 'Death's no longer absolute'. The disorienting governance of the original filmmaker becomes re-present, violating television's created expectation of shared norms in plunging the audience into darkness, void, in a mimesis of a death that will be equally unexpected and absolute.

The text does not return, the night's usual television programmes continue, marked by the consequence just demonstrated of this 'continuousness', its finitude.

6.2.2 CHEATING THE BREAKS/USING THE JOINS II: "CHEATING THE VOID" AND THE (PROGRESSIVE) SERIES

6.2.2.1 "THE MUFFLED BELLS": TO MAKE THEM HEARD

"Cheating the Void" is the most self-conscious of the sequence in that it plays with the problematized areas of film and textual theory, foregrounding its own operations as microcosmic symbols of the larger issues with which it seeks to engage. An examination of the framing of the preceding two texts shows how the cumulation of ideas brought out allows such a post-modern video to function within a 'conventional' series.

The first programme, "The Muffled Bells" (MB), seeks to fulfil the normative expectations that arise regarding a series on 'death' on BBC 2; elegiac, nostalgic, its linear diegetic progression creates narrative from personal interview. The idealizing role of Memory is captured in the opening shots of the rural South of England; a farmer is turning over a field in the 'traditional' manner, plodding behind his horse, and it is the *documentary*, with its implication of truth, the truth-here-and-now, that lends timelessness to the image, which is only questioned much later, in the sequence's pivotal third episode.

The motif of circularity and progression coalesces in the turning sod which is focused in upon in the very first frames, the earth's being prepared (to enable the fruition of nature promised in the running title graphics discussed above) is set against the straightness of the furrow, the linearity which is linked with man[8], as the farmer recedes into the distance. So the universality of the 'O' hieroglyph is established and validated (in the 'reality' that the documentary has validated in its involvement of the audience in the contract of its genre) and in a form instantly accessible to its audience. Its presentational simplicity working reflexively, 'appropriately', with the Edenic simplicity of the receding 'Golden Age'; the textual markers of 'self-consciousness', implicit in this *ostensively*[9] traditional presentation of the thematic material which will

underpin the series, remain de-stressed, to prevent initial audience alienation and to allow the framework to be constructed which can then be deconstructed. The ploughing, a man herding geese, bellringers, show this way of rural life as being as yet unchanged, continuing to exist alongside the modern world, an image of England that *crosses* barriers as, feeding into the past via the nostalgia industry, it moves city dwellers to occupy it, even as their doing so makes its 'reality' recede. This ambiguity is uniquely possible to depict by video; technological, necessarily *post*-rural, its use of sepiatone propre to (past) photography *and* its conventional subject matter are instantly the 'present past', yet its subject has to have existed to be recorded by the camera. This is a new and documentary series, the viewer watches with a sense of this subject's continuation in the present.

Thus the sense of temporal distance that inevitably accompanies a photograph or film is, in the video, collapsed, *preceded* (just as the convention of textualisation connoting 'death' - of the author/subject - was by the respondent who saw 'the dead brought back' by/in *Out of The Metro)*, uniting the markers of a 'lost age' within a format that testifies (albeit falsely) to its continuation. It is this invocation of recaptured time that creates the *punctum* of the image, the *signifiance* that extends beyond the denoted subject matter (studium), or any coded message which accompanies it:

> This new *punctum*, which is no longer of form ['detail'] but of intensity, is Time, the lacerating emphasis of the *noem* (*'that-has-been'*), its pure representation.[10]

The textualisation of Bremer is built on its sustaining of the old ways of country existence; as the materiality of our rural mythology is captured on film, placing the viewer in the privileged position of witnessing what has already been lost, the narrative seeks to supplant this willed naiveté by showing Bremer not to be an idyllic time capsule, but an icon which allows us to re-write present reality in terms of our archetypes of the past. The operation of interested Memory, nostalgia, is introduced to the materialist project of the series which will (like *The Blasphemers' Banquet*) use death to foreground the need to 'live life'This doublethink in which video engages its audience serves as an allegory, then, for man's conception of Time. The video is at once showing *our* idealisation of rural life as (this being an idealisation) it has never existed, *and* positioning itself via the camera as 'witness'. Our involved (in the video's conventions, cinematic and generic) consciousness of this duality claims our belief, our 'primary identification'[11] with the camera/video's point-of-view while pointing us to the textualisation inherent in our perceptions and, beyond this, to the rôle of the media in perpetuating modern-day mythology by fixing both our point-of-view and our textualisations. The viewer becomes overtly aware of the external frame of the video in agreeing to accept the language-of-video *as* language, receptacle and form of his/her

memory. We are involved with the assumptions which govern its narrative, and at no stage is 'secondary identification'[12] fostered as the 'factual' gloss of the documentary marks the text as inaccessible - we can see the past via the mediation of the camera, but as its status as video signals distance from the represented reality, the nature and manner of presenting this reality also implies that the referent is in a sense 'lost', we are being given an incontrovertible, privileged window onto the past.[13] The subjective portrayal of the present is, conversely, governed by the assumptions of the viewers, their memory, just as it is the text which delineates how the past is to be viewed. This text, as video, must conversely fashion its models from the material of the present, and just as the fictionalising of history frames our reading of the past, so the infancy of the videoic media brings with it the traces of the contemporaneous.

This infection of documentary *content* by video's fictionalising *medium*, of the convention the audience acknowledge by the one to which they silently assent, is most tellingly demonstrated by the framing of the miller's cottage. It is invoked as idyllic (calling upon the ease of the occupation of the rural idyll that period and rural television dramas have fixed in the viewing vocabulary), then referred to as 'for sale', offering the viewer the potential to live in the idealised world of the video, too. This is then undercut by the re-entry of the documentary; the camera draws back to include the motorway which runs outside the cottage door, moving the temporal frame from the connoted to the present-day denoted. Thus the video foregrounds the partiality of (its) representation, the politics of (its) framing, and the audience complicity in the mythologizing processes inherent in all media which is responsible, the audience *as audience* is responsible, for the changing structure of the rural population, the move to live in rural 'landscapes' depicted as 'scenery' being exactly that which is ultimately responsible for their current demise, as past 'reality' becomes perpetuated as a textualised hyper-reality.In fact this ambiguous process underpins the whole episode; past traditions are 'revived' in order for the camera to capture their final demise. A coffin is hand-crafted in solid Yew by an undertaker whose commentary on the event is of how special this instance is; the gravedigger laments the mass-manufactured nature of modern funerals. The testimony of the few who are demonstrating their crafts possibly for the last time, to honour a man - their dead friend, who they are to bury - who was brought up while they were still flourishing, evokes not their crafts' life, but the recent memory of their death. The documentary becomes a heritage reconstruction to complement the portrayal of the unspoilt countryside, so that, witnessing the very last vestiges of rural simplicity, the viewers can watch, be unwillingly present at, the moment of its transition into nostalgia. The universal nature of the video image allows what has been lost to the rural community to be brought back for all, so they can be more fully sensible of what they had been nostalgic for, they can make their loss 'real'.

So, whilst this first episode fulfils its generic expectations, it does so while demonstrating the origination of its content from these expectations, their re-enforcement being a mirror of the process which governs our perception or framing of reality. It marks the poet's series, that is, with a selfconsciousness; of conventions and the implications of their continuance, of the division between crafting a coffin and crafting a coffin in the 'traditional' manner. Once the action of the present becomes *performed*, as a citation of the past, it is not simply that representation within the videoic frame is invoked, but that its influence overspills its borders and textualises the reality that produced *its* text.

> the image creates its own frame that, conversely, constructs its own inside. The outside is folded chiastically back into the inside, and what was external - real life, the mirror, consciousness, desire, film history, genre conventions, a society's culture, and so on - become internalized through invagination.[14]

6.2.2.2 "MIMMO PERRELLA NON E PIU...": FOLDING IN THE CATHOLICISM OF DEATH

The second episode of *Loving Memory*, "Mimmo Perrella non e piu..." (MP), also plays with its 'framing', invagination here hinging around the 'un-conventional' reiteration of the title within the text-proper. The defamiliarization of an Italian title challenges its governance; its delineation of what is contained in the text is overturned, the majority of viewers reliant on Harrison's (oral) translation to lend it signification. It is its subsequent dual repetition in the videopoem, in both languages, that reattributes its propre, heavy semiotic emphasis, suggesting that it is indeed a 'serious' title. In the double operation of the invagination, carrying this title-endowment into these iterations, it becomes a ritualistic punctuation that pronounces a happening without (in its incomprehensibility) fully functioning as announcement. It comes to serve as a marker of libidinal drives inherent in its initial alienation as signifier from reference, the symbolic death invested within language summoning here the sense of the event without being present-to it, apprehending it through mediation, translation, which deferral acts as graphic for the process of death discussed in this video. The transition from death to purgatory is figured here as a journey that relies on external intervention - the prayers and masses of the family - to allow the completion of the process.

This internalisation of the title is semiotically gestured by the opening of the church gates. Connoting death as a rite of passage (an image present in each video), the border which divided the title sequence form the video 'proper' now figures an internal division which reveals a second iteration of the title, only destabalizing its contextualisation, as its communicative function within the reality presented in the video spans the breach of the title/video divide; the title becomes pure *mis en abyme*.

6.3 PROGRAMS CONTAINING SIGNING FOR THE DEAD: THE PLACE OF THE POET IN VIDEO

The status of the signature becomes intrinsic to these questions concerning the position and function of the frame: Harrison's 'signing' for the videoic body of work, its authentication, rests on his status as poet/dramatist. The assumption of responsibility for written words is carried over to the oral poetic text of the sequence, a continuous narrative thread bearing the trace of the (audience-acknowledged) propre-to-the-name 'Tony Harrison' - he has 'progressed' from written text to performance via performances of texts first published in written form ("*from* The School of Eloquence") to those having a dual propre-ity ("*v.*" has distinct realisations as 'book' and video-performance), such that, although *Loving Memory* is propre-ly a video (*claiming* no more of the properties of 'text' than any other television program), the existence of a text for which the poet could sign is implied here. But for the video *images* the operation of the signature becomes more problematic - as 'author' of the series, Harrison validates the video's textuality, and, as discussed earlier, we can perceive many common features in the videoic style which can be isolated as specifically sister-textual moments within his body of work. This 'signature' is concentrated in the re-occurrence of the 'O'-semiotic which spans the division between writing and image, but in making us 'think the gap'[15], it is the materiality of language that is brought forth; the image is *graphicalized*.

Correlative with the *textual* signature that borders each video is inevitably the *appearance* of Harrison within the video, as imagistic guarantor. As the written signature authenticates the linguistic text, and the semiotic signals its appropriator, so Harrison's physical presence signs the images that accompany it. Harrison is not an actor or a narrator, as the interweaving of 'his' words with the images, which are at once called up by and articulate his ideas, demonstrates: as the 'O'-hieroglyph points to him, so he claims it, he is constantly authoring his presence. This phenomena has been noted with respect to Hitchcock's cameo appearances in 'his' films:

> his appearance creates the structure of the third type of signature, the self-reflexive pointing to the fact that 'I am writing'. For he is unavoidably writing his 'proper name' with his body, and writing visually, in the image and in other signifying loci of the film. He thus becomes a writing, and 'excess' in more ways than one.[16]

So the process which claims the image of Harrison as text sanctions his written signature's claim as poet in translating the video medium into 'writing'. This invagination again destabalizes the borders, foregrounding the idea of control in the everpresent figure of the author 'writing' (making us as aware that what we are watching is 'crafted', by an anterior presence, as when we read a sonnet) whilst pointing out the fluidity of the framing he ostensively controls. As subject to the

framing process he is unable to exercise a will-to-governance, as 'the undecidability of the inside/outside dynamic of the signature'[17] acts on him-as-subject, enfolded in the text, subject *to* its hierarchies.[18]

In "Mimmo Pirella non e piu", the balance of the signature effect is inverted, what is at this stage a token appearance, a cameo, in what has been established as Harrison's video/text is limited to the opening section. The role of 'Harrison' is left to be strongly realised through the narrative, as commentator, now speaking 'from' authority. This is signalled in him translating the title: our understanding of the semiotics will be mediated through his spoken text, the setting in Naples (*as* foreign) prevents the first-person testimony possible in, and (geographically, culturally) propre to the earlier episode, wher he iterated "*v.'s*" video persona alongside his/its appropriation of a low key documentary narration. Yet

marking the undecidability that accompanied the title and its estrangement from the viewing context, Harrison's self-presentation is unsure - his reading of the Italian notice performs *his* unease with the strange tongue, the awkwardness of pronunciation rendering the phrase a semiotic excess as its communicative function slides away from its assumed, conventional, propre, originary positioning as reference.

The strength of the signature effect in "Cheating The Void", then, can be included in the self-consciousness of its framing - Harrison presents himself now as omnipotent author/editor, controlling the video from *within* its boundaries, marking its status as text, as *constructed* reality, as counterpart to the video's discussion of representation and artifice. This corresponds with Derrida's third type of signature:

> the 'signature of the signature', a self-reflexive pointing in the text to the act of production - 'I refer to myself, this is writing, I am writing'[19]

Harrison foregrounds his own act of creating the text while demonstrating the limitations of the frame he is using - the opening shot of his illuminated profile symbolising 'Memory' is set against the 'naturalism' of his following characterisation, showing his own manipulation of the audience in his manipulation of his own image, his signature, pointing out his self-construction *in process*. The interested partiality of this representation is re-cited and underlined at the close, where he 'edits' himself out of (our/his) existence, the flick of the switch erects the boundaries of the text; that is 'all' of 'Harrison' that writer-Harrison allows us to see, making it evident that what we do see is framed, manipulated, as artificial as the signature itself, which has to be devoid of presence, being structured as a repetition of presence, like the videoic image for which it signs, on which it comments.

This play with the signature is evident in Harrison's other video work[20], where he uses his presence to validate his claim for the freedom of art, a freedom based in its

nonreferentiality, ambiguating the signature process, marking its use as guarantee of its being produced by the signer who *is not responsible* - in the sense of not being the speaker of its words (not the performer of its video-images) - for the work it claims. This inevitable twist in the referential chain leaves the video-image to signify as a trace of Harrison's phenomenological presence, assuring his 'author/directorship', but not the 'truth'-status of his characterisation of himself. This is a residue that is in operation throughout the *Loving Memory* sequence, transgressing the opening episode's generic dictates.

6.4 PLAYING WITH DYING: THE INTERTEXTUAL PERFORMANCE OF *LOVING MEMORY*

Having established the intertextual function of the graphic (the specific re-occurrence of the 'O' hieroglyph) and the videoic signature, it is possible to discern other selfconscious areas of sister-and co-textual interplay. This play with the speciousness of the frame is directly engaged in "The Muffled Bells", whose primary position conventionally lays it open to contextual and generic dictates. Its invocation of cotextuality *before there are* cotexts, by involving the possibilities of irony and celebration among images propre to 'death', prepares us for later episodes' mediation of these dictates' validity via the fresh series of expectations arising from its *re*-delineation of the series' frame.

The concept of the autonomous television programme, delineated by a frame that includes only what is propre (the true documentary) and excludes what is im-propre (fiction, irony), is itself untenable; the *purity of membership* the notion implies would exclude those texts even from which the perimeters might be extracted. The 'contamination' which foregrounds the features of the genre, the 'style' of individual documentaries, marks the features' defining presence by difference, forms Derrida's 'law of the law of the genre'. The influence of this law of *identification-with by divergence-from* is felt in texts' participation within the operation of the genre without being governed, confined by the 'rules' which ostensively regulate it.

> It is precisely a principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a *parasitical participation without belonging - a taking part in without being part of.* The trait that marks membership inevitably divides, the boundary of the set comes to form, by invagination, an internal pocket larger than the whole.[21]

While not belonging to a genre (Harrison, as I have shown, is still forging a genre from documentary, 'comment' and poetry-proper), a text carries the marks which link it to a parent genre, the codified trace which paradoxically contains the genre via the notion of iteration; the gesture towards repetition bears in its very act the whole body of the genre it cites. While the surrounding co-textual material, the less 'serious' later episodes, delineates "The Muffled Bells's" not wholly belonging to the documentary

genre, the 'principle of contamination' makes those episodes in turn incorporate the corpus of a separate genre. A delimitable boundary is untenable, "The Muffled Bells's" citations of its cotextuality with its (yet unseen) sistertexts denies the sanctity of documentary, the thing as-which we are watching it. At the same time, the invagination process makes the codified incorporation of those to-be sistertexts, their 'participation [in the strictures of the documentary] without membership' subject to undecidability - are *they*, in their a-documentary irony and atheism, any more the 'voice' of the poet, now he has shown 'seriousness' unable to be itself. The series becomes a documentary 'about' *the* presence, Harrison, who would control it; it is about his, atheistic-materialistic control of the death-event at least as much as it is about the conventional and religious controls of death he/it ironises.

The literary genre of the elegy clearly plays a key role in invoking reverence, death, Englishness, as the contemporary, on-video perfomance of Gray's Elegy sets the tone, the lament for passing times being read in a structural iteration of Harrison's performance of "*v.*". This generic citation marks the series' ambiguous temporality, as the latter piece dealt with graveyard vandalism, and contemporary disrespect for the traditions of death, while in Bremer little seems to have changed since Gray. The textualisation of the past is made manifest in the reading; *'Far From the Madding Crowd* cites Hardy's intertext, that governs modern perceptions of the countryside as being-lost, whose perception now owes much to the conventions of BBC period-novel adaptations. The sepia filter and distance 'character' shots enfold these, marking the documentary genre's fictionalising framing. Further, the robust announcement, 'Stanley Hall, the Bremer miller's dead', cites Hopkins' 'Felix Randal the farrier, O, he is dead then?': the video's 'characters', and their 'dated' rôles, as much as its tone, are linked with the tradition of rural elegy founded on the personal and published/broadcast *en mass*.

This air of artificiality is occasioned by the self-consciousness of the participants. For Harrison to be able to state that 'Bremer's bells are pure Gray's Elegy', it is necessary that the textualisation is *complicitous*. Bremer *is* 'unchanged' in the highlighted aspects, but deliberately so - the past does not continue unchecked, but replicates itself to stay within itself, authentic in its participation in its perceived genre. This attempt at purity amidst the inevitable contamination (motorways, developments, modernisation etc.) enables the past to be re-lived, so invites invasion, by the 'yuppies' to whom the textualisation of the countryside has been fed, as much as by the tv crew that feeds it to them. Yuppies' and television's interested preservation of country practices ensures their continuation as hyper-real, 'meaning' not 'being' (in the distinction which suture Harrison's sonnets to/from their subject, his working class past), pure by a wilful 'exclusion' of modernity that spuriously keeps entertainment and work in their 'proper'

places. The video itself becomes a discussion of video/film in the processes of memory and nostalgia, invoking its role in contemporary archivisation as akin to the poetry and fiction of the past. The framing process continues in *Bremer's* involvement of Harrison and his video in *its* project of living on.

6.5 ARRIVING AT THE GRAVEYARD: "CHEATING THE VOID"

The (dying) name as signifier of death that attaches to its frame (see fn 20) is taken up in "Cheating the Void". It is the will-to-immortality, to the continuation of the present life, which led the inhabitants of Kensal Green to populate a fashionable graveyard as though it were a flourishing London suburb, investing the statuary and inscription with as much verisimilitude and consequence as appropriate:

> a 'solid tomb',
> one of the first, and solidest, erected here,
> and the deferential swish of the worker's broom
> keeps common dust from settling on Sophia,
> Sophia, daughter of King George III,
> (though precedence beneath the earth's a jest)
> by choosing Kensal Green to be interred
> gave it the caché to attract the best.   (ll. 109-16)

However, divorced from their original context, the stately edifices *signify* via their own presented textualisation long after the interred are personally remembered:

> What are they now? A stone with chiselled script
> saying 'Sir William Casement' - Who?   (ll. 119-120)

The proper name's loss of reference allows Harrison to reconstruct the past via its present - the statues in the graveyard are bestowed with a characterisation which re-animates their chiselled names. The dead do not gain these personalities from memory, but from their text-and-image forms, which are failing as hypomnata[22].

The punctum lies in this overt failure of intentionality on the part of the deceased and their family - the pathos and fear inherent in the expenditure on the paraphernalia of death is subverted in the grim irreverent humour with which the text re-animates the monuments-to-their-referent's-absence.

6.5.1 THE DYING, THE FINAL, AND THE RESIDUE: SIGNIFICATION AFTER DEATH IN "CHEATING THE VOID"

But the co-textual temporality of the present existing alongside its suspension, its *aret du mort*, in the Victorian graveyard ironically points to the success of the simulacra. The ornate monoliths, the attention to sculptural detail, the elegance of the verse, not only serve to fix the dead within a particular era and social context, but delineate the

vel which divides them from the 'modern' funeral sketched in the opening episode, with the lack of verse or representative masonry. That episode's structural irony, of late Twentieth Century re-iteration of the 'frozen' past, is here brought home by the statues' Victorian-Realist referentiality being re-cited as Poststructural dissemination, signs open to play. *Their* recreation is hyper-real:

> Not just a hat and gloves [...]
> but *them,* not just their laces, their limbs,
> what they wore on top, but all the frills below,
> and every detail etched cried out for more.
> The delicate brocade, the flimsy lace
> the widow's tear drop falling from a lash -
> every feature Memory could trace
> provided the remembered had the cash.   (ll.153-160)

The statue becomes *'them'* in a way they never could sustain in life - testimony to their aspirations, a wish-fulfilment whose perfection persists, unchallenged. Through death desire ceases, and is fulfilled as the deceased subject has passed away in the knowledge of their more complete survival as the *imago* they never attained in life. This process is supported by the family's idealisation of their departed, and the kindness of Memory and money.

But the problematic of verisimilitudinous representation is that the closer the simulacra the more it indicates the absence of its referent. The fineness of the sculpting: 'every detail etched cried out for more' (line 156), necessitates an *excess* of reproductive care, as the enhanced naturalism highlights its own artifice, the closer likeness underlining the subsequently more glaring deviations.

So, the arrested progress of the sculpted widow's tear translates emotion into symbolism. The tear is the same granite as the lace, the *corporeality* of its referent is indistinguishable from the *materiality* of the whole, integrating 'presence' and surface, forcing the realisation of the image's inhumanity, of the irreplaceability of the human.

Tears are *abject*[23], the body-fluids that traverse the boundaries, bringing the inside 'out', chemical indeces of subjectivity generating a taboo-status which correlates with their symbolic role as markers of 'presence'. Reproducing this primary phenomenological signifier codifies the emotion in a continuous way that its 'original' ostensibly could not - the spontaneous and transient grief is rigidified, sustained beyond the event, as necessary condition of the medium, of the material. The contextual assumptions of the art-form carry the notion of 'pose', the artist reproducing an attitude which is already reproduced, standardised, categorising the emotion as 'dead' in *anticipation* of its final iconicization.

The limits of this re-presentation allow Harrison to become an actor in his

dramadocumentary, fleshing out the decayed 'signature', by giving the shell 'voice', breath, forcing the simulacra whose dead-ness he has demonstrated to live within the present. This characteristic gesture[24] here shows the distinction between (the Twentieth Century context of) this 'living on' and that 'intended' by their originators; transplanting Sir William Casement of Bengal, colonialist attitudes intact, to recession-struck England couples the gentrification of Kensal Green with Thatcher-era social regression to 'Victorian values', showing the anacronism operating as social critique in the *meeting* of disparate temporalities. Class inequalities and power relations signify across the projected historical borders, the black humour of Sir William's revival points out his 'continuance' anyway within contemporary society. The paradox of the monument signalling his absence via an attempt to perpetuate his memory is overturned; its 'subject' did not 'die', the monument *speciously* signalled the death of an era. Placing monumentality and the Empire's pretension-to-immortality in the past propre to its anachronistic structure is shown to be a dangerous deceit: tyranny lives beyond the span of any individual tyrant.

Victoriana has left a patently artificial image, distanced from the method of televisual 'realism' that not only hides the 'truth' but makes these images themselves seem irrelevant. Artistic progress suggests a sociocultural progress that would make the rampant inequality which enabled Casement's show of wealth untenable, but when the video re-subjectifies the past's icon, the similarities are destabalising:

> Late of Bengal, but now of Kensal Green,
> Sir William Casement oversees these kids,
> jobless for a year, employed to clean
> his lichen encrusted cariotids.
> Juprassi, sepoi, subrada
> used to serve his slightest whim-
> now, things being in Britain what they are,
> *these* have no choice but to bow and scrape to him. (ll. 121-128)

The inherent bathos of the textual image, the colonialist re-living his authoritarianism in a localised, passive imitation of former grandeur is overturned by the video-image which juxtaposes the living reality of the continuing 'under class', still subservient to the immortal governing power. The making-literal defamiliarization of 'bow and scrape' emphasises its pathetic etymology. The 'joke' of a return to the period of the statues by revivifying them is undercut by this 'hidden' reality - the revival of common language's dead meanings is an ironic gloss on the 'forgetting' of textualising Memory.

The re-textualisation bears the trace of a different author - Harrison-as-actor marks his absence in his double retreat from the text as neither the subject who names himself in the video, nor the one who writes the naming. In this absence, destabilizing to the documentary genre, the 'I' of the work most properly belongs to Barthes' 'obtuse

meaning', which relies on the interrogation of the signifier itself, as the signified to which it structurally refers is multiple, folded back through a system of reference and relativities that signify beyond the initial binary relationship.

> The obtuse meaning is a signifier without a signified, hence the difficulty in naming it. My reading remains suspended between the image and its description, between definition and approximation. If the obtuse meaning cannot be described, that is because, in contrast to the obvious meaning, it does not copy anything - how do you describe something that does not represent anything?[25]

The video's use of sound/speech/breath of *auteur*-Harrison to create the illusion of *self*-presence is undermined by this foregrounded displacement. The fractioning of the text displaces the theocentric governance of the video's diegetic progression, speaking its disunities, and utilising the 'death of the author/auteur' as running meta-text to the sequence's discussion of Death itself.

6.5.2 WATCHING DYING: "CHEATING THE VOID" AND THE VIEWER

> The spectator, in taking pleasure in a privileged form of perception that represses its own discontinuities, compensates for the actual dis-continuities between representation and the world, and between the self and image; and so enacts a form of desire in which death is both represented and disavowed.[26]

The relationship between desire and death is reflected and chiasmically inverted in the frozen realisation of desire activated through death in the 'animated' statuary. That this revival is initiated solely through voice as self-presence makes the death that is signified by the video image more potent; this overt illusion engenders a consciousness of its conventional perceptual acceptance, denying video as hypomnemata, like spoken narrative itself, its status as Memory-representation, and signalling its role as marker of death.

This is the underlying pressure made *explicit* in "Cheating the Void". Here, it is the conventions of Twentieth Century media themselves that are laid bare, in the replication of the early black-and-white movie 'Out of the Metro'.

> These people are all dead, and yet they walk.
> The first, in fact, to move on celluloid.
> Though they're silent and will never talk
> their very movement seemed to cheat the void.
> 'Death's no longer absolute' wrote the reviewer
> having seen this film in 1895.
> Do our TV's and videos make it truer
> and help the dead seem more alive?   (ll. 1-8)

The illusion of life was initially satisfied by the criterion of 'movement', the image's ability to maintain the gesture of life being sufficient to allay death. Viewing this same

film in this 'video age' context, its 'movement' *signals* death; the flickering, jerky image produced by less frames-per-second, absent of sound and colour creates the *studium* (Barthes) of the image, the sense of this-has-been, as deferred from the 'now' of the viewing context. Time has made the viewing subject change from secondary to primary identification, *with* the camera point of view. The audience are now within a more detached, voyeuristic plane historically unavailable to the early filmgoers whose unfamiliarity with the apparatus of film left their perception firmly linked with the gaze of the subject.

This demonstration of the historical swing in viewing strategies is undercut by the video's own enactment of the video in contemporary society; the details which signified the past, death, are mirrored via modern recreative techniques, showing that it is these elements of the studium which connote 'death', and not the filmic process *per se*. While we are more selfconscious, we nevertheless replicate the naïveté of the first filmgoers as response to the desiring process instigated by the video/film image. So, the *contemporary* crowd leaving the metro at Pere La Chaise, when shot silently and selectively (focusing on ambiguously dressed 'characters') in black-and-white, replicates to an unexpected degree the original's connotations. This re-presented 'reality' of the film is shown to be inevitably an interpretation, a partial and ideologically-governed textualisation; the choice of life-in-death or death-in-life is in the hands of the 'controller' of the video/film, and there-but-for-the-grace-of him go we, the viewers[27].

In directly questioning the role of TV/video within the economy of representation, the text points to the element of consumerism introduced into the play of desire - modern viewers' control over the apparatus grants the appearance of *them* wielding theocratic governance, mastering death in their ability to generate and terminate the image as they please, to regulate the presence of their projected imago, in a controlled enactment of the 'fort/da' ritual[28] that first gives rise to the divided subject and the introduction of the Symbolic. It is precisely this specious security that is threatened by Harrison's manipulation of the video's frame. The invagination of the early film within the current video shows the development and incorporation of *its* audience's ingenousness, their ease with the medium deceives the contemporary, 'sophisticated' audience into the belief that they control textual processes because they apprehend them at work. The violent severing of the documentary at the close, with Harrison performing the viewers' conventional rôle, turning them 'off', destabalizes this illusion of control in an abruptness mimetic of death: translated into 'virtual reality', the safe investment of the viewers' delirium in the enacted death-wish and its overcoming reveals itself as structuring fantasy.

The effect of what is 'permitted' assuming governance in a dialectical reversal plunges the viewer into a Symbolic death, as the investment of the self (moi) in the videoic counterpart (je) momentarily leaves the subject divided from him/herself; the *object petit a* is removed without the generic warnings which normally signal closure. The fantasy enactment which functions through the subconscious mastery of death is made overt as the subject becomes present to their own fear/desire, the suppressed expressed in a movement that relinquishes the self, merges with the Other as being-to-death. Although 'living on' after this petit mort, 'cheating the void', the viewer is left with the sense of loss, mourning, and complacency of control is challenged. As the closing remarks of the second episode have implied, the euphoria of survival is in itself a coping strategy; it is the void itself that ultimately dictates freedom.

6.6.1   RE-TRACING "THE MUFFLED BELLS"

This direct textual engagement in the third episode is an inversion of the almost voyeuristic detachment of the previous two, where the horror/fascination of death has provided the viewer with a vicarious experience, witnessing its process without involvement. In the re-citation of genre in "The Muffled Bells", death is presented as pure ritual, the punctum is missing, an experienced absence alongside Stanley Hall's - the viewer is protected from the threat of the event as secondary identification with the deceased is prevented. This ties in with the previously-discussed notion of death being re-evoked (the lost idyll being re-created) in order to witness the tragedy of its demise: the death of the miller takes place outside the documentary boundaries, and the viewer is left with the rituals of his absence, the traditional burial being a hyperreal event for the camera. This is inevitably occasioned by the act of filming - the presence of the camera *affects* as well as effecting the event it seeks to document. The miller occupies the text as 'trace', the gap which shows where the original (subject) has been, linking and dividing the originary self-presence and its difference, the (Derridean) border:

> The living present springs forth out of its nonidentity with itself and from the possibility of a retentional trace. It is always already a trace. This trace cannot be thought out on a basis of a simple present whose life would be within itself; the self of the living present is primordinally a trace. The trace is not an attribute; we cannot say that the self of the living present 'primordinally is' it. Originary being must be thought on the basis of the trace, and not the reverse.[29]

The trace is the constitutive of memory itself, its 'arche-phenomenon'[30], operating in anticipation of the future, so the deferred trait functions after the 'final' spacing (*éspacement*) of death. Memory is structured as necessitating the absence of its object to enable it to govern the recalled image of that object, unmediated by its presence, but the object has to have been present for this to be put into process, and this possibility

of re-tracing is inherent to each moment of the self-present.

This process is doubled in the video as its structure as a network of traces, imagistically - showing what has been, and marking its non-presence - and generically - the play of the trait which inscribes it within a genre while demonstrating its exteriority. So the trace of the miller in the Bremer's memory is re-traced via the videoic textualisation, an absence of an absence, in a mimesis uniquely possible within the medium that *enacts* the process of the trace, and in this rectifying completeness 'satisfies' the lack, the projected absence is filled with the presence implied by the trace. The phenomenological presence never enters the textual logic, as the discourse of trace can never directly engage with its other, and since the video likewise can never summon 'presence', the lack that the video is framing becomes in its process a 'virtual' presence[31]

This 'absence of (an) absence' captured by the film most importantly highlights the sense of continuity fostered in the rural community - realising the opening graphic of the regenerating wreath. Death is not so much a loss as a transition, the community of Bremer includes its dead along with its living:

> Two congregations, one in seven layers
> stays silent, as the other sings the hymns.

Similarly, the material trace left in the now-vacant mill, the footprint-graphic, is a 're-mark', mark of a mark (a presence that signifies an absent presence), all the phenomenological effect remaining of the miller to supplement the trace of memory:

> And men from outside Bremer, come to view,
> will find Stan's footprints on the floury floor.

This mark is an appropriation of the signature process, the craftsman's graphic inscription of identity, the footprint being 'unique' within a universal code. The white flour around the black is analogous to the writer's page, so the personal investment of the practitioner with his process is linked throughout the video with that of the poet, *this* poet, concerned with light/dark, mark/void.

The universality of the trace is made apparent in the montage sequencing which links the funeral's invocation of 'dust to dust' with the footprint-in-the-flour image. As the miller's distillation to 'essence' is metonymically incorporated with his craft, his physical dust parallels the whiteness in which he had made his mark *and* the accumulation of dust on his unused mill. The trace of the footprint is in time chiasmically inverted; the absence of absence is necessarily that which cannot leave a trace, and it is this very erosion of trace which re-marks the miller in his death, the decease of his marking:

> And white dust gathers on the mill's grindstones[32].

So the question of textualisation is inherent in the trace, as the elegy universalises the personal, the specific marker of an absence loses its particular signification and becomes incorporated within a wider, codified network, and points to this codification as the movement of (the poet's) life; it is memory which emerges as life, presence. Memory of the personal becomes entangled with the memory of the trace, and *this* process is the textualisation of life, its living. If this first episode can be said to be discussing death in the absence of its absent subject, it is broaching the problematic of being present to the non-present, the trace operating even within our conception of the 'original', as overtly demonstrated by the self-textualisation of the crafts and lifestyle presented in the video.

This re-appropriated, dual narrative is expanded to link the elegy on (a) death to encompass the death of elegy. As the traditional funeral becomes a rarity and the crafts that contextualize and enable it die out, so the redundancy of the poet is foreseen, as traditional verbal recorder of tradition; to Harrison's distress this 'traditional' funeral does not include verse on the headstone. More worryingly, its absence, like that of the miller's craft, is 'not felt'; the projected harvest festival *will* continue sans locally milled flour, the loss supplemented by 'grapes freighted in from Italy or Spain', so the headstone is felt to be sufficient with just a name and date. Text becomes as 'supplementary' as Hall's bread, its omission no longer a 'lack'.

In response to this trend, writing becomes a gesture of selfconscious textualisation; Harrison's rhymed presence on television is resolute, in the same way the crafts and traditions featured in the video are continued in a gesture of defiance against 'progress'. Harrison's identification of his poetry with these crafts' gesture and materiality is signalled via the foregrounded archaic vocabulary that informs their discourse(s), linguistically signalling the increasingly limited circle of 'readers' privy to their context:

> Pity the miller's headstone wont have rhymes,
> quatrains as antiquated as his querns.

6.6.2 RE-TRACING "MIMMO PERRELLA NON E PIU..."

In the second video, "Mimmo Perrella non e piu...", it is the physical presence of the dead as trace-of-death which is foregrounded, providing an extreme contrast with the preceding discreet reticence of the suppressive 'English' treatment of death. The subject conceived as trace-as-absence now has a counterpart - deceased who remain phenomenologically present to challenge the operation of memory, threatening to displace the memory of their living with the 'reality' of their death. Instead of the trace-after-(self-)presence which resulted in the above textualisation process, the idea of presence itself is threatened; where the separation-ritual of the secular or even

Anglican funeral consigns identity to continue as trace, within the realm of the Symbolic, the Catholic faith's attention to the corpse, the tending and preservation of mortal remains as the site of the Self, questions the materiality of Being. This is further ambiguated by the process of drying the body in its initial burial phase as marker of the start of the rite of passage, an initial separation enabling the soul to leave the body and start its journey through purgatory; 'they need the departed *to* depart', the body/trace works for the workers who work at it.

'Separation' is framed as a positive process, the means of enabling the soul of the dead to find release, but after the waiting-period the body is exhumed, the trace united with its deferred present. The present which is returned is inevitably not that which has been operating via memory, the fresh physical manifestation of the deceased brings into play a new trace, a chiasmic splitting. The initial trace of the living subject absent through death becomes a re-trace, the trace of a trace. It becomes self-identical - the 'remains', the physical body, tangibly ceases to correlate with it, and marks the continued existence of the absence it projects. It does not simply relinquish its referential plane and exist as pure signification; the believers believe in the projected *physicality* of its counterpart at some finite point in time, Judgement Day, when the processes of death will be reversed, the 'lost' physical corollary of memory's trace re-fleshed. The physical transformation of the corpse in itself invokes the idea of the trace, as its materiality bears the imprint not simply of the past Self, but also of the future, the person that will be again. Despite its phenomenological reality, the mummified corpse is ideationally conceived of as transitional.

In this sense, too, memory and belief play a stronger role than any single actuality, which conversely leads the Neapolitans to face a greater degree of involvement with the corporeality of death than their previous video-counterparts. Faith in ultimate salvation allows the material reality of the event to be borne as provocation of the suffering which, cyclically, will enable this reality to be transcended; the grotesque physical transformation becomes symbolic of the truth of the spiritual transformation underway. Indeed, the unrecognisability of the exhumed body is *desired*, as marker of the soul's successful journey; the body/soul as meta-discourse is marked in the delineations of body fluids as spiritual index:

> If, when it's exhumed, the body's wet
> Giuseppi's going to put the corpse back in.
> It means the soul's not made it up there yet -
> moistness, as of blood and sex, means sin.

So, the spiritual rite of passage is followed on Earth by its physical manifestations, investing the role of the trace with a separate function - the material disintegration does not signify an increasing difference with the trace operating in memory. Rather,

as the last physical link between the two worlds (their separation occurring when the last trace of "life's" moistness is gone), it allows a transferential investment in the progression of the Symbolic trace, as the material Other signals its ultimate division. The function of the trace becomes to designate the presence of 'self', of identity, within the physical-beyond-death.

The psychoanalytic framing of this corporeal trace inevitably centres around the abject[33], the transgression of the living body's borders is reproduced in death as metaphor for the final traversal of boundaries. The fluids which bring the body's interiority to the surface become *pollutants* which, when eliminated, signify the purification of the corpse; 'moistness', connoting 'blood and sex', forms a symbolic cluster uniting the processes that indicate life with their symbolic corollaries of 'sin'. The belief-system's dogma necessarily coincides with the practical, physical realities of the death process, their mutual dependency involving a continuous invagination that leaves no 'outside'; faith allows events to simultaneously exist as 'a' and '-a', a suspension of the acknowledgement of one reality while using this same deferred knowledge as justification for this act.

External to this system as a professed atheist, Harrison-as-commentator occupies the breaches within the disparate 'realities', exploring the spacing between the trace(s) and subject(s), stating what is 'not said' within this given-as 'open' acceptance of death, marking that which it seeks to pass over. 'Grim' humour is an apt vehicle with which to speak the unsayable, the apparent horror of the process to an outsider is mediated by the ribald irony, which foregrounds the failure of 'serious' discourse to adequately comment on the event.

The poet's 'graveyard humour' generically cites Revenger Tragedy, where the tension of the extreme is presented via its inverse. Yet this treatment raises further ethical questions as the textualisation of a 'real' event pushes its literary 'justification'; the audience at once respond to the generic structures' trivialising of the *actuality* of death - literature provides a means of exploring and coping with the world - and to the reality itself, which reflexively *becomes* the text even at its most extreme, its most selfconsciously 'textual', 'dramatic'. The process of textualisation foregrounded in the narrative functions on a receptive disjunction; while the event is demonstrably framed for the television programme, the invagination of Harrison in the opening sequence has placed him as present at 'reality', but this presence points to his rôle as poet-artificer, marking the event as text at the moment of its coming-into-being. This gives the impression of watching a text of a text, the mise-en-abyme framing investing a sense of unreality to the defining reality of life itself, the trace of death being the mark against which living is posited, the absent which is delineated within the structure of its

deferral, living, in the present.

The cognitive revolt this engenders is what makes the death, in the end of our back-and-forths across this mis en abyme, hyperreal. The performance of the psychological denial processes makes the posited 'unreality' more real in its catalystic function within the text, strengthens the conception of the imagistic/subject trace as being the mark of a Self-presence. In refusing to validate the loss by dealing with its inevitability during the textual process per se, the video frames the process at play within the loss of loss, provoking the viewer to a consciousness of the apparatus of this failure of representation, prompting the viewer to find the infinitely deferred subject inscribed in this operation of the trace.

This technique is realised when 'Giuseppi' is exhumed, the psychoanalytical positioning of the viewer as witness alongside the widow creating the suspense occasioned by the projected uniting of the trace with its physical corollary. Although this is a universalised experience for the reader, the 'absence' being a generalisation that is sustained from episode to episode, the event of seeing that which has been present only through its absence is a stressful experience, each viewer cannot help but project their own death in this imagistic identification with their dead 'other'. Death ceases to operate solely within the Symbolic realm, as other and Other are simultaneously invoked, the trace of presence is inextricably linked with the ideational trace of memory, belief. This descent to materiality from the abstract is brutally underlined by the text's re-enforcement of this present as deriving from that which lived on as counterpart to memory's trace until the moment of unearthing marked the temporal disjunction. The rupture between the two is insistently played upon as the narrator ridicules the disjunction between what memory retains of the living person and 'his' current reality:

> He always took such trouble with his hair -
> even towards the end he kept it trim.
> He was a natty dresser, took great care
> over his appearance, now look at him!

This irreverence plays with the network of traces, invoking the human presence the widow keeps alive in her memory, and then re-directs this trace towards its counterpart which maintains the status of the 'being' (lacking soul - but pending ultimate return). *If* this is Vincenzo, he has ceased to display the attributes which once defined him, if the body still relates to the identity, then he has 'let himself go'; if the 'present' reality instead re-defines the reality of Vincenzo in that he continues to 'be', he has become other to the trace he left when alive.

What is actually preserved, what is left in the conceptualisation of the 'remains', is semiotically interrogated via the framing of the mummified corpse with the photograph

of Vincenzo, re-marking as documentary 'fact' the extent of the transformation *away* from the ideal. The dialectical field of loss is captured by placing the photograph by the now-empty coffin, re-iterating the Biblical miracle of resurrection: Vincenzo has risen from the grave, but his emergence as this unrecognisable mummified corpse destroys the present citation as citation of an 'idealised' event *and* destroys the 'ideal' of the cited resurrection. At the same time, the juxtaposition of photograph and dried corpse unites the traces in signifying a common absence, one sought for and lost in both propre frames, coffin and photograph; the widow is forced to face the truth of her husband being no longer present either in ideational image or phenomenological materiality.

> Now, now I know you really died.
> Till now I only half believed it true.

At the instant of the body's exhumation, the deferred temporality of the trace is updated to its current referent, the spacing between the 'now, now' marking the transition from apprehension to present: memory allowed the survival of the uncontaminated trace which in turn is now 'destroyed' as the exhumation creates a re-trace that supplants the primacy of its other.

The maintaining of *both* 'traces' is evidenced by the widow's tending of the corpse, the care given to its preservation a continuation of that proffered to her husband in life, though the macabre nature of the disinfecting processes also serves to mark the distance between the two. Vincenzo is at once objectified, treated as casually as a piece of meat by the funeral attendant who prosaically disinfects and sanitises the corpse, and is 'subjectified', is granted a vicarious humanity through his widow's ministrations. Indeed, her treatment characterises him, gives him *a* character, one defined by the reception of her imprints upon him - her powdering performs a maternal relationship to a husband 'infantalized' in his helplessness, wrapped in the shroud as in a nappy, a bizarre continuation of the regression posited in the 'seven ages of man', rehearsed by the poet's intertextual mimesis:

> First alcohol's sloshed on to wash him clean.
> Then disconnected bones are put to right.
> Then liberal sprinkling of naptheline.
> Then DDT to keep off flies and mites.
> Was this the Vincenzo I slept beside.
> Vincenzo Cicatiello non e piu.
> It took Vincenzo 60 years of life
> and 20 months of death to look like this.

In entering their fallacy that human appearance connotes the human being once present to it by discussing Vincenzo as if alive, Harrison is demonstrating how his 'subject' is *not* Vincenzo, how 'he' has 'changed', therefore losing his presence, his humanity. The

'serious' inverse of this problematic (in the sense of un-ironically describing the *living* in terms of the *dead*) - of what evidence of presence constitutes 'life', and whether a subject can, indeed, lose all presence (appropriate another) and 'live', is the one explicitly tied to 'memory' (a subject's memory, others' memories of the subject).[34]

6.6.3   UN-RETRACING "INTO THE VOID"

From these two 'personal' videos, showing the 'personal' to be incorporations of religioculutural conceptualizations of death - the Neapolitan/Catholic prioritisation of the body as index of presence ('I still find my father in what's left of him'), contrasted with the English/Anglican focus on the continuation of the ideational trace - the series moves to the public, secular domain, where neither body nor personal memory take precedence over the textualisation of the deceased's persona.

At Pere La chaise, the deliberate creation of a 'graveyard of fame' built upon the ungovernability of the signature effect after death, allows the dead to be promoted as 'present'. The graveyard appropriated a following as faithful and lucrative as that which its internees (neither willing or not, de-subjectified and appropri*able* via the signatures of their names and bodies) enjoyed when alive:

> The tour starts here with voices in your head
> hear one corpse sing what another corpse composes -
> follow their music, let yourself be lead
> to where the shell of genius reposes.
> Composers rot, but their recorded notes
> are all we need to make them seem alive,
> the singers buried here have crumbled throats
> but the voices they vibrated with survive.   (ll.29-36)

The indeterminacy surrounding the textualisation of departed 'personalities' is evoked by the videoic ambiguity of the 'voices in your head'. As the crackling soundtrack precedes its graveyard referent, the disjunction spatially positions the music as internal to the viewer in a mimesis of deferment - music is the 'mark' of the body which is a 'mark' of its subject; 'you' are the author of his subjectivity. The broken video-convention of sound/image *unity* marks this music as external, not *its* soundtrack; the video is abandoning the authority to constitute the subject assumed by the graveyard/tour, and by the viewer who is 'taking' it.

Again the idea of the trace is brought into play, dividing around the dual signification of voice as mark of 'presence' - here to create the illusion of the generic trait of genius 'living on', and to illustrate the fading trace of the actual singer. The decaying 'shell' is contrasted by the seeming vitality of the music. Yet the final absence of the physical counterpart makes the music appear 'empty'; the connotations of self-expression and

emotion inherent in music as performance are undermined. The phenomenological reality marks the loss, as the trace which lives on as 'genius' is the human impetus that presented a unique interpretation of the structure through which they chose to express 'themselves'. This deficit is the experiential lack of the 'grain of the voice':

> The 'grain' is the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs.[35]

The self-presence of the performer invested in the structure as it leaves them, the trace of the body that enters the signifying structure, momentarily breaches the separation between form and physicality; the music re-iterated here reminds us that now there is nothing *but* materiality to the body (of the composers), presence is lost to this music, there is no 'grain' in it. In the final textualisation of the deceased performer, their music ceases to function as personal vehicle; as the body which occupied it decays, the power of the performance-element recedes and the song 'leaves' the body behind, so is inappropriate in this graveyard. *Now* the song is 'geno-song [...] the space where significations germinate from within language and its very materiality'[36]. The music itself becomes a network of textual play, its punctum now resting on its interaction with the correlative textualisation of its originator:

> This possibility of reproduction, the structure of which is absolutely unique, *gives itself out*, as the phenomenon of a mastery or limitless power over the signifier, since the signifier itself has the form of what is not external. Ideally, in the teleological essence of speech, it would then be possible for the signifier to be in absolute proximity to the signified aimed at intuition and governing the meaning. The signifier would become perfectly diaphanous due to the absolute proximity to the signified.[37]

The breach between sound and presence performs the falling away, the dying of the dead, here, while demonstrating the continued functioning of voice-*as*-presence within Harrison's narration and the phenomenally concrete world apprehended by the documentary. This is textually marked by ironizing the resultant ambiguities of 'voice' - 'And that - what's that, a bird?' (line 37): a thrushcall vies with the recording of Mezrow's clarinet, the one so entirely natural as to count as parergonal, intrinsic to the setting, the other now displaced. In the textual logic, the 'natural', propre, has become necessary to point to the perceptual 'blindnesses' at work in the viewer, to the televisual-sophisticate's assumption that *all* voices are disjoined, inauthentic, lost-to-origin, their subjects dead.

The camera penetrates the darkness of the undergrowth whose 'leafy paths' lead from the funeral gardens, to show that it is this very 'naturalness' that man's elaborate artifice, like the video, is working to keep at bay; the soundtrack appears to be the distorted cry of distressed birds, an obliteration of the tranquillity of the preceding shots,

> Drawn down into Oblivion,
> and drowned in Eternity's white noise and endless hiss
> from where the waves wash up the surface
> of divas from the same dark depths like this.   (ll.45-48)

until it is re-contextualised as the crackles of an early wax recording, the Symbolic enactment of Oblivion more propre-ly given to the 'surface' of the already departed. The entranced 'audience', gathered at Piaf's graveside for a recital without the performer's presence, again eerily underwrites the suppression of absence; the cracked voice bidding them 'au revoir' years after she herself left seems not to perturb them. Their attention and pleasure constitute a presence where they have come to mark an absence, raising the question as to what 'remains' that continues to be sufficient-to-itself and not needing the departed self-presence. The textualised trace serves as adequation of the living person, purer in its perpetual idealisation - its temporal suspension seems to defeat 'Oblivion', as the form of immortality art guarantees.

This relationship is inverted at the graves of Molière and La Fontaine, as the recorded theatrical performance more strikingly points to the absence at its centre - its performers are unable to 'act'. The only living audience to the show is a dog, which scurries away from the grave. This vacatedness makes the laughter and applause from the recorded audience sound hollow; it was the 'presence' of the tour audience that lent the 'life' to the 'repetition' of the *recording* of the original auto-affective circuit. The living re-animation of the dead trace allowed the scene to function as enactive verisimilitude, but its counterpart, in relying solely on the 'original' hearers and the dog, that is, on the unhearing, the nonpresent, suddenly arrests this process of aural re-creation. The viewers are left as self-conscious witnesses of a 'second death', unable to be present-to this event and so aware of the failure of sound itself to mark presence despite its apparent ability; the opening question, framed by the convention of preservation that links (Lumière's) film to the documentary, is reframed:

> 'Death's no longer absolute' [...]
> Do our TV's and videos make it truer,
> and help the dead seem more alive[?]   (ll. 9, 11-12)

The movement from the original discourse situation, which introduced the 'spacing' between the vocal production and its reincorporation as signification, and this posthumous repetition, demonstrates the illusion of full-presence granted to speech.

The problematic of the constitution and reference of the trace, discussed in the preceding episodes, is shown in "Into the Void", to be open to overt manipulation; the undecidability that attaches to the living-on of the trace becomes a re-textualised mimesis of the signature effect within the life-span. The detachable mark, legally taken as uniquely referring to a specific individual, becomes, on death, public property. The impossibility of the 'original' being reproduced, the law of the name, takes over, its

citation serving as legitamator of material gathered under the existent signature effect without the owner's sanction. So the trace lives beyond the boundaries of the signatory; the textualisation process which inevitably occurs as memory re-constructs reality is laid open to intentional fictionalisation justified on the grounds that as the result is the same the intention is not accountable.

In removing the subject from the network of significations the residual cluster of historical data and anecdotal material becomes more accessible, the life becomes a re-trait, a tracing of the *characteristic* mark of the absent identity, which tied the person to a genre, a period, an event. This partiality replicates that of the generically fictional character, and makes the identification process easier - the absence at the centre of the cluster of traits is occupied by the projected ego of the onlooker, the Other allows internalisation, no actual differance, propre only to itself, which marks its division from the self. The material provides the viewer/reader with an 'empty' form to inhabit, the structure of desire is invoked and, while the object is in effect a projection of otherness which is self-derived, this limited circuit satisfies the immediate drive as transferential narcissism.

Time in effect deprives the subject of the possibility of 'immediate' experience, the phonic markers of presence being, upon their aural reception, already subject to the spacing that has separated it from its origin. In this way, the subject always apprehends a 'past' as constitutive of their immediate present, whether through the auto-affective circuit of hearing themselves speak or through hearing others, the seeming metaphoric circle operating within difference is made overt when the recorded voice interrupts the circuit, the phenomenological materiality of spacing as an irreperable disjunction is foregrounded as the speech is demonstrably removed from a subject no longer present:

> Sense, being temporal in nature, as Husserl recognized, is never simply present, it is always already engaged in the 'movement' of the trace, that is, in the order of 'signification'. It has always already issued forth from itself into the 'expressive stratum' of lived experience. Since the trace is the intimate relation of the living present to its outside, the opening to exteriority in general, to the nonproper, etc., *the temporalization of sense is, from the outset a 'spacing'.*[38]

As one's perceptions of 'reality' are therefore deferrals of what *has* been temporally present, this mediation enacts the relationship which constitutes the trace itself, the spacing between signified and signifier, and this is what links the alive to the external world, the spacing being also a 'joining'. In its failure to achieve the interiority of full-presence, this spacing/joining becomes instead the internalisation of the external, a borderline that links as it separates: 'Hearing oneself speak is [...] the irreducible openness in the inside; it is the eye and the world within speech'[39]. The movement of temporalisation figures human participation within the world, the sensory experience

re-claiming what has been distanced as signification, and by this trace's relation to its signified apprehending what has been 'lost'. One's own 'reality' is likewise confirmed via this process as part of the same 'spacing'. "Cheating The Void's" focusing on the primacy of speech ultimately shows how the experience of death as deferral, spacing, loss, is tied to the process of experience *per se*. Death is the temporal arrest of a self-present subject, such that the *spacing* that surrounded, *constituted*, their phenomenological reality becomes everything, loses the *joining* of subjects, the movement of intersubjectivity, that defined life. But in appreciating this process one must accept its continuation in life: death is not simply the constituting trace within life, but the medium through which we experience 'life', as minimal unit of deferral. It is only through foregrounding the *denial* of death's inevitable presence that an audience can be made present to their own experience of it as that which they attempt to suture through the operation of desire.

In hearing the voices of those unable to hear themselves, the event of death is contained in the apprehension of the spacing, the dislocation between speaking subject and voice is internalised through secondary identification which reconstitutes the absent subject, their 'death' being experienced as double by the divided subject, whose fragmentation into je/moi experiences the projection of desire as incorporating an (absent) subject whose absence is propre to it. Instead of instigating the desire to posess a symbolically unified Other, its propre Imaginary[40] fragmentation mirrors that of the viewers' aural relationship, foregrounding the mimesis inherent in their perceptual contract. The properties of spacing and loss in the film medium: the gap between sound and image (generally sutured-over by the viewer through a projection of their desire of completeness) are likewise already constitutive of the self that enacts the process. In foregrounding this rupture such that it defeats the operation of desire, the videoic other, reflecting the viewer's identificatory dislocation, evades transferential constitution as symbolic (therefore indivisible) Other. This inversion defeats the secondary identification which enacts the illusion of making the image 'live', instead, the imago causes the viewing-subject to become present to their own death. The viewers' psychoanalytic identificatory merging with their specular double is prevented by its reduction to vocal trace, the aural mark of deferral, differrance, which foregrounded mark of death is internalised as an iteration that in demonstrating its failure to equate with self-presence, challenges the continuation of this illusion within the viewing subject. Perhaps this is especially so in the case of the voice rather than with an image, as we experience the voice of the o/Other in an internalisation similar to hearing ourselves speak, again 'spacing' making our experience of our propre speech's deferral and detachment equivalent to our reception of outside/external speech. 6.7 SEX AND DEATH

The only 'voice' incorporated into Harrison's poem-proper is Jim Morrison's, as the affirmatory singer of death-in-life:

No one here gets out alive   (line)

Morrison is then cited as claiming, in affirmation of the linking of sex and death as drives of life, 'Death and my cock are the world' (with Harrison's wry observation that the former has taken care of the vaunted potency of the latter); his *enactment* of earthly desire, through his 'indecent' performances, is corollary to his desire/jouissance for the Other's phallus, death. The suppression of this link in the living makes its realisation unacceptable in the dead, yet the split into trace and differand make up Morrison's 'world'; 'death' is that which defines life through its presence as 'absence', and the 'cock' or phallus is that which links Man with these divides, the physical corollary constituting woman as phallus in her 'castration', man's drive to supply her 'lack' motivating the 'worldly' sexuality in a transferential enactment of the symbolic. The veiling of the sculpted phallus on Jerico's plinth signals the 'conventional' cessation of desire in death; com-memoration 'triumphs' over every trace of the life-affirming except the voice, and in supplying absences, monuments and tv-programmes alike defeat the *jouissance* propre only to presence (the 'love' of 'this fleeting life', as Harrison will represent it in *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, which ends with death).

The video sutures its humorous overview of sex and death with the topic of monuments and plinths, their phallic iconicity tacitly perceived as totemic, signalling the potency of death/sex, and in earthly terms their counterparts of power and money.

> 'Death and my cock are the world', said Jim -
> that may have been, but now I rather doubt
> there's much left of that vaunted part of him
> or nothing he'd *feel* like pulling out.
> The void may well be cheated by a voice,
> composer's quill, the artist's brush or pen
> but Memory might only have one choice:
> a stone, in Kensal Green, £11.10.   (ll. 73-80)

In this philosophical balancing of Memory and Oblivion, memory is framed as a *physically* governed process, invested in the preservation of material traces, second-order signifying structures, referring back to the Classical conception of the 'art of memory' as a branch of rhetoric; the associative recall strategies of the *locus communi* is reproduced in the statuary which prompts memory beyond the lifespan of remembering individuals. This specific act of com-memoration is distinct from the continuation of *presence*, either as voice or through the body of art. While these 'presences' breach the 'void' of the subject's absence, the remaining trace being propre-to them, effecting their re-constitution as a projective textualisation, the 'memorial' only invokes the *absence* of the subject. The operation of time reduces its efficacy as *hypomnesis*, as oblivion envelopes the 'original' rememberers; this difference between

'memory' as a retroactive process and 'trace' as a modification of the present is explored more fully in my concluding discussion of "The Mother of the Muses"/*Black Daisies for the Bride.*

Video is shown to uniquely link the two as it promotes rememberance in preserving the trace as repetition, as with the World War II footage that creates a permanant record of human-created 'oblivion', the specular mnemonic 'prosthesis'[41] running parallel with its role as trace, affecting the 'present' years after the event.

> Film machines exhume the ones who died
> and bring this baby, Mia, back to view.
> But Oblivion with his bombs and genocide
> is almost neck and neck since World War II.   (ll.225-8)

The video/filmic trace is too multiple, unlike poetry or song, to be revivified with the identificatory desire of the viewing subject: the medium itself presents its own involution of the divided trace as presence *and* absence, the apperatus mirroring the structural polarities of Memory to which it is supplementary.[42] This means that videotexts become responsible for framing the past 'within the present'; the personal, psycho-analytic trace is subject to decay, destined for the void/oblivion, and we are left ultimately reliant upon media textualisations not simply as 'prosthesis', but as citational trace that modifies our perception of *current* reality, the extensive cataloguing of the past providing each viewer with more information than could have conceivably been accrued as trace by any individual.

So the present becomes emmeshed within a hypertextual framing that operates on the re-insertion of the trace as coterminous with the contemporary, the linearity of historical deferral overridden in a gesture that writes the 'loss' within the re-construction of a present-that-can-never-be(-present), a present that overruns the boundaries of any subjective *experience* of presence and is not available-to-be-experienced as the fictive informs the reading of the 'real'. Such a development is the foundation of Harrison's latest exploration of Memory, which I will discuss in the concluding chapter, where the hyperreal supplements the present in an anticipatory gesture that presents the dehumanisation inherent in this new media-ized mnemonic grafting. It is this grafting, the 'giving' of some voices as aide-memoire, and the appropriation of others to form a text-of-the-present, that will be the subject of the intervening chapters.

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[1]Derrida, *Spurs*, page 137.

[2] Derrida, *Spurs*, page 137.

[3]The opening sequence structure can easily be argued to be becoming Harrison's signature in itself: as I am demonstrating, 'his' version of his texts - their 'revealed' meaning and function is played out here, in *Medea - A Sex-War Opera*'s dumbshow, "*from* the School of Eloquence's" epigraphic riddle, and in the increasingly dense semioses of the television works' pre-title or title sequences, in a self-indicating reappropriation of the sonneteer's loading of maximum signification into spatiotemporally limited forms. As a 'concluding couplet' transplaced to the opening border, the dumbshow/title sequence refers to the transient nature of television, and the overlaodedness of memory by its images - video is not made to be 'reread' in the light of its conclusion, but, as I have shown, the prioritization of this conclusion states a limit the semiotext (*Medea, The Blasphemers' Banquet*) mocks by overrunning.

[4] Derrida, *Living on: Border Lines*, page 84.

[5]*The Blasphemers' Banquet*. Lines from complementary stanzas are conflated here (pp398, 400).

[6]The opposite direction characterizes religious readings, of course, but, while these are cited (in the spirit of documentary evenhandedness) in the *In Loving Memory* series, their positivism is never brought to bear on the circle or the line. Harrison's interest in this 'into the light' positivism's absence is declared in (is the *raison d'être* of) *The Blasphemer's Banquet*, where he presents it as a closure, an image that denies life, where his formulations of the abismal circle affirm it.

[7] This circularity/linearity is even repeated in the event of the letter 'd' appearing first and last in 'dead', a microcosmic signatory motif to close of the text with the same border phenomena separating/joining this to subsequent texts that Harrison's 'O' performed for previous sister texts in opening this one.

[8]Harrison's linkage is mede explicit in "Lines To My Grandfathers":

> I strive to keep my lines direct and straight,
> and try to make connections where I can -   (ll.14-15)

These memorial 'lines' *enfold* Harrison, as selfconsciously writing 'poet', continuing the experience of work-as-working-class-mark-of-identity, 'in person' within the documentary/fiction tradition of the literary/televisual elegy he has entered stylistically: their conjunction of man and craft ('Harrison kept a pub with home-brewed ales', line 7), is now terminated, as the death of one leads to the cessation of the other:

> Now that the village's last miller's dead
> His craft of milling flour has also died.

[9]Ostension is 'behaviour which makes manifest an intention to make something manifest'. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, page 49.

[10]Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, page 96.

[11]Christian Metz distinguishes the viewing subject's 'primary identification' with the *camera* point of view from their 'secondary identification' with the actual *actors* on screen. in The Imaginary Signifier, page 51.

[12]See previous note.

[13]This nostalgic voyeurism is compounded in the closing shots of this episode; pulling away from the village hall where the children are performing a show, it leaves only their voices to echo in the darkness of the country night, transient as ghosts, so enforces the idea of the camera peeping in on the past. The light of the windows glowing in the blackness subliminally connotes the Memory/Oblivion dichotomy which will be the theme of the third episode, light being here linked with breath, speech, the marker of Presence that is made explicit in its later linkage with Harrison as text speaker, this vocal beacon being threatened by the encroaching void which surrounds it.

[14]Brunette & Wills, *Screen /Play*, page 105.

[15] Derrida, *The Truth In Painting*, page 36.

[16]Brunette & Wills, *Screen/Play*, page 123.

[17] Brunette & Wills,*Screen/Play*, page 123.

[18]The property of 'citation' intrinsic to the signature effect is most clearly demonstrated in the first episode, where Harrison portrays himself as 'poet' within the rôle he has delineated for himself in his other video-poems. This is Derrida's second sense of the nature of the signature:

> the set of idiomatic marks that a signer might leave by intention or accident in his
> product...The style, the inimitable idiom of a writer, sculptor, painter or orator. (Derrida, *The*

Truth In Painting, page 54)

So the graveyard context of "*v.*", his most famous elegiac text/performance, is directly invoked by the performance of his reading of Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" while seated on Bremer tomb. This imagistic iteration fulfils the criteria that designate the field of influence of the signature; it is 'repeatable' and marks the replication of presence, the guarantee that its structure pertains to a specific individual. This brings into play the thematic elements that are bound up in this intertextual repetition; death, nostalgia, tradition - elements thematic to Harrison's poetry, in a visual cross-over with the videoic context.

[19]Brunette & Wills,*Screen/Play*, page 120, citing Derrida, *The Truth In Painting*, page 54.

[20]In "*v.*", the Leeds skyscape is shown speciously to promote his fame via hoardings subsequently shown to belong to the building firm, Harrison, juxtaposed with a sequence 'authentically' showing 'his' name in West End lights. In *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, Harrison undersigns his poet-status by appearing at the ill-fated feast with(out) other literary blasphemers, the videoic image of his 'appearance' guaranteeing his authentication of the written text, its 'serious' communicative function being founding his visual presentation in subsequent works. The punning on the 'signatures' engraved on tombs also links "The Muffled Bells" with its determining intertexts, as the proper names of the past rectors - Snow, Frost and Dew - recalling the auctioneer, 'Bishop' (see chapter 8), are converted into nouns whose operation seeks to obliterate the 'original' signifying function:

> None sustain the pressure of their eponyms.

"*v.'s*" family plot is surrounded by the names of literary luminaries Wordsworth and Byron, whose actual past lives as organ builder and tanner recede over time, leaving their names subject to the accumulated signature effect of their famous namesakes, they become citations of those whose living was citation. These intertexts, binding the 'television poems', open the passing citation into a more wide ranging dialogic relationship; the function of the name becomes at once that which marks the individual in memory, and that which is subject to loss, death, and revivification in the transformational structures of language. This is an advancement of Harrison's interested project; it progresses the series, from the immortalisation in work-as-Being, towards the futility of writing as a means of preserving the past, of making it 'live on' (which "The Muffled Bells's" local historian succinctly invokes: 'gravestones and memories are useless'), enacting Ulmer's statement that 'the proper name occupies the masterpiece like a body in a tomb decomposing' (Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology*, page 63).

[21]Derrida, "The Law of Genre", page 206, cit. in Brunette & Wills *Screen /Play*, page 46.

[22]Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy"in *A Derrida Reader*, page 136.

[23]Kristeva: 'The objects generating abjection - food, faeces, urine, vomit, tears, spit - inscribe the body in those surfaces, hollows, crevices, orifices, which will later become erotogenic zones - mouth, eyes, anus, ears, genitals.' *Abjection, Melancholia and Love*, page 88.

[24]The technique of displacing the text-speaker, so investing the inanimate with the role of speaking-subject, creating a rupture within the projected 'unity' of the video, pointing out the medium's structure of displacement, absence, cites *The Blasphemers' Banquet*'s animation of the busts of Voltaire and Molière. For the limits of this technique, see my concluding chapter.

[25]Barthes, "The Third Meaning", *Image Music Text*, page 61.

[26]Brunette & Wills, *Screen/Play*, page116.

[27]The addition of sound and colour instantly revive the 'dead' image, making the scene 'appear' contemporary, but the trace of 'death' remains throughout the video, a reminder that what we receive today as marker of modernity (the feature inherent to the documentary genre as 'snap-shot' of the state of affairs) bears the imprint of death *as consequence* of its foregrounded contemporaneousness; that which signals its belonging to 'now', today, is the very feature which will subsequently label it as 'then', 'yesterday', and ultimately 'the (ceased, deceased) past', connoting death.

[28]Freud's constitution of the Pleasure Principle, discussed by Derrida in "To Speculate - on Freud", in *A Derrida Reader*, page 521.

[29]Derrida, from *Speech and Phemonena*, in *A Derrida Reader*, page 27

[30] Derrida, from *Of Grammatology*, in *A Derrida Reader*, page 43.

[31]See the concluding chapter, discussing *Black Daisies for The Bride*, where Harrison attempts to reconstitute the 'presence' of 'real' subjects, via video-'memory'.

[32]This strong correlation between man and job, finally underwritten in the symbolism of the miller being transformed into the very 'flour' he no longer mills, returns us to the notion of the intertextual

trace. The conceit recurs in the "*from* The School of Eloquence" series, radiating from "Marked with D", where Harrison's baker-father's ashes become 'Flour enough for one small loaf'

[33]See note 22.

[34]This is the specific problematic of Harrison's most recent poetry and television work, "The Mother of The Muses"/*Black Daisies for The Bride*.

[35] Barthes, "The Grain of The Voice", *Image Music Text*, page188.

[36] Barthes, "The Grian of The Voice", *Image Music Text*, page182.

[37]Derrida, from *Speech and Phenomena*, in *A Derrida Reader*, page 121.

[38] Derrida, from *Speech and Phenomena*, in *A Derrida Reader*, page 27.

[39]Derrida, from *Speech and Phenomena*, in *A Derrida Reader*, page 27

[40]Lacan calls the identification process with images, such as the 'imago' in the mirror stage, the Imaginary, as distinct from the Symbolic which is concerned with signifying structures. See *Ecrits*, page ix.

[41]See Derrida's discussion of the supplementary nature of the pharmakon replacing the 'living' memory in "Plato's Pharmacy" in *A Derrida Reader*, pages 114 - 145.

[42]This framing of the 'filmic memory' is invaginated in Harrison's later works as icon of the trace that is no longer present in those whose histories it portrays. Specifically, his father-in-law's Alzheimer's-ravaged memory enables him to sit through the bombing of Dresden on televison without responding to its mnemonic prompting.

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THE BLASPHEMERS' BANQUET I: APPROPRIATE VOICES

7.1 THE MARGIN OF INTRODUCTION: PRE-TEXT AS MAXIMUM TV

Harrison draws on the dumbshow/pre-text structure he has used successfully in the "*v.*" video, to succinctly prologue *The Blasphemers' Banquet*; in only 1.38 he sets up the rhetorical and semiotic structures of the videoic narrative, but also, equally importantly, this prologue functions as a 'promo video'[1] in its own right. Many viewers will only watch these opening moments of an unprecedented program, one without the 'frame' of a series (the *Byline* series signalling nothing but autonomy, 'independence', *un*predictability) or widely-known actor/writer/*auteur* before deciding whether to turn to a more commercial channel, so this short *introduction* must create enough interest for them to 'participate', or to switch channels having passively absorbed the kernel of the video's argument. Cultural literacy is again invoked; if you are literate in conventional terms, you will be engaged by a renowned poet announcing a discussion of topical issues relevant to the literati, if your 'literacy' is televisual, this short video will engage as television *or as an intense TV program in its own right* in the way, as I have shown, that essential aspects of Harrison's plays and poetry-sequences are distilled back into his prologue-dumbshows and epigraphic riddles.

With this in mind I shall subject the opening sequence to analysis with this dual effectiveness-criteria in mind; as pre-text to the whole video's ostensive[2] aim to communicate cross-culturally to a wide spectrum of British (or British resident) viewers, *and* as mini-text, communicating semiotically to a marginal audience who will ultimately chose not to view.

It is the ambiguity of the opening image which serves inevitably to underpin the entire semiotic sequence; it is the first visual information on which all following footage is built, the anterior to what becomes the video, the only context-free image, open to instantaneous, basic response patterns of archetypal and subconscious association, which then run through (subliminally) the rest of the video. That is, this image is not only the video's generative, but its receptive determinant. So, it is designedly as well as inevitably significant that such an overdetermined video as *The Blasphemers' Banquet* (BB) starts with a defamiliarized close-up of two globe lanterns, which turn out to be in the Tandoori-restaurant setting of the video's narration, the authoritative here-and-now from which Harrison recalls other times (the time I will be referring to as T_0). The viewers' insecurity at encountering this unprepared-for video, then, is not dismissed as it would be in the presentation of a recognisable context; instead, the image is pure, unreferential semiosis. Then this is further alienated by the sound being

unfocused, indistinct talking - again, without audio(or)visual reference to its speaker, *pure*ly 'utterance'.

      The blasphemers' banquet table;   (line 1)

Yet in this foundation semiotic can be extracted the key (or 'fundamental') opposition images of Harrison's work - the light/dark motif, fused with the archetypal heaven/earth dichotomy, suggested by the hanging lanterns, and the inclusion/exclusion barrier. These are invoked, indeed, by the overspill(-citation) of the previous image from *outside* the video - the globe of the B.B.C., the repressed/unforgotten past, its circular destined return vs. the journey from it. This spatio-temporal relationship between cotext and context coalesces to form a hermeneutic which places the tenor of the following debate within the field of these 'universals' embedded within the everyday, secular lifeworld.

We can also perceive the agenda of different degrees of analysis; of the 'real', Being and the illusory, Meaning. The right-hand light/lamp has definition, presence, but signals layers of contiguity in the circle/flower eyelets of its raffia design. The left-hand light is a 'deconstructed' meta-presence of the other, an inverse spatial image of light-specks in an undifferentiated darkness, pure opposition, elemental semiosis. The camera eye reiterates this concrete imagism of the circle-motif in the 'abstract' visual field, geometric figure becomes motional reality as *we* (primary-identified with the camera-I) circle. Video-theme becomes organizational function, tying in the round table which lacks its blasphemers with close-ups of raffia chairbacks *constructed* of ('empty')circles and of the round chair seat whose embossed mirror-discs reflect the scene and its signification, being designed into a 'sun' motif and its radiating satellites. An infinitely reflexive gestalt.

Here we have a universe structured around an archetypal reality; the embedded significance of traditional, universal-conventional motifs is re-presented by video technique, causing the televisual audience to recall, as relevant and vital, that which has been too bound up with the superficial, surface layer of reality to be uniquely perceived. By so initially provoking basic archetypal responses via the defamiliarization of point-of-view and by frame-deprivation, the familiar is *re*-viewed in terms of these patterns which culturally underpin the everyday; the 'religious' prefiguring philosophy these symbols cite is co-existent with all aspects of the secular, frames and informs them. As the video will eventually explore, as it is signalling already a deconstruction of, this is the 'frame' that was already present, for its technique does not *devise* these motifs, it merely brings out what is implicit, re-appropriating aspects in order that their 'original' significance (that 'originated' with their design) can be seen and opened-to-question.

Working from these identified universals (as Jung identified, present everywhere even if not 'true' in their symbolism), the video moves on to create a parallel strata of signification which is to be associatively tied to this foundational bricolage of blocks of light/dark and shape/sound and can be manipulated more sensitively within the video rhetoric. For the circle-archetype, in being propre to *every* religious universe, is, ironically, too generalizable - its appropriability makes it inappropriable. It can be used to evoke the tenor of a debate, inform the context, but not shape what is to be discussed, it wholly 're-marks' itself, and can take on no new determination. Harrison's choice of semiotic vehicle is the food/wine motif - an easily accessible marker which brings with it, and always, as in this restaurant, demonstrates its relation to, the cyclic but which can be ambiguated and redetermined, by 'pleasure', 'fulfilment' vs 'deprivation', 'denial' and 'hedonism' (if we follow Harrison/Khayyam's reasoning) vs 'desire' (if this impulse is deferred, negated, as by heavens).

This theme is introduced relatively early in the sequence, then (00.12), with the shot of the restaurant table. The two (empty) wine glasses symbolically present the argument of the video; the right hand glass upturned, rejecting 'pleasure' now - alluding to Muslim abstention, the left reversed, receptive to the procured wine, participating, negating the other's passivity - they are endlessly co-defining. This compositional dialectic is enhanced by anaphoric reference to the opening frame (the two lanterns (00.01)), provoking its triggered associations of the materiality and the ideal whilst demonstrating the everyday reality these choices create. To strengthen the narrative's link with the everyday, a shot of a dining couple (00.08) separates the two directly semiotic sequences, tying the argument firmly to the would-be 'secular' world, then re-presenting the same reality as constrained by implicit religious/moral factors. The 'naturalness' of a dining (Muslim?) couple becomes undercut by the rest of the video; religious fundamentalism is shown to encircle the couple's world, circling from its publicised *literary* campaign to all elements (the architectural, the historical, the personal) of life, threatening the acceptability of a couple eating at a restaurant situated in a former church, named after Omar Khayyam, serving wine. The 'everyday', the 'family life' cited as the base-unit of the moral majority is already questioned, *their* foundation brought to light in the same movement as their (destructive) effect upon it. Which is why it is important this sequence is in the opening seconds; to install the 'ordinary' before it is decontextualized and redecontextualised. The audience enters the text at this level, then as *this* text-world is transformed by the video's Other - the 'same' world appropriated by fundamentalism, *re-appropriated* by Harrison's antifundamental worldview, directly, dialogically opposed to that of many of the viewers' - they feel as well as see the transformation. Harrison is the speaking subject of the text, but to understand his world it is necessary first to place the viewer in a contiguous world,

where he/she is the *active* subject, and show them the consequences of their present, passive participation.

This division is emphasized via the deictic split between voice and point-of-view. The primary identification continues with its videoic gesturality, the circular motif enacted both underlying the concrete imagery and demonstrating a distancing effect, placing the discourse outside a current speech act; making Harrison an actor, part, with the viewers-as-participants, of the historical chain he invokes.

Such non-documentary videoic practice, with which Harrison has already deconstructed the generically documentary series *In Loving Memory*, creates deictic ambiguity; when the text voice speaks of 'the poet / Who loves this life' (line 12, 00.48), the camera is scanning Harrison's back, signifying anonymity - type, not token, but also, in the gap this creates in the documentary structure, strengthening subconscious links in the following video between Khayyam and himself, momentarily deictically positioning *him* as the invoked 'poet', linking past and the present of the camera eye's circling. 'Poet' has a referent for the audience members who have not heard of Khayyam, those in most danger of choosing non-participation because unfamiliar with the scope of Harrison's argument, so the literary allusion does not distance them, 'turn them off', but involves them in 'human interest': the 'poet' 'loves THIS life, however fleeting' (Emphasis from published version).

By this divided subject technique, the viewer effectively retains the decoding control, attributing referentiality where necessary to make sense of the narrative (this is the 'shortest/easiest interpretative strategy' basic to reception[3]). This videoic technique will be essential to the video proper, so here we learn its language; later, Harrison's voice will divide between his 'own' - the one that makes statements for which he 'signs' visually and in print - and those 'given' to the blasphemers, attributing im-propre ideas to them in a literal mimesis of their literary blasphemy.

This ambiguity is necessary, as it enables a receptive comprehension via audience members unused to literary analogy as argument and also completes the structural symbolism of the lifecycle motif, giving a 'present' to become absent from, with the introduction of *'fleeting* life' - the flickering candle comes into shot at this juncture, connoting the cumulation of light/dark, presence/absence archetypes so far coined, and providing a concrete denotation of the span of the realization of 'THIS life' - a marker of the limits of this hypothesized *reality*, whilst participating in its wider *symbolic* function.

Similarly, a filled wine glass is always in shot when Omar Khayyam is named, subliminally associating his philosophy with the *performance* of a concrete act. This denotative pairing works beyond the surface level of symbol. It is its very temporality

- the *act* of living - which distinguishes the specific hedonism here, pleasure in the process of *becoming* (the dining table has signalled the *beginning* of the meal), desire being fulfilled in the *drinking* of the wine. The immensity of the concept, the 'offering' of life as this *achieving* of pleasure, against fundamentalism's deferral of it, is focused in this minute tokenism, accessible to a larger audience and foregrounding it for them, renewing (their) selfconsciousness of the act of obtaining pleasure:

> Omar Khayyam, who also loved his wine and had no care
> for those cascade-crammed castles in the air
> the Koran promises to those who sacrifice
> 'this fleeting life' for afterlife up there.   (ll.9-12)

The distancing, critically (as subject of a documentary), although not receptively (in the documentary as 'entertainment') of enjoying is not performed because it is intrinsically pleasurable (though this is the ostensive function of the act, signalled via the shot of the *un*selfconscious dining couple (00.08)) but because the 'loving' pursuit of pleasure has become an ideological stance which is threatened or marginalised by the 'Rushdie affair', and alignment with it can only be signalled via first citing, framing, *then* enacting its processes - hence the overtly melancholy timbre of the speech act:

> 'And I'll propose a toast to Salman Rushdie
> And all those, then or now, damned by some priest'.   (ll.19-20)

The ambiguous layering of the Speaker underlines the actual deferment of pleasure, as the Koran's text world (as presented in the *video's* text world) overtly signals. The static pre-determined nature of the text as poetry is being called upon to re-function as discourse-*becoming*-poetry, exploiting its 'oral' propre-ty in structural mimesis of 'natural' speech (and later in the embedding of the fictive speech acts of speaking 'on behalf of' or 'from the (statue-esque) mouths of'). This removes the immediacy, changes the focus of the event from the *now* the viewer experiences and encodes, to an un-definable past which works towards a moment of fulfilment. The future tense, predictive modality 'I'll' contains the dialogic relationship between ideologies; the metaphoric non-present of the Koran, of the addressee 'gone before', the parallel oral discourse of the 'future', of the addresser 'about to', and the secular poetry of being in the moment of utterance. There now has to be a moment which encodes the choice of the present as *not* the other, which selects among those interpretations, which, in Harrison's arche-gesture, *determines*. Being is defined against what it is not; not simply as desire, but as not *not* desire, so the moment of attainment (for the text speaker), is held, disseminated, in a critical assault against factors which have de-activated his token speech act: this is to be a (video) demonstration of becoming-joy as transcendence of its 'meaning', its message of the everpresence of oppression that

would defer this 'becoming' for ever. 'I *[wi]ll* propose a toast', I will always be between this proposition and its accomplishment, relishing the space of desire.

This affirmation of jouissance is semiotically opened beyond the simple, conventionally affirmative by Harrison's spatial isolation at his solitary table, surrounded by darkness, absence, the 'not' his presence attempts to negate; a return to the fundamental light/dark oppositions of the video, but now the suggested lights of the candles connote temporality, the implicit plunging into darkness of Harrison's *carpe diem* argument, mortality. (This effect also will be cited in the main video, where the dimming of theatre lights again denotes death as *non*-being.) The 'meaningfulness' connoted by the artificiality of the setting, the heavily spotlit chairs of the other (non-present) blasphemers, contrasts with the documentary 'naturalness' of the corollary shot (00.08) only yards away and nominally (if not practically) in the same 'time'. While ideologically the pursuit of desire is a valid motivation, it is propre-ly unconscious, and once it is actualized as an aim, it becomes further distanced as the *pursuit* of the pursuit of desire: the more aware one becomes of what is sought, the further, critically, the object recedes. This point of view is to be discussed by the videotext, as the conditions which enable religious fundamentalism to exist are, inevitably, deliberately *un*selfconsciousness; in not examining what belief entails it is possible to live closely with what is felt to be 'true', so this becomes the truth in so far as it forms the basis of all apprehended reality. Philosophically such interested truth can be demonstrated to be 'flawed', self-contradictory, even within its own terms. This demonstration, of the self-contradictory in fundamentalism, will be the project of the main video, as the parallel demonstration for hedonism has been performed here. However, as here, Harrison continually faces this deconstructive problem: in attempting to reach wide audience groups he first needs to convince perhaps the majority of his target audience that the metaphysical and political 'flaws' exist, that is, that there are many realities beyond theirs, yet that theirs deliberately limits all they can see, to a perhaps fatal extent. The consequent exclusion-from-perception is, arguably, deliberate for Harrison as much as for fundamentalists, and so he cannot address the problem by foisting his limited worldview on the viewer in place of the viewer's own. Rather, he must make the viewer realise his/her position in *choosing* to *not* see, and at least therefore be conscious of his (Harrison's) argument, encoding it as Other. Facing the limits and interestedness of his own worldview initially presents it as being not an 'answer' (unlike the presentations of the fundamental religions to be discussed) - it is not what is being 'promoted' in this promo - but one of a number of conceptual frames of life, and if it demonstrates that there are a number of such conceptions *and* that they must all be subject to the same deconstruction, it in part breaks down the stability of the worldview in the viewer that causes the difficulties he is attempting to address.

This is signalled by Harrison's gesturality at the end of these initial lines (01.35), his slumped body and downward gaze underlining his isolation, his inevitably inwardness, enacting the philosophical defeat of his argument. Pragmatically, as the only hearer of his toast was himself, perhaps Harrison the actor prefigures the futility of Harrison the poet's attempt at communication, marking it as an incommunicable internal dialogue, the silence of his 'Banquet' paying testimony to the success of those he seeks in vain to convert. This is perhaps the most explicit admission in Harrison's oeuvre of what is meant by the autonomy of the voices he characteristically invites into his work *as* 'others'; that they enact their independence from him *in the (linguistic) laws of their own ideological world*, not his, propre-ly, that in bringing with them their restricted context (as his father brought orality to "*from* The School of Eloquence", and the 'women' brought nonphallocentric discourse to his designedly determined *Medea*) they never leave it for his liberal one. Rushdie, bound inside the legality of another use of language, is not 'free' to attend, and the viewers to whom the discourse is ultimately aimed are also symbolically excluded at this point, separated from the 'event', perhaps finally; here the prologue ends, with a fade into darkness (01.36), an enactment of withdrawal as the video text re-locates itself generically via its title sequence, and the audience-members who have only been 'caught' accidentally by the text, change channels, as the discourse situation is abandoned, the 'gaze' lifted.

7.2 BEING DETERMINED: ASSIMILATION WITHOUT APPROPRIATION

The Blasphemers' Banquet, then, is concerned with questions of perception, identification and representation, with how they constrain and can be escaped. Most literally of all Harrison's texts, it invites other voices in, to 'speak for' different modes of perception and constraint. Where his 'proper' poetry, the sonnets "*from* The School of Eloquence" attempted to include Harrison's 'ineloquent' forbears, and in doing so led not to any reconciliation with them, but rather to an admission of *division* in the poet (to be articulated in the skinhead 'alter ego' of "*v.*"), and his ideologically 'determined' drama 'failed' by demonstrating the structural freedom from determination of the voices (of Caleb's dissent, Medea's femininity) *it* sought to involve, this dramatised television poem explicitly faces the other-ness of found voices, in a stated project of demonstrating the moral and philosophical-linguistic superiority of his 'own' voice over them. To do this, he must assimilate into his text, without appropriating into his language the other belief-systems' denotational givens, so that they can be shown for what he believes they are. However, what is singular about the televisual medium, is that these givens, as verite footage, 'found' images from other videos, are ostensibly free from *this* video's ideological structuration, their propre interpretative context is the same as its own. Harrison's inclusion of them is thus his greatest risk of losing

'control' over them; needing no structural or stylistic 'translation' to enter (his) video, only his framing of them can effect the rereading of their propre message. An investigation of his use of these 'found' voices, then, is not this time of their transformation, but of how their *re-positioning* within a destabilizing syntagmatic ordering functions in the implied communicative scope of the video, and whether *this* degree of control is as constraining as that which it criticises in them..

The citations here, then are 'documentary' television more propre-ly than is *The Blasphemers' Banquet* itself. While Harrison's program, following his *In Loving Memory* series, foregoes the will-to-truth propre to the genre in favour of a fictional/poetic celebration of its polyphonic possibilities, these extracts, from news and other designedly nonfictional sources, bring with them their 'original' truth-value. Their motive of production is outside the political/ideological scope of this new or secondary placing, and they stand to inscribe this independence even when, removed from their original diegetic structure, they take on meaning from their placement in this post-documentary, fresh (montage) context.

This problem is made apparent in the first 'documentary' sequence. As all videoic representation carries a strong connotative sense in that it is pragmatically oriented towards hypothetical target audiences, parent genre etc., then in reusing the sequence in an antagonistic context, the 'original' connotations are made manifest, what was contextually implicit, is made explicit via the (videoic) syntagmatic difference, with each diverse extract signifying first towards a non-present object (audience, diegetic governance, political manifesto etc.), and *then* in the new postdocumentary frame, marking its deferral, the differance involved in *re*(use) The loss/separation of the signified is made doubly apparent. This first 'documentary' sequence, of Salman Rushdie (1.50), paradoxically marks the *absence* of the text-speaker, that is, Harrison appropriates the 'original' message of his selected documentary, that Rushdie is elsewhere, inaccessible. Rushdie's non-presence having been already established in the prologue, we see him, disembodied, speak on a television, in a news interview experienced as it would originally have been experienced. The denotational message,

'...and frankly, I wish I'd written a more critical book!'

is undercut, as the estrangement between viewer and image is underscored, the secondary identification with the camera eye/I is foregrounded (doubly, a camera is watching television, where a camera is 'facing' Rushdie). Documentary here functions as 'unmarked' text, but eschews the pretence of realism, of 'being there'[4], and not only structurally, but historically; speaking to Rushdie at this time is a common impossibility. Objectivity is enforced, the pretence of a dialogic relationship conventionally engendered by the news format (open ended discourse directed at the

audience as interviewee answers questions directly to the unseen Hearer via the interviewer), is denied. The *illusion* of primary identification is revealed -

> The filmic signifier is an imaginary one because perception in the cinema always involves between spectator and image the presence of a third term which is hidden: the camera. It is the repression of this absence and deferment of the act of perception that turns the subject-object relation into an imaginary one[5].

The presence/mediation/intervention of the camera and TVscreen being manifest fetishizes the apparatus of representation, evoking the connotation of the original productive and receptive contexts (iterating the Ur-text's *iterability* in running a video of it 'on TV'), but re-catagorizing this original experience of the text-as-news as 'deferment' of image/subject representation, and of each viewer's collaboration in this. So, two layers of pretence are disclaimed at the outset of the video/film proper, semiotically signalling that this will be a renewing of consciousness in perception, a re-evaluating of the familiar by viewing the processes, structures of information, representation and presentation of viewing, as a model of the (conventionally invisible, unquestioned) constraints on perception operated by belief-systems. The video's own sequence must be laid open to perception if its 'argument' is to succeed, or be any more morally 'valid' than the propagandic structures it deconstructs and, in the schedules as much as philosophically, seeks to replace; it must be non-theological, non-phallocentric, but reveal its signifying structures as open to the spectator if the critical practice of *exchange* is to be actualised as the object rather than that of *information*.

The foregrounding of the non-presence of the subject creates audience awareness of the different time deixes, temporalities with propre/conventional associations, present in the video. I will call them:

T_0 - the 'real time' locus, as created by the secondary identification with Harrison as 'narrator'; the stasis of locale in the opening sequence provides a basis from which to judge the different temporalities.

T_1 - the 'on location' sequences involving Harrison as 'actor' denoting a present anterior to the prologue (T_0), but informing it anaphorically, making it for the viewer a retrospective on this specific intertext as 'already seen'.

T_2 - 'free time' 'documentary sequences' (distinguished from each other by ordinals, 1, 2, etc.), marked as spatiotemporally anterior to the video's presents (T_0&$_1$) as 'found' montage; having a 'lost' context, and so deictic Otherness.

T_3 - potentially a fictional time space, created parallel with the documentary sequences, to demonstrate the *subjectivity* of the 'real world' events; the Moliere/Voltaire/Byron sequences, whose 'characters' function ahistorically as fictional realizations or textual creations and so are produced for their current context, yet rely on physical presence in the 'lifeworld' of the past the video is unable to deal with. So, as floating, transcendental signifiers they serve to unite all disparate strands of the video sequence.

As each documentary segment re-appears, it re-cites itself, travelling back in perceived time locus, becoming meta-textual, so this initial use of the 'free time' (T_2) Rushdie sequence ('documentary sequence', Doc, 1) is reflexively placed by its subsequent re-appearance: $T_2(T_2)$Doc1. This embedding system becomes necessary to locate the rapid intertextual (re)citing in the final montage sequence.

The emphasis on deferment is heightened in frame [1.50] of Doc 1; Rushdie's television interview is contextualised by 'real-world' distractions - the noise of heavy traffic and a window in the background providing an index to a 'naturalistic' viewing context in which the camera focuses on the TV, as viewer. This displaces, disorients, the actual viewer as the typical viewing situation being mimicked is defamiliarized by the foregrounding of the conventionally subconscious presence of 'background'; the 'unthinking' camera eye merges the actual and the cognitive boundaries of 'viewing', going outside the conventional frame being operated by the 'cited' camera, signalling its 'unseen' or 'unshown'. The 'limited' enclosing of the subject within an ideological boundary, characteristic of news-camera technique, is reflexively commented on; going 'beyond' conventional limits and letting in uncontrolled elements, the cit*ing* camera uses the overabundance of information, the superfluity of context, to alert the viewer to its interested limitation or purposive exclusion in conventional presentation. It takes the camera itself to show its propre structural processes - a (spoken-language) narrator can only comment *within* the structure they provide; Harrison is never able to fully demonstrate primary identification, as his presence creates secondary identification. Here the camera demonstrates that the viewer sees what it selects, not only by demonstrating interior absences, but also by indicating a fresh set of boundaries (the camera cannot, and does not attempt to show all the literal context of the shot, instead presenting the tunnel-vision effect of a hypothetical viewer). The viewer does not know where this new viewing context is, and is therefore only aware of the viewing Other.

The speaker of the embedded text (Rushdie) is no longer simply projecting his view, as in the original interview context. His displacement and isolation is connoted more 'seriously'; the theocratic structure of 'presence' via (televised) speech is broken down and Rushdie's is marked as one utterance amongst others. The original metaphoric 'enclosure' of the speaking subject, stressing his confinement now serves to demonstrate his 'loss of contact' with the outside world - Rushdie's comment becomes evermore 'inappropriate' to, undirected towards, a 'reality' triggered by his fictional creation. At the catalytic moment, both functions are catapulted apart and cease to have any point of contact or shared reference.

7.2.1 DIVIDING THE AUDIENCE

So, what are the propre audience responses to this piece of verite/news footage, which generically connotes 'factual', pseudo-unbiased stance, 'uncoloured'[6] showing of the basic 'texts' of the Rushdie affair? The defiant semantic content encapsulates his (then, T_2Doc1,) unrepentant stance, and can serve as an index of the video's textualization of Rushdie, (indeed it will be that textualisation - the entire video contains only this one video-ideogram to substantiate *its* entire moral/religious/philosophical stance's appropriation to the 'Rushdie affair'). This cited 'stance', propre to (then-)Rushdie, appropriated by Harrison, will instantly evoke partisan stances in the divided viewing audience, though the connotations of context will be differently perceived. A 'pro-Rushdie' viewer will be more prone to secondary identification, empathetically absorbing the message, and subconsciously adding 'approval' to the news context's rhetorical, discursive familiarity and reason, its (his/her) hierarchical indices of 'superior' debating powers (superior to, for example, the following 'dis-order-ly documentary images of fundamentalism). An anti-Rushdie audience might, in view of the death threat, be more inclined towards primary identification, aware of the intervention of the camera between the message sender and the receiver (themselves), of the disassociative deferment *of* Rushdie. For both viewers, the inclusion of the T.V. set in the frame acts as reminder of the 'freedom of the press'/Western news bias undecideable (decided, in practice, differently by each) of the greater freedom of access to the media of Rushdie over the Muslims.

This three second byte is followed by another documentary news section; Muslim protesters' Bradford book burning (from [1.53] to [1.58] (Doc. 2))- the other half of the dialectic presented within its 'own' context (although always appropriated by the 'fact' of TV/video structuration). The video's argument presents its parameters 'within' the antagonists' chosen milieu, not paraphrasing nor artificially staging them; by the assemblage of documentary footage of each speaker's chosen arena of utterance/action it presents a 'view' (in its re-appropriated language of visual metaphor) of their 'views'.

The defiance of Rushdie's *utterance* is matched with the Muslims' militant *action*, then. The central image or denotation is the burning book, *semiotic* answer to Rushdie's blasphemy, not pure signification; the context moves attention away from the central signifier, as the sky fills with flying pieces of charred paper and the background noise of jeering overwhelms selective perception/cognition. The rowdiness and disorder, juxtaposed with the propre (to the 'reasonableness of the liberal *media* debate) structural order of Doc1, jars the viewer out of secondary identification. The editing emphasises this non-naturalistic, disseminatory reading of the network of signs,

imposing a vertical axis by structurally uniting the stick holding the burning book [1.53] and the placard at [1.54] reading 'Rushdie must be killed', then re-iterating the stick of [1.53] (at [1.56]) with its 'original', less architectural, angle. This 'shot' evidently precedes [1.53] in the *action*, but the first perception is of the imposed time-sequence propre to *narrative*, so that in this re-citation, it is this narrative-ness that is highlighted: the book here is less charred, changing the denotative emphasis, in a caught moment of news-control 'back' from 'burning' to 'book'. A disembodied gesturing arm re-states the vertical semiotic, its pointing finger making a human parallel with the icon of the previous shot. Significantly, this three-phase assemblage follows a triumvirate of representation; purely iconic (the burning book), symbolic (the placard's linguistic function), gestural (the personal/human enactment of the dispute, and of 'right'). These three phases allow for a wider comprehension within a disparate target audience.

The purely iconic demonstrates the violence of the outrage felt by the Muslims, *received* as outrage by viewers who feel it connotes Nazi bookburning's threat to intellectual freedom. This shot cannot fail to signify, whether it evokes anger via secondary identification, or anger at the chaos and destruction. The 'disintegration' of the book has a similarly ambiguous metaphoric materiality; the 'removal of evil' (dissolution of the image as positive 'blacking out' of its contents, flying charred remnants of its effaced pages as a return to purity via purging-by-flames) or the 'negation of freedom', 'sacrificed to illiteracy'. The representation of the process pragmatically divides point-of-view, creating the dialectic which is then verbalized in [1.54]. The typographical manifestation of the argument in English exists as a statement of intention - 'Rushdie must be killed' - but also reveals the ostensive manifest communicative intention to persuade a non-Muslim audience. Utterance re-states the placard's written message - 'Kill the bastard!' - the perlocutionary force is heightened, as the imperative of the placard has been mediated via the modality of 'must' from active to passive, producing an a-temporal statement contextually energized by the shortened, 'active' reiteration, with its substitution of Subject from 'Rushdie' to 'the bastard'. The message is initially comprehended minus the violent intensifier, so preventing a reactive dismissal of the denoted content:

Message

sign   utterance

(S)   (u=f(S))

The violence is 'legalized' as a transformation of an already encoded structure. The final phase links the preceding text-speaker to a human form, utterance becomes

enunciation, and the fragmented shot structure indicates we are yet seeing an 'aspect' of the whole, a community that is being spoken for.

The video has opened with a traditional dialectic structure, thesis and antithesis, enabling then alerting viewer identification, but not positing an external gloss on the narratorial/documentary structure beyond that of 'here is inherent bias' implied in its deconstructive nature. It is in the ensuing synthesis that *The Blasphemers' Banquet* destabalizes the implicit 'reality' which has underpinned the notion of the documentary, or video verite, common to any viewer who has heard his or her 'voice' spoken by one or the other sequence.

7.3 OR A VOICE IN AN ABYSS: VOLTAIRE AS TEXT SPEAKER

The rupture is introduced at [1.58], with the close-up of the marble bust of Voltaire, a symbolic placement that moves the video into the realm of Art, shifting the time deixis from T_2 to T_3. The stationary bust and the tranquil greenish light playing over it emphasizes, yet distances the continuing hubub of the protest as the Rushdie-TV set had its context, again discussing perception; the centring of Voltaire's right eye mid-frame posits him as voyeur, situated with the viewer him/herself, watching the 'action', *and* as subject/object of the discourse. Conventionally, does utterance attach itself to Rushdie, now offscreen, or, when the hidden speakers cry 'Burn him / burn the bastard / burn him to death!' do they now (textually) speak of Voltaire? This is a reiteration of the ambiguated object of the promo, Harrison/Khayyam, of the 'blasphemous' tradition that established, now given two more (co)references.

This technique, in opening the ambiguity or interchangeability of referents, severs the anger from its object, and we are left with the drive of desire carried not into TV's rationalism but the autonomous realm of the artefact, the appraising situation that forces locutions away from literal truth. The pleonistic irony of the Muslim taunts ('Burn him to death') are shown to be irrational by the de-contextualized juxtaposition of image and sound; the marble bust connotes indestructibility, as of the text (of *The Satanic Verses*) irreducible to the 'book'. This timeless, immutable order is re-enforced by the green semiotic's emotive overtones of otherworldly calm, bringing into relief as rhetoric the disordered violence and half-articulated anger of taunts which would be more readily accepted as serious in propre context.

Yet this dialectic also serves to re-emphasize the denotational element of Voltaire's bust; 'he' re-vives [re-lives] *his* propre context in this violence, the one the spoken text claims but modern connotations leave behind:

> 'I too heard bigots rant, rave and revile books of mine'   (line 21).

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The operation of history leaves Voltaire canonized, 'fossilized' in the Academie Francais, but to evoke the relevance of Voltaire as blasphemer, past violence has to be re-enacted. The dual temporality enables the 'present' Voltaire, confirmed - by the history which has removed him from this violent context - in the validity of his Art, to ironically comment on the conditions from which Art arose and is arising.

As the camera pulls away, the main body of the *poem* begins, significantly speaking in the ambiguous T3 deixis, leaving the overtly documentary sequences to signify via montage rather than directed Harrison-narratorial commentary:

> When I see bigots wanting Rushdie dead
> burning a book I'm sure they've never read,   (ll.17-18).

The 'I' of the opening is made to signify Harrison/Voltaire, a new combinatorial floating subject reacting for the 'body' of the blasphemer(s), to the unrest each has manifestly witnessed. The green lights' semiotic connotation turns gradually into physical denotation; as the sound of jeering fades, the light clarifies as projected images of the Bradford protest, replicates the Harrison/Voltaire dialogism via alternate syntagma[7]; the Bradford protest becomes intercut with images of Voltaire, the intertextuality of the significations semiotically foregrounded, demonstrating the role of *co*text in perception as well as providing an index for the blasphemy 'stored' in Voltaire's head, response to this ignorance.

The change of Speaker from Harrison, to Harrison/Voltaire is centred in the deictic ambiguity of the line:

> 'Marbled bust or not Voltaire's got stored a much more
> Critical book in this old head'.   (ll. 19-20)

The videoic convention of assigning utterance to image has initially connoted Voltaire thinking aloud, though the voice is identifiably Harrison's, the *literal* whole text speaker, as this second couplet of the stanza demonstrates. This violation of the norms of utterance/speaker connections, crucial as I have shown to both *taking* and *sharing* of responsibility for (blasphemous) texts by those who rearticulate them, creates a sustained, non-phallocentric duality. And it disseminates the 'negative' consequences of this 'sharing' of language on a meta-level, positing the idea that all (video/postmodern-fictional) images are textualizations in that they are 'given' im-propre significations, and so enunciation, 'responsibility' in the theocentric sense, is irrelevant - 'marbled bust or not' the work collected under 'Voltaire' coalesces around this signification, Harrison's textualization. The utterance, not being 'directly' attributed, is shown to be an ambiguous concretization of various denotative and connotative elements.

Pragmatically speaking, the proper name, 'Voltaire's got stored', points to an external narrator, though colloquially it is a possible *self*-reference in the context of a slang interpretation of 'this old head'. Conversely, the next stanza's 'revile[d]/books of mine [...] canonized as classics' could reverse *its* conventional attribution: Voltaire claims precedence as text-I and as literary 'superior', but Harrison himself, controversial author of "*v.*", could propre-ly claim the utterance. This sublation marks the discourse as genuinely dialogic, more-or-less explicit blasphemy interchanging the writers as united text-speaker(s); the continuity of events re-creates us/them dialectics which are shown to supersede *historical* contexts and become inherent, as the video itself demonstrates.

Retrospectively the text claims Voltaire as transcendent voice of blasphemy, then, by the proper name and *external* apprehension of him which denotes Harrison as its extrinsic speaker:

> I too heard bigots rant, rave and revile
> books of mine which, after a short while
> were canonised as classics, which is why
> you always see Voltaire with this wry smile. (ll. 21-24)

The shared discourse assumes an unmarked polyphony, relating a 'personal' illustrative anecdote of the destructive/purging consequences so far alluded to, in an Aristotelian dramatic narrative structure that is universal, unoccupiable, like the stage of *Mahomet* or *Medea*, by its poet(s):

> A boy from Abbeville for having sung
> a mildly blasphemous ballad had his tongue
> ripped from its roots, and on his blazing body
> my *Philosophical Dictionary* was flung. (ll.25-28)

This variety of styles allows the disparate audience to capture the videoic significance: the viewer unaware of who Voltaire is-was can construct a textualization of him from the narrative, taking the 'I' as indicator of object/subject identification and the ambiguous 'self-naming' sequence as identifying both character and speaker, recalling oral tradition's speaker introducing himself with the narrative in which he consciously embeds himself, creating in effect an 'impersonal' personal narrative designed to be taken over by the next story teller. This convention, typical of all oral societies including Islam, also evokes significance for a literary one, as it is a functioning aspect of folktale enfolded into literary genres, ('Call me Ishmael.', etc.)

The divided-subject motif is echoed semiotically via a Lacanian duality of image [2.17] - the bust of Voltaire is reflected in a mirror. This 'reflection', in a further enlivening of language's metaphoricity by real images, mirrors both self and event, I and Other, so the 'When I see...' becomes multivalent; we 'see', as viewers, what Voltaire 'sees', first ostensibly as documentary, then as subjective representation, the secondary

identification with his 'I', *and* we 'see' him, from the other's 'position' (primary-identified with the camera eye), in his literary-historical, fossilized 'position'. This makes the process and interested subjectivity of mediation in representation apparent, the final symbolic-unconscious cognition of the scene, the signifier Voltaire watching the event reflected in a mirror on the image of his own head, marking the infinite removal of signified from event. The communication time (C_T) is lost, the subject of the argument becomes centred around modes of representation, individual textualizations of events. As Voltaire's 'seeing' is a reduction of present violence to the past, so the viewing audience is to be made aware of their individual readings of this dispute being re-viewed in the light of their processing of past and present events, their accommodation of it within viewing/believing schemata. For meshing Doc2's C_T with the video's ostensive 'present' marks the ahistorical nature of the events' perception, signalling the self-conscious mediation of the narrative, yet the assimilation of events into this (or any) narrative structure is already signalling an appropriation within a 'pre-conception': the documentary fragments serve as isolated markers of extrinsic subjectivity or the subjectivity of the Other, to be selfconsciously de/re-constructed by the video process, and the viewers that actualize the performance.

The displaced point of view, if it is to serve a distancing function and remove the particularity of events into an ahistorical flux of forces, needs to invoke an absolute, not relative, political machinery.. In a Foucauldian re-perspectivising, then, Voltaire claim his own post-structural death and semiotic rebirth. The lines:

> Marbled bust or not, Voltaire's got stored a much more
> Critical book in this old head.,

semiotically emphasized by the splicing of the Bradford protest (doc. 2) and the montage overlay, mark the deictic "book's" shift in temporal signification from *The Satanic Verses* to Voltaire's transcendent oeuvre. His personality, demonstrated now as no more than the reflexive personality we conventionally attribute to the author of any book we read, becomes an index for the *im*personality of events, the releasing-into-the-world/language of a text by its 'dead' author. The blasphemous ideas video-metaphorically 'burnt' out of Voltaire's skull, that have formed a link with previous fundamentalists, now, *post* the reference to a Voltaire text that survived fundamentalist purging, shows that *ideas* - texts-proper - defy destruction.

The duality of the structurally 'oral' speaker maintains an urgency in both text worlds, Voltaire's (T_3) and Harrison's, (as narrator, T_0), the visual sub-text emphasizing key words which play on the transcendent, going-forth of non-material Art:

> A boy in Abbeville for having sung
> A mildly blasphemous ballad   (ll. 25-26)

is backed by the close-up of the burning of *The Satanic Verses*, projected on 'Voltaire', making the connection between poet as narrator - the tradition of 'I sing...' - and the contemporary 'speaking subject' of the novel; in each case the 'speaker' is burnt [2.39]. Continuing the semiotic deconstruction of the ostensibly linear narrative, "roots'"

> had his tongue
> ripped from its roots,   (ll. 26-27)

brutal physical image is made metaphor; by a return shot of Voltaire it is connoted as 'origins', the ideas are torn from their originator and destroyed, making the author, literally, speechless, unable to defend himself; the voice of blasphemy silenced in both modern and historical instances. Finally, this entire metaphoric sequence - video both explicating old metaphors and suggesting new ones - subverts its speaker as the textual 'I' is denoted by the images focusing on Voltaire's 'eye' [3.02], making explicit a further layer of Metz's camera eye/I division. The 'I' of the speaker and the subject's 'eye', that 'sees' the interior text world, informing the speaking 'I', come together:

> And I whose books got flung into the blaze
> of Inquisitorial *Auto da Fes*   (ll. 29-30)

The text 'I' precedes a suspended clause, with whose '*am* now a monument' the actual pairing is; the speaker designates himself stone, playing at once on the impossibility of the 'I' (now) seeing and on the convention of the monument as witness-to, totemic watcher of human history. The statue has no 'eye' - only a socket where the viewer/coloured light 'projects' an eye, the imposition of presence, (explicating the metaphoric vehicle of this passage) shown to be common to Harrison, Muslim (intentional-referential) readings of *The Satanic Verses*, and the viewers. The representation of Voltaire-as-speaker is self-created, *we* imply 'presence' then 'flesh it out' with our own pretexts and prejudices. This realization destabilizes perception, the device is laid bare, it is no longer workable. This (self-)revelation is videoically signalled by the vicariously-admonished camera's widening of perspective to reposition Voltaire-as-statue; the whole body of Voltaire's sculpture in the *Comedie Francaise* is surrounded by gold brocade [03.07], wholly appropriated by the overviewer/statue ambiguity. His 'whole', naturalistic presence constitutes him as a person, not the 'body of ideas' connoted via the bust semiotic; once he leaves this commonplace, videoic-metaphoric sphere, he lives and dies as subject, for the person he represents is dead! So the speaker ceases to be able, philosophically and historically to speak in this giving back of the transcendent, blaspheming, dangerously 'alive' (bust-)Voltaire to the conventional, comedic, safely dead (statue-)Voltaire of the *Comedie Francaise*. It is the limit of what can be given to or appropriated from Voltaire that will undermine Harrison's 'blasphemy' project: what, in Derridean terms, is 'remarkable' in the 'mark', 'Voltaire', that is re-cited when the video returns to his statue toward its close. Having

seen how far Voltaire can be ('blasphemously') appropriated, out-of-context, in the next chapter, I shall return to this return, and see how much of that context survives not only the fundamentalists, but Harrison.

The spoken text also ends, having moved creatively from commentary on verité footage, to the blending of genres, documentary made Art, and the original, distinct strands of the Muslim and the 'literary' discourse having been momentarily unified in a dialogic and demonstrative representation, in the textualization of Voltaire. This basic technique is repeated throughout the video, leading audience members into 'literary' or 'symbolic' fields via the 'artificial' in their own fields of experience; the interested blending of art, politics and life is shown to be universal, not only in the universality of what is being discussed, but in the common methods all involved are shown to be operating *already*.

7.4 YOUR SHARE OF THE PREJUDICE: THE METAPHOR OF THEATRE

Cohesion and destabalization continue, as the Voltaire semiotic conceit is 'emptied' by its re-positioning in the 'real-world': (his) meaning diffuses, swooping cameras scan the screen without focusing, suggesting a field without a referent, a context without 'content', the soundtrack reduces to noise, undifferentiated pre-utterance. The audience has been conditioned to perceive this unfocused speech as the preserve of the Muslim community, but in the illimitable deconstruction of (created) prejudice, *this* 'rabble' is shown to be the theatre-going public (T$_2$, Doc3).

In this transition of signifier from one conventional/learned signified, 'Muslim protesters', to another, unexpected one, 'Literati', the loaded nature of the signifying practice is highlighted. The 'educated' chitterchatter is (literally) as 'meaningless' as the incoherent shouting of the Bradford demonstrators. This communication failure is indicated by the presence of Salman Rushdie on a TVscreen in the corner (the one conventionally used to display activity in the auditorium) [03.14], speaking directly to camera, as at [01.50, Doc 1], but soundless amongst the general noise. The literary debate is as 'enclosed' as the counterprotest; its participants demonstrably discuss, yet are incomprehensible outside their inclusive(/exclusive) 'theatre'.

Placed above the crowd, Rushdie is figured as part of the literary-blasphemers' canon; he is spatially linked with Voltaire and Moliere, reduced to a (talking)head, 'toned' yellowish, a modern 'bust'. The video need not press these significations, as they are already part of the syntagmatic structure of the dialogue, it is enough to realise that Rushdie too is seen to have had his 'tongue' silenced by the chattering crowds, he too lives as a textualization - his *book* now represents him, its author, and so *he* is defined, as much for the literati (signalled outside this frame by their philosophical spokesman,

Harrison, using a single, simple, outdated, byte of Rushdie himself in support of their stance) as for the complementary incomprehensible/incomprehending Muslims.

This diegetic symmetry is in turn displaced as the framing 'art', the Voltaire/bookburner Docs critical superimposition becomes itself hard-edged, 'closed' artefact; the interdissolving fade [03.25] becomes intrusive, foregrounding its (computer) means-of-production. The harsh noise of helicopter blades cuts into the genteel hubub of the crush bar, breaking the frame, and the second Muslim documentary sequence (Doc4) begins.

As with Doc1, the videoic givens here are defamiliarized via their contextual presentation; the sound overlap of post-industrial, avant-garde music, interwoven with the helicopter noise, over news-footage that is rapid-cut then almost freeze-frame slow, prevents the audience from achieving identification, so threatens them with its dehumanized, objectifying scrutiny. From the initial overhead sweeping shots of the Iranian desert [03.27], it is difficult to determine the event from which the sequence has been lifted, the helicopter blades/views seeming to denote 'war' in this framing perspective conventionally denoting (Gulf, Iran/Iraq) conflict; this association is enfolded in the Khomeni quote:

> I know that during my long life I have
> always been right about what I said.   [03.32]

This first 'citation' of Khomeni upholds his aggressive militaristic stance, cited in the preceding camera conventions, and his blasphemy edict, yet it also signals the intrinsic instability of the insular structure of such affirmation. The lack of grammatical 'well-formedness' points to a closed, egocentric world-view; what is 'right' is all that Khomeni has said, and all that has been said is right. This is the tautology at the core of fundamentalism, the logical invalidity of solipsism which makes it impenetrable, unstable in argument (which is im-propre to it).

Hence the video's attempt to break the circle by *showing* what cannot be said. If we define ourselves in language, we entrap ourselves in its circularity - as Islam is an oral religion, formed on pre-determined dialogical structures, it cannot be argued without 'entering' its language, which means following a previously trod pathway, to a predestined conclusion. This is the weight brought to *'said'*, at the onscreen quote's end; the edicts, passed down to the Muslim faithful *are* their actions, the two adequate. It remains uncredited for two seconds to allow its impact to be digested without the problematic consequences (for the personal politics of attribution as well as for interpretation) we have seen derive from giving a speaker: semantic content is digested and evaluated before pragmatic response to the *preconceived* religion is

applied. The typographic setting of the propre-ly oral Muslim code also defamiliarizes the edict, making the *fatwa* tangible in a way the spoken word cannot be. This materiality opens it to the same ambiguous status as 'text' as Rushdie's novel; codifying its ideas within a Western philosophical/literary structuralism, whilst at the same time challenging *it* to function orally. This reversal not only tests the ideational nature of each construct beyond its propre structure, but shows how far the opposing argument can be presented in each audience-section's conventional medium.

This *statement* is visually qualified by the re-contextualization of the documentary footage (Doc 4) as, 'in fact', Khomeni's funeral. The unrestrained grief of the Muslim mourners is shown to be frighteningly extreme - the coffin clawed and shoved by the crowd - violence now appropriate to the slashing electronic discordance's that punctuated the cutting, making each fresh perspective a 'jarring' affright to rationality. The 'subject' of the quotation is *indeed* treated - by the crowds - as object; in death Khomeni becomes an 'idol' or fetish, his followers fighting to touch his earthly remains in a talismanic shamanism that subsume the 'logical' bases of Islam in his/its edicts.

The strong military statement of [03.27] is not belied by this revelation, but continued with images of the militia controlling the masses - *1984*-style - with combat helicopters, directing the procession from platforms with loudspeakers, whilst the army spray the parched crowd with water to stave off the midday heat, again negatively connoting 'riot' in this 'news' frame - water cannons, hosing down street brawlers. As with Doc2, there is no sense of Muslim identity beyond the (hysterical) collective, an impersonal homogeneity emphasised by the slowing of the tape [03.56ff], the distortion of the time deictic, which brings a fluid calm we experience as extrinsic to the turmoil, further dehumanizing it as a (ENG-)*computer-generated*, fractile-like construct.

The introduction of the overlaid refrain, 'Oh, I love this fleeting life' furthers the effect of implicit commentary [04.27] and the final aerial shot divorces the original news-context entirely, draining 'actual' colours into a polarizing monochrome; the black of the massed Shiite mourners becomes a constantly re-forming sea, on the wave of which a single white spec - the coffin - rides ceaselessly. The resultant 'timelessness' is enforced, in a *musical* metaphoricity that recalls Harrison's creative passage through opera, by the "song's" Iranian scale, which not only signifies an ancient, indeed lost, origin, but is structurally 'open', as opposed to (comparatively recent) Western goal-oriented scales. Khayyam's words are iterated over an ostensive background of 'disharmony' and yet find a peace within it, the chaos is not removed, but reperspectivized, as the flow of life itself.

4 THE POET'S POSITION IN PARADISE

Harrison's appropriative reiteration - from Khayyam, to whom he has implicitly attributed it 'originally', in the promo (line 8), and from the harmonic *sung* frame - of the video's philosophic refrain as *speech-act* lends him a specious authority as a voice of calm amongst the fury:

> The Koran denounces unbelievers who
> quote 'love this fleeting life' unquote. I do.
> I'm an unbeliever. I love this life.
> I don't believe their paradise is true.   (ll. 33-36)

The offscreen voice (moving the video's time sequence back to T_0) also enacts, in video's propre (and conventional) manner, a theocentricism. As I shall show, this realising of metaphor *beyond the determination of the text essential to Harrison's project* is part, with what is propre to the *subjects* he attempts to assimilate, of the real freedom that undoes his determination of the text. His offscreen presence here, then, places him in the position of God even while he asserts his denial; from here he widens the impact of the video's argument, the implicit 'technic-al' condemnation of Muslim militancy is written into an understanding that life is based on power struggle (in the video's generalising, Foucauldian movement). The 'message' is of hedonism as *beyond* the reflexive appropriation of the (being-rejected *as false belief*) Muslim Paradise. Beyond this equally false 'Paradise-on-earth', Harrison's paradise is a 'loving' embracing, like the video, of '*this* life', *all* life, its (violent) contradictions. However, as I shall discuss in the next chapter, Harrison's assimilation of 'life' into his paradise functions negatively as the video's also; he is attempting to 'project' a life *in effect* already divorced from its propre violence to an audience whose experience of it may be more 'real' than televisual. His *structural* apprehension, like the Muslims' own, of 'reality' is a process of its *deferral*, its distancing.

He uses the propre-ly non-metaphoric documentary text to demonstrate this 'real paradise', by converting it into a 'literal' metaphor; enacting the 'change of perspective' from camera-participant (blending T_0 and T_2 identification), to detached observer, philosophically mirroring T_2 alone. This is then inverted by a shot of Harrison, the deictic metaphor of 'reality', 'presence', now - after the affirmation of *this* life - representing (Harrison's/the viewers') 'presence *to*' reality.

The rejected 'after life' is represented by a fountain, Muslim-conventional symbol reappropriated as video-deictic. The 'Paradise of fountains and green shade' is the complete given visual image, excluding all else in a meditative mantra of 'cleanliness' and purity, loaded metaphors for (indescribable) perfection deconstructed by text and video. The fountain's perfection is Muslim-Paradise *sign vol*, static 'image' which *performs* unchangingness, but the text reappropriates it for earthly paradise, individual

elements in eternal flux; the 'waters full of stars go flowing past', fulfilling the Islam of the fatwa, and yet containing 'impurities'. This is deconstruction as showing the 'perfection' of the actual, making a paradise of it, condemning the obscuration of it in belief and language by those who hope to one day receive an unvarying, uncomplicated, ordered universe free of the 'impurities' they are trying to exclude from language/belief.

Over this visual symbol of life/afterlife, the second (initially uncredited) Khomeni quotation is shown, pragmatically making a contrastive sense of the pure/impure dichotomy:

> These are things which are impure;
>> unbelievers   [5.42]
> --
> urine, excrement, sperm, blood
> dogs, pigs, unbelievers, wine, beer and
> the sweat of the excrement-eating camel   (5.47)
> --
>   Ayatollah Khomeni (5.49)

However, when the full list of the 'impure' is onscreen, the distinction's initial plausibility is lost; the categories range from concrete to abstract/unreal, human to animal, and the bathetic ending spans the whole range, repositioning religious exclusion as propre to the psychologically unstable. This is the Paradise-index's shift, from the philosophical to metaphor to actuality, ideationally realized.   With the completed list, the reading of 'unbelievers' changes from a categorization of ideas to an index to physical presence, from a 'not-believing person' to loaded associative language ('dog', 'pig', as abuse) to 'human non-Muslim'. This makes the Muslim *argument* as morally and physically 'wrong' as the Muslim Paradise-Fountain and real-ises the attempt to 'cleanse' 'impurities', as propre-ly 'racist'.

The function of this quotation in the video is to move Western conceptions of religious differences towards a realization of the entirely different linguistic/referential code used by the Muslims. The preceding spoken text merely discusses the philosophy of the afterlife v. *carpe diem*, a standard 'Western' debate, and while the innate materialism of Paradise is brought out, it is not significantly differentiated from familiar Christian heavens. On seeing this full list of impurities, this 'materialism' is concretized as truly 'non-metaphoric'; 'impurity' is not a marker of religious or philosophical distinction but returned to its literal apprehension of 'dirty'. There is no distinction between the secular and the holy, so 'unclean' is indistinct from 'impure', mental/philosophical 'dirt' is *as contaminating as* 'shit': the religious is 'real' in the Muslim life-world in a way the West cannot linguistically allow for. The pause, before this (to non-Muslims) amazing piece of information is credited, allows the viewer to judge the information itself and

make the pragmatic evaluations about the speaker before having them confirmed or denied. This is necessary as Khomeni's 'popular' textualization is fixed, *his* text would be pre-determined by his received fanaticism/lunatism.

Harrison's allusion in his following, spoken text.

> And, as a *righteous* man

not only gains ironic force from the viewers' response to the 'new' edict, but turns this on the first typographically presented statement [03.32], evoked by their shared author and style of presentation. Khomeni's being 'always right' is judged by his delineation of purity, and this philosophic/psychoanalytic judgement is turned on the political/economic/military decisions the earlier Doc seemed to invoke, as well as on the fatwa, which frames the video itself.

The 'cleansed' fountain/Paradise textualisation of Paradise is made personal to Khomeni, 'living' in *his own* 'fictional' construct, the extreme materialism of its 'literalness' summoned now by the non-metaphoric nature of Islam. It is by the Western standards that are being increasingly invoked (since the 'racism' of Khomeini's edict) a non-righteous Paradise, for Muslim *men* (line 122) only, where women's virginity is the reward system for earthly 'purity':

> [being] served sherbets by chaste virgins...

The Freudian implications of the fountain semiotic are made explicit, as the camera follows the shoot of the fountain from its base upwards, focusing on the jet at the top at line 51, the taking of a virgin visually enacting the 'mastabatory' subtext of Khomeni's version of Paradise, adding a further layer of commentary on the deconstructed axis of 'purity'.

> Chooses some dark-eyed virgin for a bride   (line 51).

Following this 'climax', videoically and textually the base of the fountain, 'down here' replaces symbol with semiotic; 'Earth' is 'dirty', a plastic cup floats in the water still 'full of stars'. The proper fountain is not the 'pure' symbol; the escapist apprehension of its 'purity' was based, literally, in the unclean, a mutual *dependency* - over the 'reality' of mutual presence - Harrison will textually underline.

This polarity is made explicit [06.33] via a floating newspaper in the fountain bowl. Rushdie, on the cover of The Times 'surfaces' in the impure, the 'down here', the earthly. The newspaper headline carries Khomeni's edict: Rushdie is drowning in Khomeni's fountainhead ejaculation, the 'impure' release of the unstable mind that makes Paradise of master/slave sex, and makes non-referential literature referential to the animal physicality propre to its own language.

From this symbolism, (Bradford) reality emerges; refuse collectors scoop the rubbish from the fountain [06.37], demonstrating the 'fleeting' nature of news/life. We see the two extreme stances' effect on the Bradford community, as Asian school girls run across a road drinking pop from a bottle and carrying a department store carrier bag - the reality of East/West integration opposing the Khoran's unreal 'delicate brocades'. In this earthly bustle of intrusive traffic noise and jerky handheld camera technique we see Harrison sat crosslegged on a grass verge by the fountain, speaking direct to camera, as speaking-subject/human. His presence is not deitic but immediate the sound quality is poor, 'live', not a detached voice-over commentary to match Khomeni's edicts with equal structural artifice, but a personal response, a being-in the earthly paradise. The fountain is in-shot, an semiotic unit, iterating both its interpretations' presence in this secular lifeworld. It is centre-screen, but viewed via its periphery, a subliminal contextualising metaphor for the whole debate, following the schoolgirls' *actualité* [06.45], their practicality and 'ignorance', in a type of fade, its deliberate, 'straining for', 'meaning' signalled its awkward axis. Harrison's own piece to-camera, his 'position', is disturbed by occasional spray from the fountain.

In maintaining semiotic cohesion, the self-reflexive implications of Harrison's spoken text,

> *This isn't Paradise*, but the Bradford square
> Where Rushdie's book got burned, just over there   (line 55),

encapsulates for the post-structural debate the floating signifier of the previous segment. Evoking Barthes/Magritte's critique of referentiality, the viewer at once recognises their own involvement in cinematic convention in allowing Paradise to be embedded, or realized through the earthly. The irony is double-edged - for Muslim literality, it is 'not Paradise', even though the text has effectively demonstrated via Islamic strictures that it might as well have been, in so far as the human can conceive of it, and yet literally it *is*, the naming of the square relying on just such a level of unconscious metaphoric transformation. In accepting the ambiguities of reference, the '*literary*' pro-Rushdie/anti-referentiality viewers are likewise confounded, locked in the double-bind of shared signification: the square is not 'Paradise', but is Paradise, its process of naming is a constantly occurring speech act, it *is* the paradise it isn't, the one it refers to, defers. This duality - two double-binds - evokes *The Satanic Verses*' problematics, demonstrating the level and fields of semantic ambiguity English usage admits, and the importance and impossibility of sharing signifying systems as well as signifiers.

7.5   THE GODS OF THEATRE

The non-theocratic nature of theatre makes the individual responsible for their own belief systems. The structure of debate, uncertainty turns the emphasis onto individual judgement, text as questions for the reader to answer reversing religion's demanded obedience and acceptance. This is the poem's alliterative chiasmus of 'piety and prayer'/ 'poetry and plays'. The video continues in T_1, Harrison in the interval crushbar [09.40] among the audience de-mystifies his author-ative privileged position, emphasising the individual, (co-)realizer of the text. Theocentricity is challenged by Harrison placing himself as an *actor*, so making his fellow-'viewers' actors, in his 'drama':

> Theatre, said Hugo, is a place for forming souls
> but the only gods it knows are those up there.

The pun on 'gods' also posits the audience as ultimate text-creators, self-determination extending from denial of all phallocentric structures. This punning cites the earlier evocation of Greek theatre, its 'literal' presence of the Gods overlooking the drama in the original dialogic relationship of Western drama that distinguishes it from Eastern/Islamic didactic theatre in which it remains blasphemy to show 'God'. The post-structural condition is encapsulated in the deictically ambiguous 'this life below', signalling the heaven/earth dichotomy but also the Gods/stage signification. To 'live' is to make no distinction between theatre and 'reality' as equally self-created apprehensions, fragmentations of the subject's identity, set here against Islam's concrete literality, which the fountain-psychoanalysis has suggested is a (doomed) attempt to contain this fragmentary subjectivity.

The relativist stance of the Khayyam refrain:

> We live and die and only time destroys us,

delineates the next sequence, which builds on the metaphoric discourse of origins now denoted by the theatre interior to expand the ambiguities of 'living' and 'dying' in the blending of temporalities. The 'verite' of the theatrical event (Doc 5) is used to project a symbolic re-presentation of this given reality, linking it with the fictionalised reality of T_3. Harrison's 'big "O"', the oblivion-theme of much of his poetry, joins Khayyam's invocation of death as final indicator of equality. Yet both poems tie their practical *carpe diem*, as expressions of transient joy, to transcendence, living-on through Art, as, in-shot, Moliere's cynical blasphemies are self-evidently present to a contemporary audience in a way religion is not, in terms of general belief (Harrison ironically points throughout the video to the decay of the Protestant church in England - religious fortune being apparently cyclical in favour) or in terms of the working through of the fear of eternal 'nothingness'. Since all writing is death, then the writing practice is a fragmentary, self repeating discourse of working towards completion, *living* the moment in which the subject seeks identity in losing it. 'Against' Moliere, Khomeni's

edicts, traditionally *oral* forms, are lost in his death, presented deliberately ina-propre-iately as written text in the video, replaced by the next Ayatollah's, whose presence annihilates the last; just as blasphemy has saved Moliere, so blasphemers, ironically, sustain each other after death in a chain of citation and (in Harrison/Moliere's case *literal*) translation.

This argument is made semiotically explicit by extending the promo's circling metaphor. The first enactment of 'nothingness' is a simple binary opposition [10.01], the theatre wall lights turn down, plunging the theatre (and TV) audience into the awaiting void [10.07], showing art to *live* on presence/absence dichotomies, the presence of death, where Islamic offers of concrete certainties, future 'light', avoid death in a fear psychoanalytically gestured by the 'decay' figured in the list of the 'impure' and the deferral of life itself. The re-enactment of the motif [10.09] is by a spotlight overhung with three silhouetted tassels; the theatre's Moorish image of a full moon and rich tapestries enacts the Victorian/Eastern plurality of the Alhambra, the richness of cultural cross-fertilization possible *before* fundamentalism. The uniting then separating (in the name of fundamentalist purity) of the two denoted types of light, West and East, are underlined by the text's insistence on the finality of death for *all*:

> Poets and priests, queens and Ayatollahs,
> not only infidels, but fundamentalists
> whether in black turban or dog collars. (line 44)

The fading of the first light to a glowing bulb, origins, essence [10.66] source deprives the light of distinctiveness, personality, returning it into whiteness, a pure 'O' making concrete the speaker's 'big "O" of nothingness', demonstrating pure absence. The second light [10.09] is experienced originally as pictogram, but again, the camera pulls away from the lightsource and the lamp loses definition, the tassels 'disappear', the viewer experiences a sense of withdrawal, loss - death enacted as a receding from the light, the eyes 'losing' their sense-perception of the world in an inverted birth-trauma. The vacuum ends with a re-focusing on the spot light so we briefly reprieve the object, the initial moon-symbol renewed as the semi-circular shade creates a new crescent moon, a fresh beginning making death a point on life's (natur-al) cycle.

Having implanted this psychoanalytic life-light pairing, the video re-translates the concept into the T_3 metaphoric time-deictic, enabling Moliere's 'annihilation' to be apprehended in a more personal sense, and supra-structurally, to shed 'new light' on Rushdie's death threat; Moliere's blasphemer's burial is re-enacted, his bust, as altar, illuminated by a cluster of (electric) candles, is cast into shadow [10.42] at the spoken text's narrative allusion to the *absence* of religious sanction:

> No priest heard him swear
> That he abjured the stage   (line 100)

Here the agentive cause of his ignominious burial is stressed; the priest is seen as tyrannical arbiter of life, the absence of his absolving speech-act a religious structure of judgement over the individual, an untenable, de-personalising position paralleled with Khomeni's power to 're-interpret' the Islamic faith. It is belief systems' abuse *as power* that the video is condemning, a human interpretation commensurate with Harrison's atheism, and maintained in the delayed sentence-subject, suggesting *personal* reminiscence (of a 'presence' being, in the form of his statue, semiotically wiped from the screen) and *its* power to call up in the sign the physically absent:

> , this Moliere
> was buried without candles at the dead of night   (ll. 100-101)

Only the 'altar' candles remain, signalling the 'triumph' of religious dogma before, fading until they are balls of light which extinguish, they shift their connotation to the light/dark motifs of the 'big O' Moliere has transcended along with the religious institution that totemised the candles. As we live his death vicariously, so we share in his transcendence.

This symbol finally extends to the whole structure of Art; all the theatre spotlights and sidelights are isolated in a dark theatre auditorium like a night sky full of dying constellations, their fading (citing a flickering-light motif convention disseminated by Amnesty International's candle) representing the many that suffer under extremism. Now that the semiotic is replete, refilled with a secular determination the promo could not oppose to its powerful convention/tradition of appropriation by the religious, out of the darkness of 'death' the phrase which opened this segment is similarly filled, and is '*sung*', in an Eastern mode:

> We live and die, and only time destroys us.

Death intensifies life or mars it with daily decay; the opposing philosophies 'agree', in-living-we-die, but whether this is a process of enablement or destruction is for the individual to decide, a theme the video will return to.

It is in this melancholic mood that the singing returns, over images of a decaying graveyard slipping down its hill[8], and out into the city spread below, a sort of eerie, videoic transcendence, as though the hedonistic, life-embracing spirit of the buried comedian, Charles Rice is joined with Khayyam, and returning to the city; out of the blur of buildings the here-and-now hedonism of the Omar Khayyam restaurant is picked out and focused-in on. In the camera's (technologically in-appropriate, un-conventional) long focus, a shimmering graininess of image-texture is created, the old church/restaurant looks ethereal, timeless, there is a sort of translucency that indexes it as indefinable, belonging to past and present equally. A fresh shot [14.40] brings the

name into sharp focus as the singer echoes 'Omar Khayyam', marking the vel more clearly as the pristine modernity of the plastic sign seems not to refer to the Eastern mysticism of the song lyric, the author of the rubai.

Out of this ethos of shared temporality, the video segues the sung 'Omar' into a Presbyterian preacher's semi-liturgical 'Oh..', almost as if *all* the ghosts are (re)joined in one mantra. The 'found'[9] voice of the preacher adds a new gloss to the church's present 'incarnation'; the 'practical influence' of Christ, which once guided the souls of the congregation, is deconstructed by the day-to-day 'practicality' of offering material sustenance - 'good' as community and neighbourliness bringing together diverse cultures to 'break bread', prejudice transcended.

7.6 THE FOOD-IDIOLECT OF RELIGION AND HEDONISM

The spoken text continues this ambiguous temporality by first naming the church/restaurant as 'St. Andrews', appropriating it within a historical continuum, identifying the *signifier* as stable, although the context of perception of the signified has altered throughout the ages. Hence it now (within the T_0, *present*, time zone)

Nourishes Bradford under a new *sign*,

referring anaphorically to [15.03] where we see 'Omar Khayyam'; the new sign is a new 'sign', an overt code-change signalling an internal transition. This is re-enforced by the accompanying video image: inside the church-restaurant, we are shown a close-up of a man drinking 'wine', Harrison's 'new sign' in the promo. The literal and metaphoric signifying systems, identified earlier (in the 'not Paradise' double binds, see [6.55]ff, above) as separating communities, blend. The fresh signification overlays the old, the speaker's alliterative chiming introduces a new liturgy of pleasure; 'beer and Bombay biriani' rhetorically 'ousts Bible bombast' the textual performative countered with an imagistic taste of the new (Hell)fire - the chef dramatically frying onions in a flaming pan.

Yet their experiencing of the brevity of life unites diners and congregation. Churches have always been use to symbolise, to contain this experience, the change is in how the local population perform this containment, where and how they appropriate this fleeting life. This has been the dialectic of the entire video - this *carpe diem Aufhebung* is appropriate now, as the church was appropriate receptacle of the fear of annihilation of people with not much in 'this life' (as the terraced houses surrounding the former St. Andrews in its photograph show). The unafraid[10] integrationism of the new 'working class' at this community focal point is a tangible proof of intercultural

living (a theme Harrison first explored in *Yan Tan Tethera*, also in terms of inter-religiosity), *all* Bradford's residents enjoying a common source of 'nourishment' serves as fit counter to the equality Harrison has just found in death:

> And imbibers have a few months' grace before
> these girders get their gold dome on next door
> and muezzin's call sours Omar's ruby vintage
> curdling the stomach of the currievore.

The text is linguistically positioned between the religious and the secular, their inter-articulation stressing the blending of the two worlds in the language (Christianity lending many phrases that have retained metaphoricity after their context has been forgotten) and marking the transition *back* to religious life. The new mosque will de-articulate these dualisms, bounding their transcendent polysemy: 'a few months grace' before the 'call' of Islam ends the 'benign' multiculturalism, a new structure ends the handing-down of the old, before the grace-prayer, invigorated by the secular 'celebration' of good food, becomes again literal, meaningless, dead ritual.

The 'imbibers', Muslim and non, are as oblivious of the nearby mosque as they are to their habitation of an (ex)church, as the schoolgirls had been of Harrison and Khomeini's edicts. The skeleton of girders is being shown to them, too, as signifying a new infra-structure in Britain, its potency, in the text's 'curdling' [15.33], added to the bubbling skillet of present pleasures and souring it, as the Presbyterian afterlife of hellfire [15.17] had; out of a Victorian 'frying pan' [15.42], and into its fire.

The past, re-filled structure of St Andrews is everpresent not only through the religious-metaphoric language, but in the spatial semiotic, which orders the present restaurant layout in terms of its past usage, explicating the taken-for-granted. The single shot from the 'front', or the 'altar' [15.44] shows the 'inside' of the pulpit stacked with 'Good News' wine bottles instead of bibles, linked with the text's 'passionate pleading'; the 'packed pews' [15.38] are tables full of diners and *drinkers* of the 'new message'. At the communion table, instead of sacred bread and wine (or Ribena for teetotaling Presbyterians!), we see an Indian chef prepare Chappatis, 'nourishing' with a *momento mori* re-determined as an affirming gesture of friendship and assimilation before a tapestry, not of the last supper, an ornate scene of mythical Indian life, with gold threads and rich colours connoting Eastern *joi de vivre* not solemn 'Papal' splendour. In this atmosphere, the opening sequence is re-iterated ($T_0(T_0)$), the initial quatrain inside the restaurant repeated, 'full' of freshly-generated significances, the filling of the wine glass now connoting hedonism *and* sacrament, the empty mirrored chairs symbols of Eastern promise *and* vacant pews for the disciples of blasphemy.

As the sequence ends, focusing on Rushdie's chair, the lost voice of the preacher re-emerges:

A wine bibber, O that we could imbibe that spirit!

followed by a brief citation of the preceding frying pan/hell fire shot [16.23]. Rushdie is named as the new preacher, associated with the flame of blasphemy passed-on from his historical companions, and with the threatened (heavenly and earthly!) punishment that hangs over him. The ideas of 'spirit', wine of hedonism/holy spirit 'fire' the 'spirit' of dissent, of daring to take on the freedom to speak freely; the preacher of the past exhorts, the viewers to follow in the footsteps of the new 'priest' - 'blasphemer' Rushdie is still a religious man, a practicing Muslim. The positive force of old religious practice is brought to bear on the charge of hedonism as ir-religion; individuation and en-joy-ment have given themselves as the positive affirmations of life, fundamentalism has *been given* (though we are now well inside the *By-line* frame that declares this interestedness of presentation) as life-denying; Rushdie's criticism is built on his religious understanding and in the spirit of faith he feels free to criticise that to which he belongs in the name of this new freedom.

[1]As I discussed in the introduction, the prologue is designed to present a summary of the video argument, both as 'advertisement' to make the viewer *keep* watching, and as a memorable codified 'chunk' that encapsulates the message for the retention of those who don't. This function is consolidated by its repetition within the body of the video, as a reinvaginated micro-text, so the summary is more strongly marked over the more exploratory videoic discussion. This promotional function can be seen in terms of its 'ostensive-inferential communicative function' - Harrison 'produce[s] a stimulus which makes it mutually manifest to communicator and audience that [he] intends, by means of this stimulus, to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a set of assumptions {I}.' Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance* , page 63.

[2]See Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance - Communication and Cognition,* '...a piece of coded behaviour may be used ostensively - that is to provide two layers of information: a basic layer of information, which may be almost about anything at all, and a second layer consisting of the information that the first layer of information has been intentionally made manifest.' In this 'promo' pre-text, not only is the video argument summaried, but the cross-cultural construction it advocates is *manifestly* performed in the proccess.

[3]See Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*

[4]Barthes, Camera Lucida, page 99.

[5]Thomas Elsaesser, Primary Identification and the Historical Subject, page 536, in *Narrative,Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader,* ed Rosen.

[6]The news is 'uncoloured' in so far as its 'neutrality' is a measure of the status quo: since every representation must be situated on an openended scale, the starting or reference point, must be what socioculturally passes as 'unmarked' against which bias is judged. See Eco "Chance and Plot: Television Aesthetics" for a discussion on the unmarked framing of television news as 'verisimilitude', page 17.

[7]Metz , "Natural Logic & Conventional Codification in Filmic Ordering, page 52 in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader,* ed. Rosen.

[8]A key image throughout Harrison's video ouevre - see the graveyard at Beeston in 'v.', and its reoccurence in the *Loving Memory Series.*

[9]I am using the idea of 'found' sound bites in line with their emergence in avant garde music as montaged extracts used out-of-context, without reference to their original situation. This is particularly relevant in that one of the originaters of this technique was *Cabaret Voltaire,* a band whose music style is cited in the 'sound-track' to this video, as punning signature effect.

[10]At this stage in the video the sign still signifies the possibility of integration in its spanning of different cultures. This token of cultural adaptation is 'dismatled' in the second half of the video, what it *has stood for* making it, in turn, a target for fundamentalist reappropriation, as I will discuss in chapter 8.

THE BLASPHEMERS' BANQUET II: THE CRUELTY OF THEIR OWN WORDS

> Cruelty is consciousness, is exposed lucidity. There is no cruelty without consciousness and without the application of consciousness.
>
> Artaud, *The Theatre and its Double*, page 120.
>
> You cannot publish a book because it will cause offence and you cannot deal in ideas without causing offence.
>
> Executive of the Publishers' Association[1]

8.1 INTRODUCTION: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

I discussed in the previous chapter how Harrison *assimilates* into his *The Blasphemers' Banquet* the structural and philosophical differences of the 'found' voices of Muslims and of literary-freedom advocates to construct a dialogue permitting each to speak freely to the TV audience 'for themselves', his narratorial voice 'joining' them only as comment, not control. I would like to move on to show how these voices' freedom, far from being 'given' by Harrison in his gesture of integration, is intrinsic to the videoic structure itself, how in seeming to *give* a freedom that is propre (in the last analysis, to language itself) Harrison demonstrates an inappropriate will-to-governance, and how these voices operate, beyond the limited freedom he offers them, to countervail this phallogocentric will.

To do this, I shall examine how the different cultures' concept-boundaries mean that Harrison fails to engage with his targeted Muslim audience; belonging too firmly to the 'typographic' literary community he is unable to apprehend the religious-oral mindset, a recurring problem in his work (discussed explicitly with respect to "*from* The School of Eloquence"). While the unique structure of the videopoem, layering image, spoken poem and graphic overlay, is designed to meet all reading/viewing communities, the final ideological interest the poet betrays is that which leaves him speaking to the converted.

To show the concept-boundaries of the English Muslim community, I use anti-Rushdie 'information leaflets' demonstrating the social and philosophical consequences of their assignment of referentiality. The assumption of literature's shared apprehension underpins the video, its undeconstructed, base-convention; it shows the role of (blasphemous) books, plays, poems as historically bound-up with everyday life. Ironically, it is when Harrison attempts to attach his reality/ideology to the *non*literary (non-middle-class/university educated) everyday, that *his* assumptions are challenged, not simply by the Muslims always shown as fundamentalist protesters, but by other English working class

groups, specifically in the 'auction sequence' which I will discuss below. The video's failure is a failure-to-address beyond its (literary-)conventional boundaries, the failure to demonstrate the understanding it preaches.

8.2 THE REAL VOICE OF DISSENT

Firstly, the different encoding strategies used: the following is from one of the principle Muslim spokesmen, Dr. Shabbir Akhtar:

> Islam is, in fact, a literary faith par excellence based as it is on a document as an intellectual miracle of reason and speech.[2]

'Literary' pertains here purely to *written form*: the text of Islam has an author, who, implicitly truthful, *speaks* as himself: an *oral* text, it maintains his phenomenological speech-as-existence, is mark of his Being. Modelled on this original Author, authors are responsible for their characters (this is shown in the populist Anti-Rushdie-propagandic literature discussed below). To apply post-structural or deconstructive techniques to this text, then, is already blasphemy; theo-logocentricity is the defining characteristic of 'literary' here. Rushdie's blasphemy is taken as 'literally' as Harrison's defence of it. To emphasise the ingenuous acceptance of the written word as 'truth', Qureshi & Khan, point out:

> The average Muslim in Britain is not an avid book reader.[3]

Their familiarity with texts derives primarily from religious/'factual' books which promote the specious authority of print; an Islamic information leaflet utilises these pre-post-structuralist encoding strategies, in a way anachronistic only to the 'educated' reader, to determine God's existence:

> We find that the universe is like a superbly written, fascinating novel - can it be without an Author?[4]

Textual governance, whose whole metaphysic Harrison is celebrating the (post-) deconstruction of, is taken as true in a mimetic justification for the 'Truth' of Origins. More complexly, the repeated claim that Islam is a 'non-metaphoric religion' based on facts, is misconstrued by the literary 'reader';

> Islam is a religion without any mythology. Its teachings are simple and intelligible. It is free from superstitions and irrational beliefs.[5]

based on parabalic narrative, it expresses the unsayable by *structurally* metaphoric analogies which tell *the* 'truth'. This context makes the accusation of fictionality 'blasphemous'. This separate way of expressing the truth cannot be satisfactorily distinguished from the 'fictive' truth, or non-truth of literary fiction, so Muslim textual criticism ina-propre-ately applies this criteria:

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> Chamcha (another name of Rushdie in TSV, see page 12) he found himself dreaming of the Queen, of MAKING TENDER LOVE to the MONARCH. She was the body of Britain, the avatar of the State, and he had chosen her, JOINED WITH HER; she was his Beloved, the moon of his delight" (Page 169 of TSV). What is Rushdie telling his readers, if not that he fucked her Majesty.(...) I expect some British blockhead of the literary world to cry "Oh! Rushdie only fucked our Queen in his dream." It is all fiction! After all' we can't hold a man accountable for his dreams. That is true, but "O pervert!" Rushdie was not dreaming when he penned those words![6]

Rushdie is seen as all the characters of his novel, holding all the views, beliefs, desires they express.

This 'inability to distinguish fact from fiction' is extendible to the (personal) life Rushdie *must* have been enscripting; the typographic, embedded speech of a character in the novel ('"White women never mind fat, Jewish, non deferential white woman were for fucking and throwing over" (page 261 TSV)') is syntactically and ideationally simplified by Deedat to its 'base form' and treated as direct utterance ('"THEY ARE ONLY GOOD FOR DISCARDING AFTER FUCKING" SAYS RUSHDIE!'). The *literality* of this encoding is signalled by the statement's accompaniment; a photograph of 'wholesome' white women, transforming 'type' into concrete 'token', written into visual, non-referential, fictional philosophy into reality, the transformation 'authenticated' with details of Rushdie's failed relationships as 'proof' of his assertion.

8.3 THE INDETERMINABILITY OF LANGUAGE: TWO WAYS OF MEANING WITH THE SAME WORDS

This projected truth of all written texts gives to the author tremendous power, but this can only be used if the communicated message is grounded within the linguistic and conceptual domain of this audience. A text can only either tell the truth or tell an untruth; the metaphoric nature of *The Blasphemers' Banquet*'s discussion fails by attributing incongruities that, contradicting the reality of the worldview of the Muslims to whom they are attributed, re-enact *negatively* Rushdie's blasphemy. The difficulty of provoking a viewer to *challenge* what s/he is shown, to interrogate, rather than instantly attribute truth value to the presented argument is summed up by Deedat's assertion:

> For after all, what is reading if not brainwashing. We are what we eat and we are what we read.[7]

8.3.1 PURITY/SHIT

Harrison's attempt to destabalize the religious separatism of the fundamentalists via an attack on the purity/obscenity boundaries fails linguistically, as the Muslim secular/religious lifeworld conflation means there is no distinction between 'clean' and 'pure': an infidel is *as* 'unclean' as shit. Harrison's images and narrative show the designatedly 'pure' and 'impure' co-exist, co-depend, and that 'rejection' of the impure reflects fear of death. This linguistic-psychoanalysis only inscribes circularity, as it joins the *explicit* 'fear of death' that prompts religious adherence, and the religion itself enforces the taboos of cleanliness; Harrison is reiterating beliefs as though they were justification for its negation, demonstrating a wholesale appropriation of its terms by his liberality, he is not engaging with them but demonstrating a distinct signifying system.

8.3.1.1 OBSCENITY

The Muslim unwillingness to say, or write obscene words points to their *materiality*, the 'seriousness' of any (fictional or non) speech act, again the direct *referentiality* of 'language as action', a feature of orality[8]. Harrison's argument

> Various creeds attempt to but can't split
> the world of spirit from the world of shit.
> Crude scrawls and sacred scrolls come from one mind

fails to deal with deferral-as-repression: the act of 'splitting' *entails* an invocation of the distasteful in order to expel it, so define the 'pure', and is enacted in the propaganda booklets' deliberately involuting the designated offensive (carefully compiling a directory of 'fucks'[9]) to mark their divorce from it.

This motivation is enacted in the opening of *Can You Stomach The Best of Rushdie?*, in a dual speech-act threatening/promising obscenity, engaging readers whilst absolving itself from moral 'responsibility'. This propagandic 'warning' is politically motivated, embedding a response within a 'neutral' presentation, highlighting what it claims to conceal:

> This publication, the word "**UNEXPURGATED**", which means that Rushdie's text in his original, TSV are not tampered with. That nothing is done by me to remove, expunge, erase any obscene or pornographic word or phrase. If you can't stomach Rushdie's "shit"[fn] in print, please tear up this publication and throw it in your toilet pan.
>
> [fn]This is a very mild expression from Rushdie's book. See me and hear me on video "Is Jesus God?", a debate with Dr. Shorrosh in which I was hard put skirting round and round this word and yet never coming to utter it: in deference to my audience.[10]

The obscenity/shit association is clear, the debate itself centring around disclosure or erasure. The text speaker situates himself as one who would conceal the filth whilst evoking it, indeed reducing Rushdie's book to a minimal directory of its *author's*

swearwords - 'Rushdie's shit' - then claiming *not* to 'speak' them, even in citation. The word 'shit' is not transferable (as in Harrison's deconstructed language of free appropriation/attribution), but retained at it's Rushdie-'origins'. Deedat harnesses the obscenity's perlocutionary force while disclaiming it then (logically) redirecting the reader's shock, with the *intentional* violation of politeness codes, to this 'original' author. This enables him to 'adopt' 'appropriate' scatological aggression/humour, without adopting the (oral) responsibility for it:

> [Rushdie and his publishers] need something sticky and stinky to satisfy their deprived tastes.'[11].

Deedat's claimed freedom from *uttering* 'shit' is significant. In *oral* debate the word is 'skirted round and round', present as the unstated central object, yet never named, so hiding *and* emphasising its presence-as-absence, its propre linguistic - and revealing psychological - 'deferral' - in '*deference* to my audience'[12]. Only in writing can citations be dis-owned, treated as belonging to the 'original text-speaker', *their* 'truth'. The exploitation of the 'oral'/typographic codifying practice distinction can be seen in the *textual* differentiation between written-as-speech and written-as-text:

> 'That, and also her, the icewoman. Bastard.'
> (note: this **b-a-s-t-a-r-d** is a sentence by itself).[13]

The typographic form of swearing/not-swearing is enacted by an elaborate spelling out of the taboo word, placing more emphasis on it as forbidden while foregrounding the writer's own separation from it, in its signalled citation.

Psychologically, Harrison attempts to counter the Muslim assault on the 'impure' by demonstrating the impurity in everyday reality, Muslims' and non-Muslims', (wrongly) assuming its condemnation is an attempt to *hide* from it; the filth the video highlights is that from which fundamentalists *derive* their justification of censorship and control. Ultimately, as with the key wine-symbol, linking Harrison with *textual* blasphemer Khayyam, the *enacting* of blasphemy in the video can only serve to rigidify separatism: linguistic and cultural difference can be demonstrated, but not addressed by argument, filmic, spoken or written, which must, propre-ly, include blasphemy, perform untruth.

8.4 POLYSEMY AS THE SHARING OF LANGUAGE

Yet the video *is* successful; it breaks down the given structures of each disputant. Their anticipation of their encoding Other escalated the conflict to major social unrest. Just as, whilst seeming to obey all the rules of implicature and relevance[14], the significant

difference in meaning attributed to key *words* - 'literary', 'obscene' - reveal communication failure, the projection of shared *cultural* norms is a dangerous misunderstanding.

This is what the video explores by its use coupling of montaged 'documentary reality' (T_2Docx^{15}) with film verite (T_1), placing Harrison as another actor within the video narrative, inserting him within a reality he *cannot* control. The overall framing (T_0) situates Harrison in control of his own characterisation (the opening sequence, the pieces to-camera in Paradise Square, after the auction sequence), but when he brings this textualised persona into the ungovernable context of 'current reality', with a *semi-improvised* script, the slippage between the projected diegetic and its enactment collapse directorial/authorial control.

His *hyper-reality*, 'placed' objects and engineered sequences shaping the present to a *textual* version of itself, experientially separated from the text which is at once inscribing it and invaginated within it, highlights the different layers of representation, the literary text, with Harrison as its envoy, bringing added citational significance from its cotext within the video, moulding the environment to generate significances beyond its denoted present. For the real in this hyperreality, enacting its propre structure, proves to be beyond the governance of its purposed 'author'; his *finessed* motifs are present, but their spontaneous appraisal from the unscripted, unrehearsed actors creates a discourse that more properly comments on perceptions of Art and blasphemy than the commentary - revealed as *monologic* - manifestly anticipated.

Representation-as-control, the theocentricity of theatre/film, is overturned, Harrison's 'divine' gesture of relinquishing control and entering in his own work is wrested from him, the director/actor's signature effect[16] denied by a culture that does not 'recognise' him, so reappropriates its 'own' control. In the auction scene, which I will discuss at length below, the strength of the present imposes upon the 'written', making the sequence more properly (Artaud's) 'Theatre of Cruelty', than (Harrison's) theo/logocentric Classical theatre:

> The stage is theological for as long as its structure, following the entirety of tradition, comports the following elements: an author creator who, absent and from afar, is armed with a text and keeps watch over, assembles, regulates the time or the meaning of representation, letting this latter represent him as concerns what is called the content of his thoughts, his intentions, his ideas.[17]

Bradford people act themselves, unconstrained (as Harrison 'intends'), and in freeing *their* 'original representation', force Harrison to step outside his textualised persona and be present-to a reality he has not defined.

The use of this unscripted footage is crucial. It gestures the refusal of (textual *or* religious) theocentrism. However, the trace of *purposed* control here points to the problem of interest, *how far determination exists beyond the manipulated structure of events/texts*, to what extent an author imposes a unitary point of view on a *designatedly* dialogic text. Governance is gestured in the *usage* of the sequence, a specious transformation of spontaneous freedom into a sanctioned act bound by (later) framing: 'I permit you freedom'. Yet as 'original representation' it stands, foregrounding the ideologue with which it is (retrospectively) sutured, directing Harrison's argument concerning Muslim 'false' governance/suppression back towards him.

The 'Theatre of Cruelty' will also inform my reading of the final montage sequence of the video, as the fragmented syntagma of fundamentalists of all denomination captures the spirit of Artaud's 'cruel representation':

> Nor will the stage be a representation, if representation means the surface of a spectacle displayed for spectators. It will not even offer the presentation of a present, if present signifies that which is maintained *in front* of me. And nonrepresentation is, thus, original representation, if representation signifies, also, the unfolding of a volume, a multidimensional milieu, an experience which produces its own space.[18]

The direct engagement of *spectators*-as-actors is essential to the video's project, hence its usage of documentary footage, inviting secondary identification such that the various interest groups (fundamentalist-commentators, 'the viewers') become involved, implicated in the generated narrative, participate. Initially simple identification with a Lacanian Other becomes, in this final sequence, deconstruction of the presented, a break from the merging of the 'moi' with its specular 'je' towards the 'cruel representation' that destabalizes the spectator with a reality mirroring their *suppressed* 'truth', engaging them via the specular dialectic of desire to answer for their concealed motivational impulses.

The selected documentary extracts which constitute a manifest cognitive environment[19] for each section of the audience allow the manipulation of this environment (via the video's montage structure) to give rise to conceptual modifications that tell a further 'truth' in its juxtaposition with other, commenting syntagma. In this sense, the final 'message' of the video is personally determined, the cruel identification and the ideology thrown up by its suturing with contextually disparate extracts is dependant on the participation of each 'actor', within the text and present through identification.

8.5 THE GOING GOING GONE OF APPROPRIATION.

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The switch from the black and white photograph of the 'Elim Foursquare Gospel Church' (T_2Doc7) to its present incarnation (T_0), corroborates the text's insistence on the scaremongering of 'doomsday' merchants 'with its dreadful, but false, dooms', *showing* that the end of the world hasn't arrived, though the church's 'life', as building, has been curtailed. However, the switch does signal 'transience' as 'transformation', the building is now, ap-propre-ately, auction rooms, realising in a transient economy instead of preaching its coming to pass; foregrounding the shifting categorization of value/junk, as life's oddments are washed up and sifted according to an ever-mutable value system. Transience is underlined by the 'present day' building being rid of the terraced rows that enclosed it in the photograph, the congregation participating in this text as the occupants of the 'filthy' graveyard of graffiti and games, their former possessions becoming biddable surplus. The symbol itself is marked as shifting - the auction rooms themselves are being restored, hence the scaffolding and flapping plastic of shot [20.10]. The vagaries of classification signalled by the sign 'Antique and Secondhand Furniture', the valuable distinguished from the merely 'used', is meta-structurally evoked by the auctiongoers as jury, judging each item as 'junk' or 'collectable', and thereby defining history, the auctioneer passing sentence on the goods with his hammer.

> our fear of what false prophets make us dread,

> of doomsday with its dreadful but false dooms,
> of time that bustles men back into tombs,
> of that fleeting transience that can transform
> the Four Square Gospel Church to auction rooms,

This historico-structural transience is explored via the semiotic multivalency, the iterability, of each past incarnation 'present' as intertext. 'Transform' is paired with a black and white image [20.18] defamiliarized by a single light destroying contextual markers and reducing givens to elemental oppositions (this use of black/white is a characteristic Harrison semiotic for fundamental (religious) oppositions - good/bad, purity/impurity, also as presence/absence, see "*v.*"), and anaphorically evoking the monochrome of the photograph-as-document, before allowing re-encoding: the shot 'becomes' a close-up of the decorative cut-out on the side of a wooden pew in the church.

This twilight temporality invokes the church's past, seating a congregation in pews and framing their pensive watchfulness within a religious sub-text, to greater emphasise the change in usage. The desire of the clientele to 'buy up' the former congregation makes them 'live' again, prevents the disinterested 'studium' of the photograph from suppressing the emotive element. The viewer is re-situated alongside present-day 'real' people,

focusing on (their) participation within a context, not on them as 'actors'. This heightens the impact of the *text's*

> transience that makes the life-warmed ring
> Dangled for buyers from a numbered string,

coupled with the *image's* ring(s) worn by a waiting buyer [20.28], a double-marking of 'past' then 'present', the 'real' woman filling the 'loss' of subject from 'within' the ring being impersonally auctioned, *and* pointing to *her* eventual reduction to material residue. This fresh demonstration of ('the big 'O' of') 'nothingness' brings the debate from the philosophical to the practical economy of change; life deals in death and the recycling of residue, waste, constantly re-evaluating, re-categorizing; the individual subject, lost in the series of exchange of 'valuable' material items, is transient,

> ...knick-knacks of nothingness:
> The *going, going, gone* of everything! 204

This disorientation is enacted in primary identification with the camera's sudden loss of focus, activated by the falling gavel of Time, swinging quickly round the room and then closing in blurredly on the auctioneer's moving lips. A sense of panic is emphasised by the last subject of 'secondary identification', a male bidder [20.46], looking round suddenly at the sound of the hammer. Subliminally, this unfocused panic is transferred to the viewer, who experiences 'nothingness' before being inserted into what has become the hyper-reality of (T_1), caught up in the urgency of the auction-as-event.

Focusing on the mouth foregrounds imagistically the idea of utterance as expression, linking the auctioneer's patter with the preacher's message of transience. The language is as necessarily formulaic and vernacular, demonstrating orality - rhyming, alliteration, formulary;

> 'Now it's at one, have we done?'   [20.46],

living counterpoint to the video's poem, spontaneous reaction as performance, competing with Harrison's own commentary on it. This is a truly dialogic structuration, then, all the different modes competing with, commentating on, re-citing each other, its lack of centre it fulfilling Artaud's criterion for non-bounded theatre. The auctioning of 'lot 154, [...] the gold ring' [20.46] refers anaphorically to the still-possessed 'life warmed ring' of shot [20.28], except the subject is missing, the symbolism of ring as token of eternity is stripped, leaving its 'value' as material worth - 'must be at scrap value, that sort of money!' [20.57] - it is un-loaded of its given symbolic 'value', reduced to its 'element'-al origins.

Cut-away shots of would-be buyers, including Harrison, shaking their heads demonstrate human complicity in this reduction, this passing-into-eternity, yet these shots all feature

overt gesturality (nose scratching [21.20], mouth tapping [21.27]), revealing propre psychological unease/anticipation at this predatory transaction of 'making a killing'. The continuing voice-over iterates the space's double use by invoking the presence of the textual 'Bishop' within the auctioneer 'Mr. Bishop'. The delayed irony of the grammatical object:

> Bishops once burned books, and people. Here
> It's Mr. Bishop, Bradford auctioneer
> Who has *them* boxed, and bundled into job lots -
> With wedding rings and repro jardinière.   (my emphasis)

extends the present-day book-burning analogy into history's carrying out of 'death threats'. The cheery normality of the deictic 'Here', as though bathetic contemporary reality has left behind this possibility, carries a darker undertone via this ambiguous object: *'them'* - books, *seen* to be bundled later [20.20], or people, *metaphorically* boxed and bundled, their lives' traces deftly sorted and priced and *entombed*. Graveyard shots have just suggested this act, recalling Moliere's burial, and the 'repro. jardinière' stands in the same ironic substitution for the church hall's former urn as the fittings of the restaurant have been shown to stand for *its* once religious use.

In this light, the auction of a wedding ring [21.32] is a reiteration of [20.57]. The just-concluded commentary *should* re-frame it, turning the brief business transaction into a poignant symbol, moving the TV-spectator from impersonal surrogate buyer (encouraged via primary identification) to indicted participant, soon to suffer a similar passing-into-materiality. As secondary identification positions the viewer as empathetically acknowledging lot's previous owner as 'Other', the psychoanalytic investiture in the *specular* Other (the bidders, including Harrison) is displaced, *their* mortality leading to a merging which serially invests them as subject to *their* anterior Other. The desire for completeness is infinitely deferred, the viewer's transferential identification has been with a subject the text now frames as 'lack' in *their* (filmic) relation to death, a *mise en abyme* of the auction-event that cyclically reposits the reduction to 'nothingness' of the bidders.

The atemporality of the (ring)signifier is indicated via its setting against a black surface, extracting it from its personal or commercial context. In lighting it to pick out its 'O', the ring ceases to connote its personal use, being re-situated as supplement, surplus, demonstrator of its *lack* of function now, *marking* the perimeters of (its owner's) absence; the existence of this free, 'O', ring guarantees this non-presence[20].

To emphasise the shift to the symbolic (T_3) mode, the refrain *'Oh, I love this fleeting life!'* is brought in [21.36], balancing its contextual placing within the film as surrounded by the

negation of life, its disappearance, with 'life's only mediating quality being *'love'*. This re-values the ring semiotic; once the wearer is gone, it is 'emptied' of meaning, bearing a *trace* of its former value - its permanence, transcendence, that has been given commercial/symbolic 'value', is as 'scrap' without 'fleeting' love and mortality, without life. The singing continues as this (T_3) segment segues back into (T_2) hyperreality, scanning the faces of the buyers, now marking their transient mortality. A TV [22.04], in close-up, balanced precariously on a wardrobe, shows the Voltaire bust, 'watching' the proceedings, now, from the margins. This situational reversal of his dominant point-of-view status in the opening sequence whose verité action was framed as presented documentary gives the auctioneer's ad lib,

'you can't beat tuning into the mass media. Font of all knowledge is that',
resonance, not least as comment on the video which 'contains' him, its purpose to present historical views of blasphemy unfamiliar to the wider audience, including Voltaire in the general 'all [televised] knowledge', pointing to the 'broad-casting' of his original narrowly *literary* relevance. His truism correctly (in its 'real world') identifies TV as the most influential medium, its output instantly equated with 'knowledge', authority, not 'point of view'. This pinpoints the crux of contemporary, real power structures; the control of and by information's transience is more successful than the supposed lasting, 'durable'[21] effect of Art.

Voltaire is replaced by Rushdie as televisual onlooker [22.14], again citing *his* opening figuration, marking his transition from author - bringing a context from outside the visual 'media' - to media personality. *Each* re-iterative appearance serves as citation of his past TV 'performances', until his *image* is a more potent signifier than his novel, bringing with it the contextual iterations of previous confrontations. The 'issue', its linguistic propre-ty, lacking televisual appeal, becomes secondary - in this (hyper)real context his voiceless 'talking head' occupies the theoretical space his 'real' media persona delineates, a transient half-life marked by high-profile low information re-presentation of his *physical* confinement. Rushdie's visual presence, then, links the sale of the TV which 'houses' him, and the following lot,

'...three bundles of books - many tomes of ancient knowledge'   [22.20],

which naturally includes (amongst other blaspheming classics) *The Satanic Verses*. Most significant in this re-insertion of the textual debate into verité contexts is the auctioneer's immediate pairing of books with *'ancient* knowledge', that is, lacking *contemporary* relevance, unlike the 'mass media [television]', source of *'all* knowledge', prioritised by the

oral cultural milieu of which his job makes him spokesman. The most controversial, and for Harrison's argument *relevant* books of the century, including *Spy Catcher*, *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, *Ulysees* and *v.*, are granted specious acceptability on the grounds of attributed antiquity; literature being deemed an inappropriate forum for radicalism or conflict, where TV generates antagonism to enliven debates and retain viewers' shorter attention spans. The auctioneer's spontaneous, accurate reflection of public attitudes is necessary, his job relying on being 'in touch' with them, (commercially) satisfying them, and, in his speed, 'keeping up with' them. He makes clear in a way a rehearsed text (bound by its own generic origins) could not the disparity of perception of the role of literature in the different social groups.

It is evident that the ongoing literary debates concerning blasphemy and obscenity have simply not filtered into the awareness of the general public; the only 'value' assigned to books of any description is connoted via the adjective 'ancient', antique (returning us to the hierarchy of his sign, 'Antique and Second-Hand Furniture'). They are fossilized icons gaining value through their survival and transition to the 'durable'; they are *extrinsic* to the contemporary lifeworld, re-positioned from 'tool' to 'object' via coffee-tables, and decorative leather-bound classics signifying increasingly by style and title. At the auction the books fetch half as much as the television.

The final item we see auctioned is the bust of Voltaire. The auctioneer's distance from the video's literary discourse, is shown by his inability to 'name' Voltaire, but his ad lib again captures 'Voltaire's' floating nature between conceptual and material lifeworlds (as subject/object, image, concrete representation, literary text, 'actor'), articulating his unfamiliarity ('an unusual item' [22.45]) with typographic/literary forms of art/symbolism:

> Lot two five three, now, which is...
> What's it made of? Marble? It's marble, isn't it, Brian?... [22.27]

What it 'is' remains unanswered, contingent somehow upon establishing it's material form, a categorisation arrived at communally. The bust is valued, like the ring, according to it's 'scrap' value, as part of the general economy, and not, for this community (unlike Harrison, it's eventual buyer) dependent upon its *personal* worth as icon, conceptual signification. The cross-shot sister-frames of the bust [22.45], and the auctioneer's head-and-shoulders [22.50] illustrate these diachronic value systems: the calm passivity of 'classical' durability and the frenetic, animated vibrancy of the living present each subvert the other, the permanence of Art undermined by Mr. Bishops' ignorance of it, the video's thesis of *his* eventual reduction to 'nothingness' answered by his presence-to the 'real'

present, his 'investiture' in the moment. While the 'personal' for Harrison is the learned, the educated(man)'s value of the icon, with which he tries to imbue the day-to-day (the wedding ring), for the auctioneer it is *being-in-the-world*, what, as the promo suggested, Harrison's philosophy, by championing, becomes (here, dangerously incomprehendingly) distant from.

This is why this hyper-real segment is crucial to the video's argument; the inserted frame around a person's reality, formed by a separate system's structural markers, is *broken* by the very fact of it *being* a reality, unlimitable. This generates an *ungovernable* comment on the 'shaping' of discourse, which says more about Harrison's world and his attempts to theorise about the brevity of lives than his manifestly 'staged' or 'framed', visual/poetic insights do about the world upon which they are imposed. While Harrison's philosophically crafted arguments have real force within the literary circles he 'traditionally' (as 'poet') engages, they have no relevance to the people outside this circle; they still maintain their truth, but that fact does no more than assert difference of necessarily separate cultural propre-ties.

The ensuing bid ostensively inserts Harrison into Bradford reality, a bidder-among-others - only the obviated contextual manipulation, the 'props' (Voltaire's bust, the 'blasphemous' books), designates the *hyper*reality, the writtenness of 'reality'[22]. The ur-text of the hyperreal is ruptured by the *un*written, 'oral' spilling over the borderlines ('It's marble, isn't it?', 'tomes of ancient wisdom'), failing to acknowledge or be confined by text, filmic or written. So the 'planted' lots derive a significance in their telling 'misdescription', only to be undercut by the pure Otherness this inscribes.

Similarly, the bid sequence terminates with Harrison, the 'successful' bidder, being mis-named, the unperturbed auctioneer capping his exposure of the 'deceit' by quipping:

> Well there's one thing can be said - your fame's not travelled before you! Am I right sir? [32.01]

The purposed significance of Harrison's act of purchase, symbolically taking on the torch of blasphemy, validating the durability of Art, giving his name to the tradition that fostered him, is undercut by the failure to 'sign' for his act. The Derridean conceptualisation of the role of the signature, legislating for the body of textual connotations generated by its going forth in the world as signifier beyond the individual's personal governance, is defeated; the Harrison who agonizes in his poems over the validity of designating oneself 'poet', fails to utilize this persona that has 'cost' him so much, *his* Art is marked as 'non-durable' even within the event of its becoming! A fine lesson in transience.

This neatly destabalizes Harrison's attempt to re-establish himself as the videopoem's commentator for the section's summatory epilogue. The familiar persona created through his other film work, especially v., brought to this video's 'real time' (T_1), has undergone a noticeable slippage, leaving the poet less confident in being who he has 'written' himself as within the Bradford context. The auction continues in the background, and Harrison looks newly self-conscious, aware of the self-irony his situation has caused. Standing below the now pictureless TV-screen, Harrison is the last of the blasphemers to occupy this ambiguous spectator/artefact space. The sphere of his influence called into question and reflexively interrogating his current assumed role even as he enacts it, he liturgizes the cyclical nature of fame and fate, surrounded by 'junk' that gains its value purely through its visual link with the transiently famous. The fickle nature of fame, generalised-out from a selection of auction remnants, is ultimately arbitrated by the masses, as in the general economy metonymized by the auction, or socio-politically, as with the Rushdie demonstrations. These universal judgements are symbolized by the auctioneer's hammer which punctuates the spoken text:

> Time, that gives and takes our fame and fate
> [...]
> can cast aside all we commemorate.
> [...]
> and bring the holy and the high and mighty
> to the falling gavel, [thump!] or the guillotine. 216

This aural signifier anaphorically refers to the close-up of the falling gavel at [23.01], which accompanied the auctioneer's misnaming of Harrison, validating the association of judgement with these inappropriate Laws, the undercutting, in their 'false' criteria, of 'fame'.

8.6   THE *LIBERTE* OF ITERATION

The textual 'guillotine', and the striking up of La Marseilles [23.42], shifts the context back to France, Voltaire once more present as spectator, the reflected green and red lights of a Parisian carnival roundabout on his face [32.44], citing the earlier [01.58] Bradford book-burning sequence, so connoting (his) passive participation in approaching violence. The camera evokes the carnival atmosphere via short focus and rapid panning of the scene, creating the experience of speed, excitement. Foregrounding the blurred bright lights over concrete detail, this experience becomes specifically vicarious, a mimesis of the point-of-view of what emerges as the sequence's subject, a small boy riding a helicopter in the fairground [24.07]. This is the filmic technique used previously to show the violent

disorder at Khomeni's funeral and at the various Muslim demonstrations, so while here the context supports a more usual connotation of excitement, one we might share, via the anchor shots spliced in to tie it to a celebration of freedom and independence (the plaque commemorating '14 Juillet, 1784' [23.50], and the sculpted frieze of the storming of the Bastille [23.52]), this prior instance lends unease to the presented innocence; the associations from those earlier scenes include the 'boy' [2.30] who 'had his tongue ripped from its roots' for singing a Voltaire 'ballad'.

This ambiguity is carried over into the soundtrack; the orchestra *Marseilles* is replaced by the tinnier version on the roundabout, subliminally connoting the diminution of the grand ideals of the republic [23.56], and the sound of helicopter blades is brought into the mix. Ostensively, these refer deictically to the 'toy' helicopter in shot, but their slashing atonality inevitably iterates the police-state brutality it connoted over the violent Muslim-funeral montage [04.10], undercutting this celebratory context. Microcosmically, the *Marseilles'* 'cheapening' reflects back on its citation at the opening of *The Misanthrope* [08.45]. The anthem's association with *literary* freedom in this video, with the idea of re-use of material invoking but not 'harming' the material's 'original' context, semiotically presents the thesis that the 'shadow' fundamentalism/violence cast over its positive symbolism, here is corollary to its threat of censorship they extend to Artistic freedom. In these closing stages, the video is beginning to condense and intertwine its assemblage of signifiers, weaving intricate cross-reference and intertextualities that comment upon the resultant emerging structure; Harrison is *generating* his thesis from the re-presentation of material within the video's own framework. But this depends on having filled the signification of his symbols, creating a wholly *self*-referential text that manipulates the play of these significances by re-framing the already framed. He has had to, that is, appropriate the *reality* of documentary or news footage; what had to be 'real' to demonstrate his earlier points, now has to be (loadedly, personally, interestedly) symbolic of those points. This is the nature of the crux passed over in the auction-room's *hyper*reality.

8.6.1.1 ITERATION AT THE LIMIT I: THE REAL IN THE SYMBOLIC

Such a technique discusses the nature of iterability itself and the structure of the mark, in that each event or instance carries with it its previous contexts, so the 'originally' harmless sequences accrue threatening overtones by being associated syntagmatically with 'negative' sequences, generating the thesis that there are no discrete 'worlds', societies, occupations - each happening has an incalculable effect on the present and future in a chaos theory of global cultural-linguistic interaction. Harrison's appropriation submits to the ideational

control of others' texts, their 'reality', that he is (rightly) accusing the fundamentalists of. Conversely, while he - alongside other literary theorists - argues for the sanctity of literary non-referentiality, the world to which he is not making reference is encroaching upon him.

This insidious pervasiveness is demonstrated by the video's playing with defeasibility: the subliminal 'threat' is made suddenly explicit in the cut to French anti-Rushdie demonstrations:

> When I have to watch this Paris square
> packed with murderous protest, then with prayer
> at the feet of the Republic,   (ll.209-211)

Actuality blends with its stylisation within the video text, its symbolic markers lead to a cathartic expression of the suppressed violence; text/technique has explicitly appropriated 'reality', pointed to *its* (hypocritical) structuration. The implicit violence is 'opened' as the outward vestiges of fundamentalism, so made easier to deal with, the text suggests, in language, even combatable, through Art;

> then it's time
> that France (and even Britain) read Voltaire.   (ll. 211-212)

The video montages 'blasphemous' plays, demonstrating their historical breadth in counter attack.

It is in the *merging* of the two worlds that real unease emerges, the incorporation of the external limits as the structure of their transgression, the potency of restrictive dogma being such that even in violating (repressive) norms these norms have been internalised by the work, the conscious boundaries that have been over-stepped; Rushdie inevitably had to write *against* an implicit Muslim interdict, their curtailments (as with all fundamentalisms) invaginated by Art as the limits which justify the work as necessary (to 'break', progress beyond, the taboo).

This being the case, the 'threat' engaged with by the video is not purely the censorship manifest in the violent demonstrations, but the *self*-policing to which the awareness of this leads, the consciousness that to write a blasphemous/obscene work *is* a violation in a real world *within which the blasphemer is not living*, such that the literary act is now underpinned by its re-enactment as a political gesture. While the arguments for literary freedom and textual non-referentiality still hold, the video (and contemporary experience) also shows that for some socio-religious groups this can never be perceived to be the case (as I discussed earlier). The auction sequence has marked this limit, the divorce between oral and literary world views. So whilst the writer maintains his stance, he/she inevitably is aware of their work's reception beyond its target context though not of the thought-

process/belief-system that leads to it, in effect internalising the judgmental *stance* of a fundamentalist Other in a replication of what Foulcault categorized as *'la gaze'*, incorporating the external policing structures such that the resultant curtailment is more effective than could be achieved by any single interest group.

This rupture of the possibility of a unitary point-of-view is contained in the oral slippage from 'more' to *'mort'* of the video text, the same phonic signifier shifting dramatically, with its contextual re-situating, from affirmation to annihilation, childhood innocence to its perversion:

> a small boy bellows 'Mort! Mort! Mort!'
> For Salman Rushdie   (ll. 205-206)

The tracking-shot of the roundabout engages the viewer's expectations of a positive correlation between image and text, an affirmation in the presence of the features that connote aggression, governance. The initial, positive interpretation of 'more' is generated from cultural expectation *outside* the video's structure, and it is through this implicit citation of the spectator's lifeworld, and *then* its subversion that the video creates its impact. In being allowed to choose to suppress the connotations of the filmic markers, the spectator enacts the passivity which would allow the growth of fundamentalism unchecked; it is only via the destabalizing of this shown-to-be *partial* reading of the world and world-within-the-video, that the urgency of the threat can be communicated.

Linking the different temporal modalities, the helicopter soundtrack also shifts direct deictic reference from the fairground ride in the (T2Doc8) verité footage to the electronically-treated percussive version that accompanies the *hyper*reality of the English and French demonstrations montage - a grotesque 'unreal' nightmare world of incoherent protest and gestural violence - and then back to actualité footage which tracks a 'real' helicopter [24.43], asserting a recognisable 'normal' context to be destabalised with yet another protest sequence.

8.6.1.2 ITERATION AT THE LIMIT II: THE SYMBOLIC IN THE REAL

The helicopter, then, features as a transcendental signifier throughout the video, which is drawing on *heli* - transforming or combining form. Whenever the temporal deixis shifts between the protest footage and the video 'real time', the slashing blade sound introduces this shift, signalling a *transformation* of locus or event. This can be found in the Paris sequence discussed above, the ostensive context being linked by deictic slippage with its symbolic inverse, the boy at the fair being associatively paired with the massacred boy actor and with the child demonstrator by aural syntagmatic pairing, linguistically

(more/mort) and semiotically via the helicopter graphic. This process of transformation is in itself enacted via a *combining* of contextual features, demonstrating parallels which give subsequent divergence greater impact.

The helicopters specific association with the Muslim footage can be seen as alluding to *heli* as 'holy', each ideogram within the video demonstrating control, which refers back to its 'fundamental' 'origin', linguistic root. The linguistic pun (as this is not the derivation of 'helicopter') points up the hidden Muslim agenda of religion as (social and political) power and governance, central to the whole video argument and the whole Rushdie debate; the helicopter as means of controlling the population (Iranian [04.10], in the funeral footage, or English, in the demonstrations [24.43]), serves as a concrete symbol of portent or threat, its re-appearance in the video allegorically shadowing the portrayal of religion as a counter force.

Finally, the derivation *helios* can also be incorporated into the deconstructive reading of the helicopter graphic, which necessarily features, structurally, as the 'sun' in the frames where it is actually present, and in the sequences where it is visually absent but alluded to aurally, the camera itself often takes its metaphorical 'position' as sun, demonstrating the role of the apparatus itself and undercuting the theocentricism of the camera point of view (primary identification) by positing an intentionality behind the aerial shots [25.38 - 26.39], that intention being the implication of *a* 'centre'.

In forgrounding the camera, and so the viewer's specular role, the video diegesis returns us again to the concept of 'la gaze', surveillance. The supplying of a concrete signified for the 'abstract' soundtrack, [24.43], [25.23], dispersing the sense of unease generated intratextually via the video's preceding montaged syntagma, stages an involution of the subliminally suggested paranoia which focuses around the 'transformation' function of the helicopter as signifier, deictically attributed to disparate videoic signifieds. An example of this can be seen as the syntagmatic connection between the fairground helicopter and the Muslim protesters is made explicit (as detailed above), the electronically treated soundtrack expressing the symbolic link by citing the 'hyper-reality' of the framing, marking it as (T_3) [24.35], which is then intercut with verité footage of a real helicopter, [24.43], which telescopes the connotations and attaches them to a specific, 'real', instance (T_0), such that the manifestly discursive, 'literary/arty' treatment of the material that overtly cites itself as film-in-process, is superimposed on an 'event' that would otherwise lack significance. In this manner the role of the police is also called into question as the ever-present Big Brother-type of surveillance of the Muslim demonstrators shows the unchallenged infringement of 'social' freedoms and rights, the freedom to create

uncensored art being 'defended' or upheld at the cost of, or in spite of, other injustices which are as indicative of social control as the religious curtailments demanded by the Muslims. By cutting back and forth between the symbolic and the actual, the expectation of governance is created then fulfilled, the fact of electronic surveillance is presented as a sinister reality that spans both Muslim and non-Muslim camps, tying the protest to a clearly political agenda.

This is countered by the video's literary 'spectators': the sculptural commentators Byron, Molière and Voltaire demonstrate the 'disengagement' of Art, failing to make an impression on contemporary events, but at the cost of 'exemption' from these thought-police, so 'free' to provide a necessary voice of dissent that attempts to expose the corruption and bigotry that continues around them. This is the positive aspect of Harrison/art's proven lack of comprehension/engagement with the 'real'. Ultimately, the *offensiveness* of literature is questioned as a possibility in itself, the auction sequence demonstrating the limited impact of the printed word when not publicised as part of a hidden agenda. What literature can and does do in this video is to point to these structures of governance, turn the 'gaze' back on the watchers, and so engage in a discourse which 'shows' what cannot simply be 'told': to 're-frame' the frame, to decontextualise, destructure events so that in viewing them as process within a text their invaginated citations can be seen as operating against a similarly governed super-structure. The political interest activating the Rushdie protests is clearly remarked in the video by the literary guardian Voltaire:

> When I have to watch this Paris square
> packed with murderous protest, then with prayer
> at the feet of the Republic, then it's time
> that France (and even Britain) read Voltaire.

The violence invested in the placards ('La Mort à Rushdie' [24.10]), both linguistically and in the gruesome cartoons that support the chanted threats, shows the public act of religious obeisance [24.30] to have little to do with spiritual belief, its exploitation historically documented by blasphemous writers whose legacies the video invokes.

8.6.2 PARIS AND LONDON: INTRANATIONAL REITERATION

The contextual shift of the protest from Paris to London loses its distinctness due to the montage structure, the transcontinental anger manifesting itself in the same recognisable brutality. The camera point of view likewise cuts between the verité footage which places the spectator within the protest, the head level perspective enacting vicarious participation, (though the experience of being plunged into decontextualized aggression

also places the viewer as victim-recipient qua Rushdie, the purposive anger of the original documentary footage's real time here translated as semiotic drive, force, removed from its ostensive target), and aerial footage which presents a 'broader' perspective of events.

While the soundtrack reverts to the symbolic representational which accompanies these visually fragmented sequences, the images cut between typographic and oral-gestural, as the protesters themselves attempt to harness the power of the sign to back up their physical protest. In effect the amateurism of the placards undercuts their anger, as the diversity of apprehension manifested in their targeting of both audience and culprit disperses the impression of passionate unity presented by the footage shot within the crowd itself, of the focus considered propre to their single doctrine and single aim.

The placards offer a Muslim textual response that fails to engage with the typographically sophisticated pro-Rushdie debate, though the *act* of demonstrating more effectively engages the sympathies of the non-Muslim 'oral' communities similarly disaffected by books (compare the auction sequence, above), and for the video to be effective across socio-cultural groups this emotional response also must be counter-contextualised. The logical basis for disputing the 'truth' of fiction is undermined by the presented mismatch of cultural concept boundaries; the videotext's '*Death* to the imagination' (line207) implying the culpability of authorial fictionalisation is set against a series of shots from the demonstration of placards evidencing a particularly lurid collective 'imagination' in the telling of their 'truth'.

These placards are designed to communicate to those outside the 'closed' Muslim language (characterised by the Harrison/Khomeini list) as well as to rouse those within it. When they simply operate this language, then, they appear bizarre to one target audience 'Rushdie is a dog' [23.16], this unintentional effect demonstrating the language's closedness, its assumed universality, (a repetition of Harrison's language's mistake). Conversely, they occupy the 'literate' unstably: the deconstructive typography of 'Rush-die must die' [25.33] positing the death (threat) within the structure of the name, Rushdie signing as executioner in the gesture of authorship, the hopelessly 'illiterate' 'Freedom of obscenity' [25.37] inadvertently striking a blow for anti-censorship, pointing to the unbridgeable divide between the factions. So other placards are explicitly *graphic* (depicting, for example, the beheading of Rushdie with a scimitar, glasses flying, neck gushing blood [23.16]); significantly, then, many carry two messages: one typographic, one pictoral, attempting to harness the language/medium of both cultures, oral and literate, to 'translate' each 'into' the other.

The instability of the targeted receiver highlights the gesture of spanning the unbridgeable distance between the two cultural/linguistic systems One placard's 'Rushdie must be punished by law' [25.28] is amended with the insertion of 'the Islamic' to clarify for non-Muslims which law functions as *the* Law; the original brevity of the message speaks directly to fellow protesters, but the attempt to publicise the grievance beyond the converted necessitates a *gestured* diversion from the monotheistic point of view. This explication places the first citation of 'the law' as referent to a perceivedly *inferior* law (that deems the guilty Rushdie unculpable), a manoeuvre that tacitly marks *this* speaker's own primary law, as inferior/under the jurisdiction of - and so not - *the* law, removing the slogan's *prima face* case. This gap between whose law governs is that between secular and religious worlds and between their respective philosophies of language, the failure of religious hierarchy in civil life leads to the red underlining of the inserted 'the', attempting to correct the semantically implied imbalance via the resort to orality's graphics, so signalling a belief in 'one' overruling law, while attempting communication with a society external to it, which 'demanded' the modifier 'Islamic'. The message cannot make 'perfect sense' in both language/cultural systems, the absolute use of the definite article is philosophically and linguistically incompatible with "Islamic's" implied selection from among alternatives, the two encodings alternate in a *moire* of undecideability, and while in the selection its modified form the message is encodable by its 'literate' target audience (unlike many others), it points to the irresolvable nature of the dispute which can not be settled by demonstration or debate.

8.7 APPROPRIATING *CARPE DIEM*: 'SEIZING' 'DEFERRING'

From this impasse of anger and frustration, the video 'withdraws' - videoically, in the pulling away aerial point of view, and ideationally, in placing the specific dispute within a wider context of 'life within death'; atheist Harrison's *carpe diem* stance frames the localised debates as the wider camera-angle frames the whole protest, following the marchers as they circle Trafalgar Square, their chaotic anger when experienced in their midst made calm, ordered, part of a greater scheme. The 'circling' marchers semiotically represent the 'O' graphic, their specifically 'present' anger is structurally incorporated in the greater scheme of life/death continuum, the investment in the minute dwarfed by the 'overview' of history. A change to sepia and fading soundtrack break any secondary identification, the concrete experience of the protest as event is replaced by an entirely pacific, detached primary point-of-view: the happening's specular anterior. The celebratory '...life...' (of the refrain 'O I love this fleeting life' which marks the passing of

time in the expenditure of energy by the life-denying protesters) is paired [26.40] with a war memorial's inscription 'Of Death'. The play between the two metaphoric/literal points-of-view portraying the same event generates the thesis of deferral as the act of the present: against its own symbolic appropriation-deferment, it shows that whilst 'oral'-defined communities are 'immersed in the present' (characterised and united by the prioritisation of television and images over the written word, the auctioneer's as much as the Muslim's), the immediacy and disposability of their specular event incompatible with the deferment structured by words, the present they are present-to is *of itself* deferral. For the Muslim demonstrators, not only is this the structure of religious belief's negation of *this* life in the pursuit of happiness in the 'after' life, but through actively seeking to curtail the freedom of people who do not subscribe to the system of self-limitation, each moment is a step towards the destruction of the 'not-I', the traces of otherness that would force a recognition of what the 'I' constituted. This *is* différance:

> ...a play in which whoever loses wins, and in which one loses and wins on every turn. If the displaced presentation remains definitively and implacably postponed, it is not that a certain present remains absent or hidden. Rather, *différance* maintains our relationship with that which we necessarily misconstrue, and which exceeds the alternative of presence and absence. A certain alteriority - to which Freud gives the metaphysical name of the unconscious[23]

The protesters maintain a necessary relationship with that which they seek to suppress, the structure of the religion itself constitutes its own exteriority to provide an object against which the move to defer can be projected. At no point can this object successfully *be* removed as it is a necessary part of the relationship, the impure existing as part of purity, the death integral to living.

The pro-Rushdie lobby justifies its stance by the argument that one concession will lead to a further demand for restriction, a tightening of the parameters of acceptability - this is simply a way of describing the need of the (opposing) system for its counter object. So the video demonstrates that the passionate energy which seems to centre around a specific grievance is part of a more far-reaching structure, the act of protest is *a* means of engaging with the deferral of the present, of living a gesture posited upon the modification of a future which can never arrive.

This interpretation could only be offered by the video's deconstructive 'point-of-view' of what is given as 'present', or actualité. By montaging the temporally and geographically disparate demonstrations and defamiliarizing them through their juxtaposition with the

fragmented soundtrack, the *specific* pragmatics of each event become displaced. Speciously 'targeted' anger is patterned into a universal symbolic drive which gives itself to the psychoanalytic reading of deferral as implicit in the structure of desire, the paraded wish to murder being a transferential enactment of the death drive, continually evoked in its deferral, giving rise to the pleasure of its denial, at once invoking the object, maintaining the connection with desire, and distancing it, maintaining it as the *possibility* on which the libidinal economy is founded. This micro analysis is 'confirmed' by the distancing of the demonstrations' aggression as a Delusian play of forces, the textually posited 'alternative' of loving life suggested by the singing itself a naive deferral, a typographical/philosophical projection of a *different*/deferrant life 'now', that is not *here-and-now*, a conclusion that aggression/deferral is not necessary while demonstrating in the images their inevitability as propre to (desiring) life.

The disjunction between the 'oral' and the 'typographic' communities ultimately rests in their constitution of deferral, not whether or not they defer. As writing situates the textual 'I' within the sphere of the symbolic, divorced from the 'moi', and so constrained to seek their re-union, the video's 'writers' all offer a textualised alternative to the present upon which they comment, a world created by the 'je' which is a deferred Other to the one they inhabit. The oral communities, not present to the operation of the symbolic, live the deferral in trying to occupy the structure that will enable them to realise their goal - hence the (failed) attempts to harness the literary propagandic forms to counter the threat invested in the word as object. As I have discussed previously with respect to "*from* The School of Eloquence" sequence, the pursuit of the *means* to achieve an otherwise unattainable goal is the perfect enactment of deferral, its attempt to occupy the unoccupiable supplying a concretized version of the struggle for unified identity with the projected 'je' undertaken by those ostensibly possessing the structure of enablement.

8.8 CONCLUSION: MAXIMUM TELEVISION

The video's final extended montage sequence brings all the generated significances and specular associations together, reducing their features to minimal video syntagma in a discourse that invokes Artaud's 'living gesture'; language and controlled movement break down, and each 'actor' is constituted as subject within the instant, presenting the behaviour propre to themselves in a becoming that never progresses but occupies the video segment as filmic absolute, complying with Artaud's first manifesto:

> Once aware of this language in space, language of sounds, cries, lights, onomatopoeia, the theatre must organise it into veritable hieroglyphs, with the help

of characters and objects, and make use of their symbolism and interconnections in relation to all organs and on all levels.[24]

This section is introduced by verité footage of the performance of *Mahomet*, cutting between its frame as play and newsreel footage of its potential targets, the play's satire being positioned via the possibilities of video into a direct commentary on contemporary religious leaders. Importantly, this across-the-board attack on religion explicates the video's firmly anti-*fundamentalist* stance as not the racist/anti-Muslim stance often levelled at pro-Rushdie supporters. Harrison/Voltaire states:

> By *Mahomet* I meant all fundamentalists
> Moslem, Catholic, Protestant and Jew.[25]   ll. 243-244

The extracts from *Mahomet* are initially framed within the conventional literary context, marked by the insertion of Voltaire as spectator [29.33]. The intertextual citation not only serves as theatrical rendition of the opening section [01.58ff], the Bradford demonstrations '*reflected*' by Voltaire, but as a blasphemous performative (of the progressive, and progressively offensive nature of blasphemy:

> Moliere's *Tartuffe* the first French play
> to strip hypocrisy's sour mask away
> was the one most hated by fundamentalists
> till my play about the prophet: *Mahomet*   (ll. 237-240)).

In effect the video performs its own origins in the invaginated extract from *Mahomet*, from the drumbeat-based chanting of '*Allah! Allah!*' that stylizes the fanatics' anthemisation of religious slogans, replicated in the overall video by the percussive helicopter soundtrack, and sample-loop '*Kill the bastard! Burn him, burn him to death!*', which accompanies each demonstration sequence, to the beating of the chest as mark of obeisance [29.13], which cataphorically frames the beating of heads by the mourners at Khomeni's funeral, the base motif for the final '*extended sequence of fundamentalist religions*'[26]. The play *represents* the folding-in of fundamentalist voices to art by a 'blasphemer' whose every citation of these voices is at once critical and communicatively ineffective; the video's abutting of scenes from it and from 'real' fundamentalists only emphasises their mutual impenetrability, the thing the video itself has demonstrated in its own 'discourse'. If, as I suggested above, blasphemous texts become accepted as part of the canon only as they lose their controversial topicality, then this video's fictionalised re-staging of Voltaire's context as co-terminus with fellow blasphemer Rushdie re-presents his work so that it becomes re-inserted within the challenging contemporary discourse, a directed, blasphemous account of fundamentalism that engages the response hitherto directed only towards Rushdie by today's Muslims. Harrison is not only appropriating Rushdie's offence for his own 'blasphemy', his propre-ly topical 'attack', but for all 'literary'

blasphemy, making it 'real' again, so deconstructing its canonisation. This move has only been possible by the generation of an identity within the video, a suturing of the iconic bust with the voice of Harrison, marking Voltaire as speaking subject, and framing him within the actualité documentary such that he is present as the *historically justified* blaspheming commentator that neither Rushdie nor Harrison can yet be. By bringing the *already written* to comment as material ostensively produced by the present the critique is read in the light of its current relevancy, yet it avoids the negation of 'interestedness' in the personal politics of the 'Rushdie affair'.

This 'sampling' process is innovative in its radical dissemination of syntagma beyond any single viewer's encoding field, presenting historically obscure texts (*Mahomet* is 'not much played since 1742', line 241) with hypermedia referents unavailable to the literary scholar, but as propre as the plays 'original' fanatics. At the same time, its 'orality' based 'reading' situates those referents as part of history, and of a structure, albeit (blasphemer-ly) motivated; a grounding in the Western literary tradition is no longer necessary to internalise the texts' argument. As the *invocation* of the genres and precedents that inform Rushdie's novel have been ineffective as a means of justifying the work, then a television programme inscribing the same logocentric tradition would be equally inadequate to communicate across the cultural and religious boundaries. By abandoning historical linearity and generating a thesis out of different televisual versions of current 'reality', the created worldview maintains the link with the viewer's context while re-ordering it; *Mahomet* is as relevant as the documentary syntagma because it includes them as much as they include it, that is, implicitly, necessarily, uncomprehendingly, and (in 'reality' not touching them, not being readable by them) not at all.

In its use of documentary footage specific to the target groups involved in the dispute - the Muslims and the literati - the video moves towards 'interactivity' in its designed provocation of secondary identification of the viewers' videoic o/Other. The interested parties are figured as *participants*, only the videoic de-historicisation process which re-frames Voltaire as contemporaneous makes *their* interactive present 'exist' prior to the instant of (pre-determined) specular identification; this present, that is, is *involved* in the debate via its identification in the on-screen figures, viewers watch *their own* involvement, the consequences of their philosophy/actions, which have been already written. Thus the viewer's freedom to 'act' is already inscribed in the video's invaginated (T_2) time as identificatory pre-participation. Instead of this interactive-incorporation affecting the diegetic *outcome*[27], its creation *anterior* to the core diegetic's current assemblage allows the video to 'act' on the spectator, as their *prior* decisions (in terms of political or

ideological affiliation) are presented as *consequent* upon the syntagmatic cotext, the choices already made by the individual in society are figured in the final form of the video which performs the resultant version of their mutual interactions. Interactive TV is already at its limit, the determination of its participants by their philosophies, without the mediation of specious 'choices'.

This process allows the interaction to build up from the demarcated factioning of the opening sequences (which re-state the current positions of the parties) to the final montage sequence which destabalises the external reality cited in these interactive documentary sections and involutes the image of the Other, involving it in a psychoanalytic deconstruction that extrapolates the motivational drives and re-presents them as a 'bringing to consciousness' of that which was intrinsic to the initial viewer/image suturing. By invoking the hidden agenda of desire within the framework of the specular (posited on the *safe* projection of secondary identification, the possibility of merging with the Other whilst deferring satisfaction/'death', the transferential barrier of death inherent in the image-as-substitute constituted through the symbolic investment of the 'moi' of the film's speaking subject 'je') the death/absence *propre* to the specular image vicariously engenders the will-to-completeness of the viewer, occupying both possible roles of the Other and Death, engaging a temporary deferral of the pleasure principle in its second order visual postponement, allowing the viewing subject to occupy the role of the Other *because* the deferment is already contained within its structure.

This unconscious psychoanalytic process is exploited by the video's structure, as the semiotic drives which underpin the actualité footage are represented as pure semiosis in the final sequence. The portrayal of unmediated desire that is enacted by the specular Other inverts the Lacanian process, as the desire to be/occupy a particular filmic Other, is involuted by the Other *being,* enacting, the desire. Rather than the play of desire being generated by the suturing of subjectivity on a projected 'je', the desire manifests itself on-screen, presenting itself as that which the viewing subject unconsciously seeks to appropriate in the act of identification, only defeating its operation in the making-present of this desire itself. The filmic Other no longer functions as a means of attaining completeness, but as a naked projection of what this fulfilled desire represents. The enablement intrinsic to the sutured 'whole' specular identity is by-passed, as the fragmented diegetic moves beyond the will-*to* that is constitutive of desire, projecting the event of its *enactment.* The montage process no longer sublates an ahistorical unity, but fractures the generated structural identities such that each syntagma minutely manifests the distilled motivational instant of becoming, extrapolated from the created video-context to

signify its *dis*unity in diegetic terms, only marking a re-insertion within the framework of desire as each instant performs itself to the exclusion of its co-textual segment.

The collectivised subscription to 'one truth' is seen, in the montage sequences demonstration of the (literally) transferable nature of fundamentalism, to curtail individuality *per se*[28]. This is then countered by the video's re-introduction of its motif, culled from Khayyam, *'Oh....(sigh) ...I love this fleeting life'* [32.27], the 'I' claiming governance of his/her own life, a gesture of affirmation and self-determination that the child portrayed in the slowed-down accompanying image is being prevented from ever having. The 'life-denying fundamentalists' of the montage sequence are shown to be in the process of limiting freedom, ensuring the continuation of the deferral of the pleasures available in 'this fleeting life'. The emotive nature of the image creates an immediate response as the empathetic desire to 'help' (by which the video involves all viewers, not only those *shown* to be involved as accomplices or potential victims of fundamentalism), generated by the video's iteration of similar documentary genres, famine/disaster news-footage which carry the incitement to act embedded within their narrative structure, is thwarted. This *has happened*, is beyond help, and continues, beyond help, to happen in a 'different' time.

This impulse is then re-directed by the video towards its localised correlate, the spread of fundamentalism in Britain represented by the re-naming of the *Omar Khayyam* restaurant in response to local pressure in Bradford, the *making* of this video drawing attention to the acceptance of past blasphemy, and demanding its recidivism, and eradication. So the video-process presents its own interactive relationship with current fundamentalism. The historically 'liberal' tolerance of Muslims (before the influence of fundamentalism) which informed the opening of this video, enabling Harrison to choose Khayyam as a positive symbol of Muslim art and integration, becomes, through the process of its foregrounding, a negative symbol of the strength of fundamentalist sup-/re-pression. Instead of the television programme itself reminding people of the possibility of co-operation and harmonious integration, it is arrested mid-process, as the Muslims re-appropriate its/their symbol, to demonstrate their militancy.

This gesture echoes the theatre of cruelty in that the *eventual* spectators of the video have determined its diegetic structure before it is assembled, the projected narrative is forced to become dialogic, not just in its specular presentation of each interest group, but in the groups' affecting the available interpretation of its targeted symbols. The Muslim act of re-appropriation becomes the final scene of the video, the process of dismantling the 'old order' videoically enacted in the erasure of the name *Omar Khayyam* from the tandoori.

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This gesture of curtailment is replicated in the sung soundtrack, foreshortened as each letter of the name is removed, 'Omar' finally becoming 'O', the song, a sigh 'Ohhh'. This 'O' closes the video on the 'big O of nothingness' that Harrison will later re-use in his series *Loving Memory*. The negation of life is videoically enacted as the last letter is disconnected, the severing of the wire plunging the audience into the blackness of death in an enactment of the death-drive fundamentalism 'inscribes'[29].

So this final sequence again demonstrates its freedom from determination, the textual logic of the video being internally 'dismantled' by the reality it seeks to engage with *before* it has been fully constituted. Sadly, while the central symbol of the church/restaurant named after blasphemer-Khayyam is re-incorporated as a more powerful symbol, accurately reflecting the current presence of fundamentalist ideology in its enforced curtailment, it also demonstrates the failure of Harrison's directed narrative-stance within the video, as his celebration of pre-fundamentalist integration does not remind the more militant Muslims of pre-fatwa co-operation, but targets areas that, through the process of the video, become subject to re-incorporation and change. While the videotext initially promotes the belief in eventual acceptance of blasphemy, instanced by Khayyam, the re-naming of the restaurant demonstrates that *this* time the anomalies and exceptions of the past are going to be retrospectively 'corrected' by the present, forcing Harrison to defend blasphemy in the epilogue, with the realisation that perhaps *he* had underestimated the current force of extremism. The freedom he has stood up to defend for Rushdie:

> Where you're in hiding, tuned to the BBC
> I hope you get some joy in watching me
> raise my glass to *The Satanic Verses,*
> to its brilliance and, yes, its blasphemy.

has become in the process of the video, *his*, fundamentalism has determined 'his' art.

It is this interaction of current reality with scripted art that is most successful, as it moves the video away from the simple partisanship that has limited previous discussions on blasphemy and obscenity, allowing Harrison to present a strong case for literary freedom while the *counter*-case is inscribed within the argument, demonstrating the restrictions he is protesting against, and, equally importantly, showing the ultimate freedom from individual governance *all* texts must have. As the Muslims' own information leaflets show more of their world-view than is consciously presented, and their placards and protest signify *more* than the political discontent they ostensively seek to manifest, so Harrison's text resists his determination, and it is through the traceable will-to-governance evidenced by the fundamentalists and Harrison in his *'legitamisation'* of the non-bounded discourse

of the Other within 'his' text, that the issues of control are properly discussed, both in the manner control is sought, and how, through the property of language, it is proven untenable.

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[1]Cited in Qureshi, Shoab, & Khan, Jared, The Politics of the Satanic Verses: Unmasking Western Attitudes, page 29.
[2]Akhtar, Shabbir, cited in Qureshi, Shoab, & Khan, Jared, *The Politics of the Satanic Verses: Unmasking Western Attitudes*, page 13.
[3]ibid. page 28.
[4]Bawany, Ahmed, Ebrahim(ed.), Islam - Our Choice, Islamic Information Leaflets, page 3.
[5]Bawany, Ebrahim, *Islam Our Choice*, page 7.
[6]Deedat, *Can You Stomach The Best of Rushdie?* page 18.
[7]Deedat, page 20.
[8]Malinowsky, in Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy.* page 33.
[9] Deedat pages 11-12.
[10]Deedat, page 2, and footnote.
[11]Deedat, page 6.

[12]This deconstructive understanding is not shared by oral communities, who conceive of language as action, giving it a materiality which makes its utterance taboo; saying a word conjures presence, does not mark absence.

[13]Deedat, page 5.

[14]The mis-match of speech codes is discussed in my chapter on the discourse analysis of 'v.'.

[15]'Docx' signifies all the documentary fragments inserted at the given 'time', here, T_2.

[16]Cf. *Screen-play* page 123.

[17]Artaud, Antonin, cited in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, page 235.

[18]Artaud, Antonin, cited in Jacques Derrida *Writing and Difference*, page 237.

[19]'A fact is manifest to an individual at a given time if and only if he is capable of at that time of representing it mentally and accepting its representation as true or probably true.' (Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, page 39). Given the cultural differences of the separate target audience groups, this is the minimal unit that can be used to determine a mutual encoding strategy that each group will be able to identify as relevant to themselves.

[20]The wedding-ring as signifier of mortality (*not* of divorce) and human continuity has been developed through "*from* The School of Eloquence", where his parents' rings initiate his meditations on memory as iconic presence and personal absence. . This 'O' graphic becomes increasingly important in Harrison's film-texts, a signatory marker for the co-texts of an open-ended exploration of life/death's 'great big 'O' of Nothingness', a theme that also informs much of the '*from* The School of Eloquence' sequence.

[21]Culler, 'Rubbish Theory' in *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions*, page 78

[22]As the previous chapter shows, it is central to the 'message' of the video that all reality is more or less 'written', by dogma, prejudice, etc.; a visual corollary to Derrida's re-naming of spoken language as arche-écriture, based on writing.

[23]Derrida, Jacques, "Différance", in *A Derrida Reader*, page 73.

[24]Artaud, Antonin, (TD, page 90), cit Derrida *Writing and Difference*. page 240.

[25]This final the past-blasphemers-as-text-speaker statement (here a close up of Voltaire [29.38]) follows the video's deconstruction of their role within its text; the move in literature to 'strip hypocrisy's sour mask away' (line 238) is mirrored by the videoic gesture of the camera pulling away from the close-up of Voltaire and Molière to again destabalise their transferential-transcendental status and re-contextualise them as (im)passive statues in the foyer of the Comedie Francaise [28.52]. Their 'mask' of life is set against a 'real' cleaner, vacuuming at their feet, as the temporal zone segues from (T_3) to (T_0), symbolic to verité. This final undercutting introduces the workings of the final montage sequence which 'strips away' the other generated semioses.

[26]Direction from the published version of *The Blasphemers' Banquet'*, page 404.

[27]This is the current formulation of interactive television/film - the viewers determining the narrative progression, so inscribing themselves as 'authors' in their re-structuring role, primary identification retained as their participation is in an over-all structuring control. The interactive model I am suggesting here is built around secondary identification, originating from propagandic techniques, that re-presents the viewers' framed reality and then uses the 'action' of the groups as indices of 'choice'. The diegetic inscribes these anterior choices within its structure, the viewers identifying with their specular other *and its actions*, such that the videoically portrayed consequences go beyond the citational reality, and engineer a projected/deconstructed outcome which maintains interactive engagement in its anterior generation of selected, concrete, 'life-world' options.

[28]Appendix Five is a detailed analysis of this extended montage, in terms of the identificatory strategies it operates.

[29]A technique re-cited in "Into the Void". See chapter on *Loving Memory*.

CONCLUSION: THE MEMORY ... BIT

9.1 WORDS AND ACTIONS

In this concluding chapter, I will be tracing the different treatments of the theme of 'presence' and memory in Harrison's media: written text and television. Harrison's long poem, *The Mother of the Muses* finds the poet at his most fluent, dealing with a personal tragedy, which when universalized in the video *Black Daisies for the Bride* becomes enmeshed within the de-personalising videoic technique he has established as his 'style'.

Both 'texts' engage in the exploration of Memory as function of identity, using their respective formats to demonstrate their workings as *hypomnesis*, supplement to the failing of the mneme around which the debate centres. Fronting the 'Alzheimer's awareness week', the broadcast of the video raises the question of what constitutes identity when self-presence is stripped away by this debilitating disease. The distressing footage of patients confused and depersonalised, bereft of the ability to say 'I am', and consequently prevented from occupying or projecting the self they created and inhabited in their lives prior to the condition, is juxtaposed with a fictionalised reconstruction of the 'I' they have left behind. This opposition, in a defamiliarised hierarchy of subject/object, alarmingly leads the viewer to prioritize the identity of the re-presentation over the documented present of the patients as separated from their 'I', all traces of 'self' eroded through the process of the disease.

Both texts are also, necessarily, intensely personal; the poem deals with Harrison's coming-to-terms with the fragility of identity, subsequent to his own experience of his father-in-law's death from Alzheimer's, whereas the video attempts to present the sufferer's point of view, returning them to the person they 'were', able to express the frustration and despair at being systematically denuded of what they consider characteristic of, 'propre' to, themselves.

The works' presentation interrogates the function of memory itself - the Platonic dismissal of 'writing', records, which create a simulacra of the mneme, making the recall of the 'original' a repetition that is necessarily a deferral (the recalled object is conjured via the offices of an *external* mnemetic), is utilized as part of the modern-day structure of information technology. The 'traditional' model of Memory as an 'art' is embedded within this structure, and is shown to be precisely that which ultimately fails. In the case of Alzheimer's the 'prosthesis' lives on as testimony of the existence in time of a specific captured textualisation of a person; a life, that due to the workings of the

disease can no longer be activated by the subject's own 'live memory'. The spacing that is inherent in all writing, separating the subject from the materiality of the recalled event (the mnemonic topoi, or mental loci occupying the same metaphoric space as the paper/book, etc., in writing) marks the rupture between the *Dasein* that Plato seems to bestow on the workings of the mnene and the operation of the hypomnesis, which is seen as a simulacrum of the 'original'.

> The boundary (between inside and outside, living and nonliving) separates not only speech from writing but also memory as an unveiling (re)producing a presence from re-memoration as the mere repetition of a monument; truth as distinct from its sign, being as distinct from types. The "outside" does not begin at the point where what we now call the psychic and the physical meet, but at the point where the *mneme*, instead of being present to itself in its life as the movement of truth, is supplanted by the archive, evicted by a sign of re-memoration or of com-memoration. The space of writing, space *as* writing, is opened up in the violent movement of this surrogation, in the difference between *mneme* and *hypomnesis*. The outside is already *within* the work.[1]

This distinction becomes significant within the argument of the video and poem as the supplementary nature of the text points up the 'loss' of the 'original' and its substitution by a material other. At no point can Harrison *present* mneme as it is an internal process of being present to an idea, image, an act that remains temporally bound, an instance of the Dasein of a being. When this internal circuit is broken to allow its translation for others, the mediation of signs is introduced, shifting this idealised memory into the realm of hypomnesis.

9.2   THE MEMORY OF A POEM: 'MEMORY, MOTHER OF THE MUSES'

This double bind entraps the *poem*, as it is the personal loss of memory (mneme) that de-subjectifies Emmanuel Stratas, nullifying the power of the recorded (hypomnetic) past to prompt the locked-in memories of the actual being-there events. The duality of the pharmakon as remedy/poison is vividly demonstrated as the simulacra of the past, *films* of the Dresden bombing, fails to serve as 'remedy' (Emmanuel seems not to show any recognition, any sign of his own memories being stimulated), the 'poison' polarity is opened, as this artificial supplementary memory highlights the original's loss, and that of the personal in the father.

With this allegorical demonstration of the operation of the graphic record as infinitely deferring the original, Harrison seeks to show the limitations of the form to discuss what it is they are substituting for. As the preserved records of the war continue beyond the conscious memory of one who was present at/to the event, this very disjunction serves to show the incompatibility between the two branches of memory, how the 'written' supplementary form can never reveal what it is additional to (or, in the case of Alzheimer's, replacing).

To breach this inside/outside delineation, the poem invokes the operation of memory external to its own frame of reference. Contrary to writing-as-record, the poem reflexively documents the text-speaker's inability to recall; he records, then, an absence, in which noting of the non-appearance of the hypomnetic repetition the mneme of the reader is engaged. Harrison's failure to quote the speech from *Prometheus* not only points out the finite, fallible nature of human memory, even prior to Alzheimer's, but places the reader in a complementary position, challenging them to supply the lack in a parallel mnemetic act, making them present to the process that cannot be otherwise textually engendered.

> Seeing the Home he's in's made me obsessed
> with remembering those verses I once knew
> and setting myself this little memory test
> I don't think, at the moment, I'll come through.
> It's the Memory, Mother of the Muses, bit. (stanza 3)

If the reader is also unable to recall the passage, the 'gift of writing' with which it reflexively deals enables us to refresh our memories, and so the value of the textual hypomnesis is proven, or rather the interaction of the textual and actual, propre.

The loss of acquired knowledge is compared with the loss of personal material, prompting the writing of this poem as hypomnetic back-up for the events that catalysed it. This process evokes the Dasein of the event by reversing the identificatory process of the lost quotation, the materiality of the poem substantiating the presence of the actual event in the writing mind, although the process reaches the *reader* only via its deferral and translation as writing.

> I resolve to bring all yesterday to mind,
> our visit to your father, each fact, *all*. (stanza 2)

It is the bringing-to-mind of the past which differentiates Harrison from his father-in-law (whose existence at the home eventually becomes so temporally confused that progression is arrested into one continuous midday), the will-governed being-present-to a recalled event which enables a subject to confront the aetiology of their own continued being. Memory allows the subject to contextualise their being by reinserting the past within the present, ensuring a continuous (self)consciousness.

Yet this '*all*' cannot be preserved, either in individual memory or in text, as this would necessitate a structural repetition of the event itself, so the poem's claim deconstructs its own premise to show that memory itself is not a question of retaining the past as analogous to the experience of the present, but modification is propre to its structure *per se*. What is retained under the name of memory is the past re-presented by the textualisation of a subject. The 'all' Harrison seeks to imprint upon his memory, while allowing the possibility of image rather than the external form of writing, is inevitably

partial, coloured by his subsequent textualisation in a way that the taking-place of the event disallows. This can be attributed to the distinction between perception and consciousness, the drawing of memory's trace in the present, and its entanglement with the other unconscious traces upon its later retrieval. The will-to-recall, then, is a gesture of selfconsciousness that returns a version of the past to the being that experienced it, in a gesture that re-enforces identity by contextualising the present self within a reflexively governed history.

> The alteriority of the 'unconscious' makes us concerned not with horizons of modified - past or future - presents, but with a 'past' that has never been present, and which will never be, whose future to come will never be a *production* or a reproduction in the form of presence. Therefore the concept of trace is incompatible with the concept of retention, of becoming-past of what has been present. One cannot think of the trace - and therefore, *différence* - on the basis of the present, or of the present of the presence.[2]

This personal unquantifiable nature of mneme is contrasted with the hypomnetic *text* which offers a finite textualized object which can be retrieved 'intact'. The poem itself now stands as document, com*memoration* of a specific day that, due to the supplementation of the pharmakon, is freed from the temporal erosion of any individual mneme. Like the speech from Prometheus, Harrison's text can be retrieved mechanically when recall fails, not only safe-guarding his own memory but adding it to that of an audience not present at the original event. This translation of event to mneme to hypomnesis underwrites the function of memory as deferral:

> this movement is described as the effort of life to protect itself by *deferring* a dangerous cathaxis, that is, by constituting a reserve *(Vor-rat)*. The threatening expenditure or presence are deferred with the help of breaching or repetition.[3]

So, for Harrison, the *trauma* of witnessing the mental deterioration of his father-in-law, experienced as the 'need... to escape', is enabled to be examined only retrospectively, in the act of recalling which symbolically occupies the vacancy left by the father. This gesture 'recalls' the father, mnemo-imagistically captures the immediate past, and in bringing back his missing attribute, his lack, restores him 'whole'.

The identificatory process at work within memory which exhibits an internal specularity allows the psychoanalytic identification between the remembering subject and their other to be traced. So Harrison's memory of the father has the collapsed role of the Father written into his textualised recall. This transferential process (noted in Derrida's deconstruction of Freud's account of himself as observer) can be seen in the interpretation inherent in the re-presented memory. The drive to supplant the Father is enacted in the appropriation of his vacant role, as the son ('in Law') supplies the lost memory doubly, by demonstrating its survival in the son as process of recall, *and* by

providing a textualisation of that which has been lost by the father, safeguarding the two by joining them in a text- (hypermnetic-) form. The accomplishment of the supplanting as dictated by the Pleasure Principle is in itself subject to deferral, as the Father is needed to continue in the intergenerational role as projected Other, the relational spacing being necessary to the will-to-power of the son. The conflation of roles enabled by the 'absence' of the Father is ambivalently seen as aberrant, an enabling that is disabling in its defeat of desire, akin to Freud's 'irreparable narcissistic injury' at the untimely death of his grandson (Derrida 557).

This deferral is fossilized in the writing of the poem, creating a concretized version which while ostensively preserving the memory of the event serves to permanently defer it by placing its *repetition* in the place of Harrison's actual mneme. The writing of the fiction-memory textualises the event and objectifies it, foregrounding its status as past-that-never-was by placing Harrison as reader, alongside others who have never had access to the 'original'. By controlling the signifier of the Father, Harrison can manipulate a textual fort/da relationship which summons the father-in-law not only within the poem, but generically as part of the framing '*(In memorium Emmanuel Stratas, / born Crete 1903, died Toronto 1987)*' the double action of the hypomnesic re-marking the absence of the subject in the gesture of recalling him.

The ambiguity of what actually constitutes the recalled subject is neatly embedded within the poem. The temporality of the textual body implies an immediate past, the motivation to preserve memory directly inspired from the recent visit to the old people's home, whereas its frame registers a further deferral, the status of 'memorial' distances the events recounted in the main text, playing with the status of the recalled subject as the text speaker apparently remembers the father-in-law as alive-but-changed (from the man he was), whereas the parergonal frame re-situates this perspective as a retrospective tribute to the memory of the man *as he was.*

This paradox is central to the debate concerning Alzheimer's and identity: while still living, the sufferer occupies a role that seems disjunctive with how others *remember* them. The person occupies a grey area, neither entirely divorced from how/who they used to be, nor accepting of what they are becoming. In death they 'legitimately', proprely become the property of mneme, and in the arrest that is signalled by their ceasing to belong to the present, the undifferentiated past reconstitutes them as 'whole', a finite textualisation of all the contradictions which were problematic in living confrontation. This process is evident from the relatively small part Emmanuel Stratas plays in the poem prompted by/commemorative of him. As the diegetic invokes the immediate past which still places Emmanuel as 'less' himself as Alzheimer's claims his faculties, the textual body mimetically enacts this process as the ostensive 'subject' is

effaced; the context which surrounds him is recorded - the home and its occupants and the details of his family's visit - but like Emmanuel's fading self-presence, these are ultimately extrinsic to the subject and fail to directly engage, leaving a sense of vacancy, remoteness, distance which is akin to the father-in-law's inability to grasp the present

> [...] your dad, who, as we left, forgot
> he'd been anything all day but on his own.   (stanza 30)

The presented 'truth' of Harrison's hypomnemata[4] is that what is remembered of Emmanuel is his lack of presence. The spatial memory-image necessarily remains, but cannot be conveyed in writing, and it is this *translation* of being into external interaction with the world that is missing: speech which is equated with self-presence, the traversal of inside out, the breath of the subject denoting presence in the auto-affective act of hearing themselves speak, being present to their words as the closest correlation of moi and the je codified in language. This linguistic dysfunction is symbolised by Emmanuel's reversion to Greek. The present no longer exerts a pressure to speak English, instead language becomes an *internal* circuit satisfying an individual criterion that is activated by the deregulated memory. Emmanuel solepsistically communicates with a self salvaged from the fragments of his past, retreating into a mnemonic self-textualisation that fails to engage with a present:

> Life comes full circle when we die.
> The circumference is finally complete,
> so we shouldn't wonder too much why
> his speech went back, a stowaway, to Crete.   (stanza 16)

Due to Alzheimer's, Emmanuel can no longer be present-to himself, present and past are meshed making him unable to fully perceive his current situation or govern the memories of his youth. Given this circumstance, Harrison is unable to portray Emmanuel's memory, as his father-in-law is unable to give himself as a subject: the poet's memory of the event can only be the mediated enactment of a memory, as Emmanuel occupies his self-textualisation, re-lives the repeated mneme. Ultimately both poem and 'frame' discuss the act of being present to the process of remembering by recalling the consequences of losing this faculty. In crystalising the memory of those unable to do so, Harrison concretizes the Otherness against which he thankfully defines himself, able to constitute himself in terms of a surplus of traits instead of (like the Alzheimer patients) their diminishing:

> Elsie's been her own optometrist,
> measuring the daily way her sight declines
> into a growing ball of flashing mist.   (stanza 9)

Instead of memory providing the aetiology of the Self, for the Alzheimer sufferer memory becomes an internalised 'other', bearing the traces of a 'moi' that is dislocated

from the identity that recalls it; the sentient patient measures the physical-mental degeneration that severs her from the self memory says they once were, until the battle for self-presence shifts from the inability to communicate (the linguistic cortex 'loses' the vocabulary to bring the 'inside' moi, out) to disengagement from the immediate present. Senility destroys perception, the patient confusing 'the nurse who wipes his bottom for his mother', (self)knowledge is beyond recall, it is random memories that speciously evoke a past behaviour.

The poem-memorial, pledged to recall a specific event as symbolic tribute to one prevented from any longer doing so, cannot speak of the Emmanuel that was. In situating the temporal reality in the immediate past, where the father-in-law was no longer present-to himself, the text prevents the 'truth' of the man from emerging. The imposed limit of 'all yesterday' specifically constitutes the supposed subject as 'lack', the ravages of the disease effacing the remembered identity with a fresh present that momentarily wipes out past perceptions in the violence of their being overridden by the new. This erasure is effectively conveyed in the poem's overruning of its proposed frame, including the dedication to Emmanuel, its subject; in its failure to discuss its designated subject it more surely engages with the problematic of constituting something that is no longer present (to himself, or to the writer).

9.3 SEEING THE PAST: *BLACK DAISIES FOR THE BRIDE*

In the video *Black Daisies for the Bride*, this 'lack' is explored both by portraying visually the disintegration of personality which is so profound it exceeds the possibilities of verbal expression (specifically because the linguistic breakdown which accompanies it resists 'meaningful' translation into the form it no longer occupies) and through creating a hypothetical projection of the lost self, the identity absent in the long poem's structural void. The video re-animates the wedding photographs of its three 'brides', basing the physical transformation on the specular double of the patients, the frozen photographic image taken as corollary to the *arrested* memories of the Alzheimer sufferers, its re-fleshing allowing the bottled memories of the celluloid 'self' to be expressed.

This multi-dimensional projection of a single identity demonstrates the confusion concerning what actually constitutes the 'self', whether it resides in the physical presence of the named individual, shrinking as the behavioural, perceptual parameters recede, or whether the nature of the disease leads to the belief that identity consists in a person being present-to themselves, able to take responsibility for what they give themselves as, and when they are unable to function as an 'I' in the present they have lost that which they would have called propre to themselves (so, rather than claim the

new identity for which they are not 'responsible', they retain the dignity of the old one, from which the new is a dysfunctional result).

This raises difficult moral questions, addressed directly by the therapist/patient pairing dramatized in the video - the role of the carer is underwritten by her work with her patient, Muriel Allen, who's intellectual degeneration leads to the open question 'Well, what *did* she do? Try and guess!' This challenge is linked with verité footage of Muriel in the ward, aimlessly shuffling a chair round and round the room without seeming to be present to her own actions. The futility of the gesture is emblematic of the purposelessness of existence once consciousness, will-to-self, is lost: since Muriel is unable to account for her motivation, the act continues, evading the possibility of its cessation as this would entail the projection of an achievable goal. Once separated from the cognition of 'why' which is invested in the 'who' of identity, the gestures of living continue randomly without the *possibility* of conclusion; Muriel is trapped into dragging her chair around as she is unable to recall her original reason for the act, so it can never be completed. The act is a *enactment* of a remembered role, its partial performance highlighting memory's fragmentation.

This filmic portraiture of Muriel lends no clue to the therapist's question, as she is reduced to 'doing' nothing, in her evident lack of presence to her ritualistic series of movements, the viewers must inevitably constitute her as a subject whose propre-ty is vacancy. The restless activity is in effect a mechanistic deferral, a reflex impulse that results from a basic human motivation to 'do', to 'be', but the erosion of memory, and resultant blurring of identity, removing the purposive element leaving its simulacrum (of what she 'did' do, when she 'was') as empty gesture.

It is this intellectual vacancy that makes the therapist's revelation that Muriel also was a therapist so destabalising for the viewer. The chair-shuffling images have prepared the audience-expectation of a manual job, appearing as a "domestic's" remnants, the seeming-complete absence of focusable intellect engender the specious assumption that she was not so bright before Alzheimer's. In having an actual therapist present, the reality of the deterioration is manifested in a way language could not; it is the demonstration of presence and *its* absence that captures exactly how devastating this disease is. While the three other 'fictionalised' brides are foregrounded as hypothetical Others, the past/present therapist pairing ostensively portrays a meeting of the two *in* the present - a before-and-after Alzheimer's which allows the sentient therapist to mourn her Other, and confront her own decline.

> Muriel Allen, a therapist like me
> now beyond all forms of therapy.
> And if Alzheimer's doesn't spare her -
> lifetime professional carer -

and destroys a mind of Muriel's kind,
- and a *therapist*! - no one's free

It is perhaps unique to the role of therapist to be present to the *reality* of your own potential disintegration, as the process of caring necessitates an identificatory aspect, an ability to perceive your patients as people *in their own right*, as who they used to be, and so maintain the dignity of their existence in their current situation. Therapist-Muriel must have in turn contemplated the possibility of her own subjection to Alzheimer's, the realisation of this feared prophesy being captured by the video-instant which telescopes therapist/patient, self/other, into an endless chain, a *mis en abyme*.

This linkage is captured by the 'black daisy' motif, first introduced as the therapist tries to stimulate Muriel's memory by singing 'Daisy, Daisy', a song she was able to join-in with a fortnight earlier. Music occupies the role of central signifying structure in the video; musical memory is the last thing to fade in Alzheimer victims. This mnemonic 'key' is semiotically signalled by the punching of the door code which opens the ward door, its bleeps played-over by the theme, *Daisy, Daisy*, the monotone actuality of the keys echoing the monothematic response of the patients to the therapist's song. Muriel struggles to evade her carer's grasp while she sings to her, musical multidimensionality supplementing the lack in the other.

This graphic of 'filling' an absence while pointing to its existence, the dual operation of Derrida's *suppliér* is *visually* echoed by the black-daisy-tiled corridors of the hospital. This imagistic perversion of nature, blanking out colour, contrast, detail, leaving the daisy's silhouette, its outline, while erasing its features, its properties, transfers to the Alzheimer's victims, *their* external form remains such that they are identifiable, but the internal features propre to them are blanked out, making them (in Harrison's characteristic 'real-ising' of metaphors) 'a shadow of who they used to be'. The corollary *fragmentation* of self, identity, is suggested by the mosaiced daisy-tiles of the floor, in turn a sister semiotic to the opening-title credits' dry stone wall, an edifice that 'lacks' the cement to hold it together: the first view of Menston hospital is through a crack in the wall, 'fractures' in the structure of identity 'lead to' the institution.

The black/white, presence/absence graphic introduced by the daisy motif provides the framework around which the bridal 'Other' is recreated; the white bridal gown connotes innocence, optimism, worn at an event which signals full presence as it is constituted on the potential/symbolic 'giving' of the self (linked with the traditional marriage proposal in the song *Daisy, Daisy,*) and it is the inversion of this potential that portrays the destruction of Alzheimer's. The white daisy petals of innocence blanked out, the bride no longer gives herself as, but is 'taken', her identity stolen from her, her memories (corollary to the *hopes* engendered at the wedding) nullified, leaving gaping absence. This visual metaphor is re-enforced by the black version of the theme

song:

> Daisies, daisies, their petals black and thrown.
> Thrown on paths where memories turn to stone.
> A black bouquet there is
> For brides Alzheimer's seizes.
> The groom beside each white clad bride
> Wears a black daisy button hole.

The symbolic 'throwing' of the bride's bouquet becomes reinterpreted, 'thrown' connotes over-blown, past their prime, degenerating, thrown away.

The confusion and distorted perceptions are filmically realised, taking the viewers inside the experience, mimicking the therapist(s)'s 'journey', by a defamiliarization of the hospital environment. On the corridor linking inside and out shown, to be incomprehensibly threatening through unfamiliar use of camera angle and blurred focus, the laundry vehicle is close-mic'ed to a distorted whine and the echoing footsteps that tread its black-daisy-strewn way seem to personify the approach of (or the approach toward) Alzheimer's to claim his next 'bride'. This spatial symbolism of the corridor as 'threshold', whose traversal links the worlds of disease, distortion *and* the 'inner' mental universe of the patients distanced from the 'real' world, with the 'outside world', ignorant of the hideous distortions perceptually enacted as symptom of the disease, visually replicates the mnemonic technique of using *loci* and *imagines*. The concrete space of the hospital serves as visual plan for the mental plane of the memory around which can be placed a series of images which prompt the recall of certain ideas.

> In order to form a series of places in memory, a building is to be remembered, as spacious and varied a one as possible, the forecourt, the living room, bedrooms, and parlours, not omitting statues and other ornaments with which the rooms are decorated. The images by which the speech is to be remembered [...] are then placed in imagination on the places which have been memorized in the building. [...] We have to think of the ancient orator as moving in imagination through his memory building *whilst* he is making his speech, drawing from the memorized places the images he has placed upon them.[5]

The topography of the video hinges around this corridor which symbolically joins inside and out yet is also figured as a delineation, rite-passage which entraps *and* enables. The fictionalised brides exist purely in this spatial 'memory' zone, cut off from both their 'real' or physical selves and (recalling Harrison's wish to do so in the long poem) unable to escape into the outside world at the other end of the passage.

The patients themselves peer out from their locked wards but are unable to open the door to their separated memories; only the therapist/orator can pass between the two, her mastery of the locus identifying the video point-of-view as belonging to her, a visual projection of the workings of a mnemonically-summoned speech. The viewer

inhabits the created space of her memory, sees the images placed there - brides, daisies, confetti - experiences an internal memoryscape. This unique role is assigned because *as* therapist her potential degeneration is already embodied in Muriel, psychoanalytic overlapping placing her as a sort of Everywoman, containing the seeds of her entrapment in its realisation in the form of her Other. She is symbolically able to cross the borders because they have ceased to function as discrete divisions. She not only has the possibility of her own ceasing to 'function' everpresent in the form of her patients, but (in a movement traceable to Harrison's otherness in "v.'s" skin, and his otherness *of* the skin) she specifically supplies their lack; Muriel's wandering memory finds a displaced repository in her therapist's mind, which takes on not just the abdicated *role*, but the material lost to the former therapist, professional *and* personal. She remembers that which her patients ought to but no longer can, to try and rekindle their lost information, a mnemonic invagination which brings with it the trace of loss within this movement of displacement and relocation. The therapist retains a textualisation of her patients' 'missing' identities, past lives, a hypomnesis of the 'original' mneme, repeated in the hope that the 'prosthesis' will provoke the return of the lost trace, a self presence, a relationship reiterated in the fictionalised 'brides', played by nurses from Whearnside[6].

The repository of memory is marked as a physical trace in each *actor*, Derrida's 'already written' made literal as repetition which cites its former presence but cannot reproduce itself as identical form. The individual's 'originary repetition' is conflated, their life/memory - a series of always-modified presents formed around the present's deferral, experienced through the mediation of what is remembered to have been - becomes the *actualized* enactment of this process by the nurses who metonymically serve as videoic 'prosthesis' of the trace that remains as propre to the individual, so anterior to any one instant of their patients' self-presence.

> The outside, 'spatial' and 'objective' exteriority which we believe we know as the most familiar thing in the world, as familiarity itself, would not appear without the gramme, without differance as temporalization, without the nonpresence of the other inscribed within the sense of the present, without the relationship to death as the concrete structure of the living present.[7]

To show that there is a 'lack' there has to be a specific, correlative present, so the device of the nurses (already positioned as containing the Other through the explicit therapist/patient pairing discussed above) allows the absent mental process to be enacted *through* their specular role as trace. They involute the loss (of memory, sanity) of their patients, whilst potentially becoming Alzheimer victims themselves, so they embody the surplus or supplementary, not just *professionally* (taking on the patients' histories to stimulate its rekindling through therapy), but by inverting this relationship such that as Other, the activated lack creates an equivalent 'present' in

them: they supply their patients' lack(s) as *additional* voice to their diminished video presence, and as *occupying* the created subject-void.

This repetition of repetition again shadows the process of memory itself, deconstructing the Platonic conception of 'original' or living memory; the 'brides' inhabit the symbolic corridor linking inside and out, so are metonymically *internal* presentations of memory-before-it-becomes-external, becomes mediated signification. They demonstrate that, even within the mind itself, memory is constituted of separate traces that retextualise the subject. The bride exists simultaneously with the patient, present yet separated, subject and trace.

This indeterminable presence/absence divide is the hymen's graphic (co-presence of which division is constitutive), presented in the video by the bridal imagery. Maria Tobin's procession down the aisle is interrupted by temporal rupture, the 'marriage'⁸ is halted by the reinsertion of a 'present' that is its future, turning the wedding into trace, an invagination present even in the 'original' wedding, represented via the photograph.

> [Therapist, off screen]
> -Maria, come and sing. [sings] Give me your answer do.
> [Maria as bride]
> -The answer's 'no' then. That bloody Daisy Daisy!
>
> Maria, I've lost Maria, Mari.....
> [Door closes after her, cutting off her words, trapping her veil]

By foregrounding the textualisation inherent in the representational process, the modification of the mneme away from the 'original' present to its reconstitution as context-bound reiteration is made plain, the nurse/bride *retains* the trace of dementia, each simulacra of the wedding is framed by the patients' simultaneous video present.

So bride-Maria is destabalized in her self-conception, her wedding aria, ruptured by the insertion of the *im*propre, prevents her progress down the aisle/corridor towards her future as it is folded-in as the already-present, the nurses' voices recalling her to a different self-present which displaces the framed 'identity'. As each separate persona or 'present' is compartmentalised, prevented from creating a unified subject, so the specular bride-as-trace is unable to reach the self she commemorates. In the utterance 'I've lost Maria', the trace claims the role of the subjective *'je'*, positing the notion of identity being centred around a subject being present-to themselves: the Alzheimer patient unable to be such, it is their trace, or mnemonic 'other' that lives on, maintaining the identity that can no longer be claimed. What is 'named' as the subject, *'moi'*, lives on, but without the desiring will-to-unity. Fittingly, the continuation of the trace/other as what was *propre* to them demonstrates the movement of the propre as anterior to the individual, re-constituting them beyond the possibility of its enactment.

This psycho-spatial metaphor is continued through the use of the corridor corner mirror which doubles its function to show round corners, to reflect what is separated in the memory, the 'reality' of the ward is captured in the process of *mis en abyme*, the contorted replication presented in the bowed mirror serving as a corollary to the distorted world view of the patient. The passage between bride/nurse is filmically signalled through the second order presentation, the traversal not being seen, but reflected, the motif of the simulacra maintained.

The video embeds its structure's representational nature. The nurses and therapists are 'actors', singing poetry to enhance the artificiality of the video-framing. The only 'real' people, the patients, *cannot* present themselves, Alzheimers having made them reductivist caricatures of who they would claim to be. There is no (marker of) *reality* against which to read the programme, viewers are obliged to create significances from the textual layers of presence and presents alone, in an operation mimetic of the early disordering process of the dementia it discusses. Moreover this signification-textualisation is suggested to be inscribed in the operation of memory itself; voice-overs from patients' families recall how they used to be,

    -The way she made friends was amazing.
    -My mother could put a dress together in...
    -She was absolutely fabulous.

freezing the person as a living textualisation inhabiting memory while the remaining 'shell' is seen no longer to exhibit these *proper*ties, the composed-remembered is more 'real' than the 'present' reality. The sufferers' inappropriate behaviour is contrasted with the mnemonic idealisation, the catalogue of disturbed behaviour-patterns which, for the viewers, fits the presented subject seen in the hospital, is seen by those who know/knew the patients to illustrate the absence of the person:

    -It takes everything away from you, doesn't it.
    -It's the stripping away of all present memory.
    -He put his pants on back to front.
    -Apple cores in vases.
    -All the ornaments started being painted gold.

As in the long poem, the subjects are reconstructed through the textualisation of the memories of 'others', a psychoanalytic reversal of the individual's cognitive process; instead of constituting them*selves* against what is 'other', this division functions as the other becoming the means of retroactively determining what they were. What is (was) propre to the individual can now only be ascertained by the *im*propriety of their current behaviour.

However, what has been designated *impropre* to the subject by the testimony of the relatives is picked up as propre to their present reality, linking the seeming dislocation of identities, as Harrison's technique of reducing language to reframe it as a material

signifier (as in the 'O'-semiotic - 'Omar Khayyam', "*v.*"), is employed to match the deterioration of the patients' linguistic skills. This dismantling of language to a signifying structure that no longer *communicates* is reinserted into the bridal textualisations; Maria Tobin's remnant of her operatic past, the one high 'A', from "The Death of Butterfly" structures her bridal aria, as does Kathleen's stammer, her inability to form words intruding upon her (fictionalised) past such that it performs a signature effect (recalling Harrison's stammerer-uncle's), the repeated initial acting as metonymic of her inability to 'name' or constitute herself:

> Yeah, I'm motorbike bride,
> I'm Kath the motorbike bride,
> Harold and me we used to court on
> a BSA and then a Norton.
> Harold in the steering and me
> me on a car at the side.
> Motorbiked to mountains,
> me and Harold went
> up Mickle Fell and up Pen-y-gent
> Me, C, C, Can't you still tell from my stride?

The oral presentation of the text makes the stuttered 'C' pragmatically linked with the preceding 'me', makes it be received as the 'K' - 'Me, K, K,' - of a self unable to claim their proper name. The linguistic impediment invaginates the patients' current state within the reconstruction of the past, such that the simulacrum is able to question whether what they have become is inscribed in the identity that seems to be lost, while supplying the present lack itself;

> but God damn it, I'm gl, gl, gl, gl, gl
> glad I'm still Kath and alive.

The way Kath is 'alive' is explored by the materiality of her life, the self-sufficiency of the 'angler, climber, dancer, gardener' being framed as a separate context, a recreation of the production of an individual without the person being there, being capable of creating it themselves, again. The external is used as the only concrete way of invoking the internal dysfunction. This productivity is intercut with the 'real' subject - focusing on her mouth, unable to speak for herself, now only producing 'nonsense syllables' - then returns to the 'bride', to express the disorientation Kath herself is unable to articulate:

> All I remember is four
> or at the very most five
> words that still have some meaning...

This multidimensional construction of the subject draws on Harrison's technique of using different genres and filmic 'realities' to avoid a *determined* framing that in this case could not present a process that demands a series of temporalities to show

deterioration. The issue is not simply the sufferers' ultimate disabling, but the agonizing stripping away of the persona, characteristics. The video's re-constructive technique communicates the *event* of loss.

However, it moves away from its functional purpose to exploit the subjects' lack of control over their identities to prioritize *Harrison's* textualisation over the living person. This is particularly evident in the third 'bride', Muriel Prior, who's 'living speech' is re-inserted into a dialogue with her alter-ego bride, pragmatically creating the illusion that she is claiming responsibility for her textual 'other':

> Bride 3:
> If life gave you back tomorrow
> our memories joy and sorrow -
> not just the best, but all the rest,
> would you want to relive them?
> Muriel:
> Yes.

While it is the basic human will-to-live that makes Alzheimers' seem such a cruel disease, as it robs the person of the memories of all they have been and done, making Muriel's apparent speech-act of reclaiming them theoretically justified, it is an *improper* use of what remaining subjectivity she has to make it subject-to the translations of her textual 'other'. If Alzheimers' depersonalises the individual, the video treatment itself compounds this effacement as the patients are secondary to the more recognisable textual personifications, the remainder of what they give themselves as is misappropriated to confirm the validity of the imago. While the brides are ostensibly reconstituted from the trace, historical and linguistic, of the individual, the *actual* trace is negated, as supplementary to the video's re-trace (in a real-life repetition of the supplementarising of *Medea's* women's 'selves' by the male-chorus' account of their actions). This becomes objectionable as the subject is subordinate to her 'other' to an extent that anticipates the human; this 'other' properly enacts the function of the propre in existing anterior to the individual, except that it is no way propre-to them. The established videoic metaphor has created a relationship that exceeds its moral and philosophical boundaries in that the supplementary ceases to function as 'addition' and inserts itself into the space left by the 'lack': of memory and self-presence.

The blending of temporal realities is signalled by the clearing up of confetti at Muriel's feet, residue of the bridal-blizzard that signals the onset of dementia in the video. The symbolic is inserted into the everyday, as was initially attempted in *The Blasphemers' Banquet* auction scene[9], but here, unlike there, the subject is unable to re-appropriate her presentation; her illness, that which the video purports to present (in a sympathetic light, as with the oral cultures in *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, and the women of *Medea*) is that which makes her subject-to manipulative re-framing, constituted as

actor without being capable of conscious participation, her loss of self-presence ultimately enabling the video to re-constitute it at will. While this might create effective television, its past use within the Harrison oeuvre, in relation to statues, pictures etc. where the subject is *actually* absent, and for the most part 'lives-on' (*survive*)[10] as textualisations within the literary discourse with which the video is engaging, demonstrates the designed im-*propriety* of this act[11]. Here, the metaphoric 'absence' is made literal, in her illness Muriel is made to occupy a re-textualisation that reappropriates the last trace of self, becoming a virtual 'prosthesis' to her own commemoration.

> Muriel:
> What about the, the thing that I want to do?
> Sung voice over:
> Muriel braves the blizzard with her big blue eyes.
> In a few more weeks though, Muriel Prior dies.
> [Muriel looks down, leans slightly forward speciously signalling acceptance]

The montaged comment from Muriel seems central to the entire video's ethics - her inability to *name* her desire leads to it being overlooked. In this out-of-context splicing, the subject-less question identifies her as pure 'loss', sans linguistic control, sans the ability to do what she chooses or remember what she might have chosen to do. The subject effectively speaks her disablement.

Yet the structural governance of her video-presentation negates the statement which was propre-to Muriel, and reclaims her as its created subject-in-process, reinserting her within its own disorienting symbolic temporality, and in effect making its own fictional 'blizzard' more 'true' than her own articulation of her present confusion. The banal characterisation ('big blue eyes') makes the rhyme ('dies') crass; in its rhetorical foregrounding, the actual death is devalued, the event seems governed by the structure that presents it, an impression compounded by Muriel's bowed head, apparently gesturing understanding and acquiescence. This overtly theocratic poetic statement again prioritises the videoic over the subject's present.

While it is arguably necessary to show Alzheimers' as a terminal disease, the device of textualizing the patients has come to mean that they are constituted as 'fictionalisations', such that their death does not carry the connotational 'seriousness' it propre-ly demands. Generically, the documentaries this video cites would announce any deaths of featured subjects after the programme, but in presenting itself as a self-consciously 'art' video, *Black Daisies for The Bride* invaginates this announcement, incorporates it into its structure.

Because of the familiarity of death as a *motif*, from "*v.*" onwards, Harrison can no longer deal with it outside the frame of fiction; it is psychoanalytically plausible that

his inability to deal with it *per se* leads him to return to it continually in this non-threatening context. As I have proposed throughout this thesis, Harrison uses the fictional medium to create signifiers which, while gaining signification from their seeming autonomy, are subject to his manipulation, so he defers the threat of the Other, in constituting it textually as his literary 'other' - the other of the *'je'* inscribed in the poems, and *enacted* in the videos. The Harrison who contemplates his/his parents' grave is as much a product of the video medium as of the identified split effected by the ungovernable signifier in writing. Language's *'je'* finds its corollary in the video's *imago*, and not only in respect to the viewers' specular relations with their 'Other'[12]; the effect on the author of the self-conscious 'signature effect'[13] is apparently to anticipate the splitting and inscribe it within the 'written' nature of his video work.

Harrison textually anticipates another person's death: Rene Parker's near catatonic state leads to a devaluing of her person insofar as her husband's continued affection is presented as narcissistic, un-genuine:

> And till Rene Parker died, Rene died,
> her husband's weekly kisses consoled his pride.
> Only eight more kisses then he'll lose his dear,
> swept off in the blizzard where brides disappear.

The verite footage of a husband still fond of his wife, able to see her as a person despite the advanced stage of the disease, portrays more movingly the personal tragedy of Alzheimers' than any detached textual commentary, but Harrison's ironical stance imposes a textual dominance that ignores evermore 'living' individual subjectivities, framing them as process; installing a temporal frame 'eight more kisses', he fails entirely to confront the personal.

Whatever the reason for this omission, it serves to instil the thesis that the loss of memory, self-presence actually means the loss of the subject propre, 'endorsed' by his appropriation of their properties no-longer governed by the *presence* of the individual. The fallacious nature of this thesis is promoted by the continuation of the subjects themselves to present an individuality that works against the video commandeering it, the 'lack' of Self, is still a *specific* unique-to-themselves *loss*, and cannot be properly filled by a textualisation.

This returns us to Harrison's discussion of Memory, and the nature of our continual re-writing of ourselves through the operation of a textualised past. While no event can be repeated, or, consequently 'remembered' (as Platonic mneme), it is the unique play of traces that leads a subject to give themselves-as an identity that is different to that which can be re-constituted by *others* from external textualised traces. The failure of the video representations re-marks the loss in not being present within the textualisations; Emanual Stratas' 'commemoration' is measurably different in its

treatment because Harrison is involuted within the fabric of the *recalled* commemoration.

9.4 CONCLUSION: THE PROPRE-PERSONAL

In conclusion, then, Harrison's work is most successful when it engages with *his* personal - the sonnet sequence where he comes to terms with his past, "*v.*" as an exploration of a mythic 'alter ego'. However, there are identifiable problems when he attempts to 'represent' subjects that are not propre-to himself - the women's discourse in *Medea: A Sex-War Opera*, the social representation inscribed in the double reading of "*v.*" - and claims to allow these other voices space within his work then re-writes them, (increasingly in later television work, from *The Blasphemers' Banquet* to his latest *Black Daisies for the Bride*).

While self-consciously foregrounding the poststructural fragmentation of the subject in language, and ironising his own textualisation, he subjects the presentation of others within his videos to a similar treatment; it is not propre to them, they do not control or consent to it. A 'true' portrayal is not possible, but the problematics of framing his subjects 'properly', intrinsic to the philosophy Harrison derives from his parent-community's conception of language and art (informing the project of "*from* The School of Eloquence", its 'oral' communities' belief in linguistic eloquence to express 'properly' what they are unable to formulate, and of "*v.*", to articulate the symbolic aggression of the graffitied sign) makes him responsible for his subsequent manipulation of communicative strategies in the televisual media, the main tool of communicative power for these non-literate social groups. While not ultimately able to control the multivalent network of significations, he is responsible for its appropriation and re-presentation, and often it is the written itself that would lead his fictional personifications to say, 'Don't treat me like I'm dumb!' ("*v.*"); within the new media he subjects his subjects to a new form of ineloquence in removing their propre characteristics and inscribing in/over them a technological eloquence that exploits their 'restricted', denotational reality.

This new problematic comes with the translation of the poetic form onto video, the reinvocation of its oral origins, establishing the poet as community-spokesperson, finds Harrison too distanced from the social groups he speaks for. The technologizing of the 'global village' allows its experimental recreation within the 'secondary orality' age, but the media-'literacy' required to assume such a role necessarily demands that the poet/orator no longer be a 'naive' participant of the lifeworld of at least half of his potential audience, the propre position from which I have shown Harrison to derive his authority, 'half' from his working-class knowledge, 'half' from his middle-class

eloquence.

In communicating within the realm propre to the times, Harrison re-discovers the effective alienation explored in his printed texts. The searched-for sincerity that evades the rhetorical glibness of 'eloquence' is again represented in a different form, and Harrison has yet to find a way of uniting his poststructural understanding of the visual medium with his audiences' less self-conscious reception of it. As with linguistic eloquence, the awareness of the propagandic force of the televisual, misinvested in its denotative aspects of 'presence' and 'reality', means that the desire to *not* manipulate communicative response binds as much as the initial ineloquence that prompted its acquisition.

In moving towards a communicative sphere that frames the possibility of reaching mass audiences, Harrison re-creates the same set of problems that lead him to make the move initially: the ultimate impossibility of reaching the still largely oral-based communities with the written word demanded the move to their *propre* medium, but this medium is not propre-to Harrison as poet, the oral 'roots' he shows are underpinned by typographic structures, his readings are performances of *written* texts. It is this 'written' that is inappropriate to his subjects and subject matter. As oral codes acquire an inelegance and awkwardness when directly transcribed into typographic form, the written structure inscribing *its* properties, marking it as 'improper', both to elaborated/literary-typographic readers (whether they attribute a negative judgement to this or not, the sense of difference, the deferral of the code that properly occupies the space, is a measurable semantic fact), *and* to the speakers of the transcribed code. Harrison's own will-to-eloquence was catalysed by the inappropriateness of his family's attempts to harness the formal.

Harrison's 'quest for a public poetry'[14]deliberately draws on the Greek dramatic tradition of poetry being a language in which to discuss a range of issues from the political to the personal, but in resituating it within the modern televisual pantheon, he doesn't take account of his use of 'real' people, not actors, playing themselves, unmasked, and ungodly. In this sense the regrafting of tradition is misapplied, as his texts are written for the 'masked' subject, who 'keeps on speaking'[15]in the face of tragedy, but in his videos the mask is *his* textual overlay, the words that continue stem from his narrative after the individual has ceased (as discussed in *Black Daisies for the Bride*, and *Loving Memory*), making the living/present subject pure vehicle, the 'original' device of mask as enabling function surpassed. The anonymity of a mask would negate Harrison's project - his referents are real - yet the invisible mask of language which he grafts on the real subjects hides their subjectivity, their real-ity, while purposefully retaining their authority, their actualite'.Likewise, his earlier poetic

exploration of the silencing of the ineloquent, and the problems of effectively communicating between disparate social groups (framed by his own experiences explicated in the sonnet sequence), has shifted in emphasis as inevitably the catalytic sense of alienation is replaced by an increasing identification with a particular literary community, leading him to finally state:

> ...my upbringing among the so-called 'inarticulate' people has given me a passion for language that communicates directly and immediately. I prefer the idea of men speaking to men (sic.) to a man speaking to god, or, worse, to Oxford's anointed.[16]

This statement embraces the possibility of 'a' language that reaches all groups, a stance which belies his earlier works' dialogic speech structures and initial engagement with multi-media formats. The increasingly theocratic structure of his textualisations positions Harrison uncomfortably close to extending his metaphoric chain to Author/God speaking *for* men. I also note that the proposed speech structures inscribe the masculine such that Harrison's projects to incorporate the discours feminine are incontrovertibly framed by their use as another mask, behind which the voice of the male speaks, Artaud's condemnation of logocentric theatre continues to apply.

As I hope my analyses have shown, Harrison's actual productions provide a richness and breadth of material that work together, despite or because of the foregrounded intentions of the poet-filmmaker; his pioneering work in the creation of a video-poetry lays him open to criticism in the necessity of discovering the problems and shortcomings of the medium *as it is created.* As such, the role of this thesis has not been to provide an appraisal of Harrison's poetic/dramatic success, but to discuss the specular and linguistic-philosophical difficulties which emerge, propre to their new site, and deconstruct the philosophical *framing* of these productions as integral to the new areas of interrogation, mapping the field of play between what Harrison claims to do, what he actually does, and the resultants.

The Blasphemers' Banquet was one of the first documentaries to effectively harness montage, verite footage and authorial involvement, creating interactive viewing in its infancy. New technology has made genuinely interactive viewing possible, and I believe Harrison was correct in his pinpointing of this trend as a move towards a unifying involvement of different social groups. However, the techniques he evolved have since been re-used as inter-textual citation, such that they now perform the role of the filmically *written*, the generation of significance from the interaction between conflicting syntagma, linguistic and filmic is now directly transferred from text to text, such that the signature effect of the material as propre-to the author assumes primacy over its receptive encoding by the audience. Unless Harrison himself addresses the problems inscribed in his new media projects, he runs the risk of producing increasingly

bounded art that recycles the motifs of death, the 'big 'O'' and female protagonists speaking a pseudo-Northern dialect, until he becomes his own hyper-textualisation, leaving the real in evermore personal attempts to engage it:

> *A circle of white surrounded by a black circle. It could be read as a 'deconstructed' top hat. Behind, the three Olivier shutters, white with black edges, like blank funeral cards.*
>
> Tony Harrison, *Square Rounds*, 1992, 'Performed almost entirely by women...'

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[1]Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy" in *A Derrida Reader*, page 133.

[2] Derrida, "Différence" in *A Derrida Reader*, page 73-4

[3]Derrida, "Freud and The Scene of Writing", in *Writing And Difference*, page 203.

[4]Derrida, *'hypomnemata'* are 'monumentsinventories, archives, citations, copies, accounts, tales, lists, notes, duplicates. chronicles, genealogies, references. Not memory but memorials.' *Dissemination*, page 107.

[5] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, page 18.

[6] 'Whearnside' is the Alzheimer's ward at Menston. In re-presenting the brides from the 'original' black-and-white wedding photos, the visual trace is recreated, though again this authoritative medium posits the death/loss of the subject, the non-presence of the subject, 'framed' as this-has-been, is doubly marked as absent in the video presentation, which activates the lost subject through her simulacrum, the philosophical made physical in 'filling' her metaphorically designated space with a *replication* of an imago.

[7] Derrida, "Differance at the Origin", in *A Derrida Reader*, page 42.

[8] One of the configurations of hymen, see my chapter on Medea.

[9] See my chapter on *The Blasphemers' Banquet* for a discussion of Harrison's failure to govern, and fictionalise reality external to the video's frame.

[10]I allude to the Derridean sense of *sur vive* discussed in "Living On: Border Lines".

[11]To an extent, an 'autodepersonalisation' links the 'subjects' Harrison gives voice - the 'oral' not only have no 'eloquence', but can not identify it being mis-appropriated to them; *Medea's* women, absenting themselves from the economy of truth, seem to create a vacancy in which it can be written; the monuments (*The Blasphemers' Banquet, The Gaze of The Gorgon*), lend their authority to Harrison's words on exactly this condition. I have already indicated my unease with Harrison's extension of this technique in relation to the actual deceased subject in the *Loving Memory* series, and I see this latest use as an unthinking continuation that confuses innovation with exploitation, but, as *theme* of his texts, the giving (his) voice to those whose own has been *removed*, has always contained exploitation.

[12]Metz et al.

[13]Derrida, in *Screen/Play* discussed in the chapter dealing with the *Loving Memory* series.

[14]Tony Harrison, foreword of the Bloodaxe Anthology *Tony Harrison*.

[15]Radio 3 interview.

[16]Tony Harrison, foreword to the Bloodaxe Anthology.

APPENDICES

Of the five appendices which follow, two are 'tables' of the videofilms "*v.*" and *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, one is a transcription of the videopoem "Into The Void", part three of the series *Loving Memory*, and two are analytical. These, the last two, represent 'close readings' of Harrison's use of videomontage, included here to demonstrate the density of his technique, not easily appreciated by simply viewing the videos. Appendix four looks at the opening montage, what I refer to in the text of the thesis as the 'promovideo', of "*v.*", newsreel footage from WWII, while the final appendix breaks down the last montage sequence of *The Blasphemers' Banquet*, what Harrison himself refers to (in notes to the printed version of the poem) as the 'extended sequence of fundamentalists'. These are drawn from equally full analyses of the whole of the two 'videopoems', which I could not include here for reasons of length.

'v.' - FILM SEMIOTICS TABLE

00.00 Tony Harrison (TH) walking in a snowy graveyard (Beeston Graveyard, Leeds, the one featured on the cover of the Penguin *Selected Poems of Tony Harrison*). Camera pans up from the ground, showing his footprints in the snow.

00.22 By-line on screen: 'TONY HARRISON'.

00.23 Voice of TH as internal narrator. Camera spans up and away from 'speaker': '*I first came here with my dad, during the war. A lot of the graves were leaning over, and he told me this was due to subsidence, because there was a worked out pit underneath the graveyard. And when I came to tend his grave, in May 1984, during the miners' strike, I remembered what he'd told me and I began my poem, 'v.*".

00.54 Different recording quality of *spoken* soundtrack, less polished. Speaker's tone less authoritative, more hesitant, conversational. Camera follows TH walking as above, then tracking shot, keeping with him as he walks among the graves. *This is the grave where my* (pause) *mother 'n' father are buried. Where my father's mother 'n' father are buried. It has a panoramic view of the whole of Leeds.*

00.55 Front shot of TH approaching his parents' grave.

01.03 TH looks direct to camera, points beyond it: *'This way, towards the Town Hall, er, Leeds' Grammar School and the University of Leeds* [shot of University on the horizon] *where I studied and got the education, that took me away from this background. In this direction it overlooks Leeds United football ground, er, Elland Road.* [shot of Elland Road, but shadowy, indistinct] *There's room for one more body in this grave and it, could be mine, and when I think about, er, returning here, to be buried, to be, er, united, with the people who are buried here already, the butcher, the publican and the baker, I have to ask myself how... what I do...poetry... relates to what they provided the, basic essentials of life: bread, meat and beer.'*

01.57 Close up of Churchill's victory 'V', scans back from hand to show top half of text speaker. Black and white war footage. *'The day of Hitler's downfall will be a bright one for our country, and for all mankind. The bells will clash their peals of victory and hope. And we will march forward together, encouraged, invigorated, and still I trust, generally united, upon our further journey.'*

02.17 Hitler in similar screen position to Churchill (above), using parallel gestural semiotics, though soundtrack indistinct, the overall message seems to be comparable with the previous shot.

02.22 Nazi procession of standard-bearers, in parallel formation, then parting (V shape).

02.28 Explosion, seems to be a firework, then is recontextualised as a bomb. From this the following rapid-cutting war montage follows:

02.31 Searchlights pan the sky, side shot from right.

02.32 Searchlights from behind, viewer positioned as actor.

02.32 Planes picked out by the searchlights. Guns shoot - parallel axis to the lights (02.31) only from the left. Explosion from three guns.

'v.' - FILM SEMIOTICS TABLE

02.33 Camera follows missile-shot through the air. Whited out screen, illuminating single gunner in the flare of the explosion (one frame only).

02.34 Black screen with tiny specks of debris.

02.35 Repeat of (02.33). Explosion - actual torpedo invisible. Rapid firing.

02.36 Blank screen with specks of debris, as (02.34).

02.37 Two bombers fly past (close up), the shadow of the pilot, firing, can just be made out.

02.38 Close up of plane undercarriage, dropping torpedoes.

02.41 Aerial shot of sky specked with falling missiles, structural replica of the gun shot at (02.32).

02.43 Camera follows the falling missiles, which, freed from context, seem to float upwards! Then they seem to be fragments of an explosion themselves.

02.45 Flash of an explosion. Then shot of an area of ground, illuminated (bombed).

02.47 Second explosion.

02.48 Series of explosions in the sky.

02.52 Pinpricks of light in a black background.

02.52 Illuminated nose of bomber, including the cockpit, and shadow where the pilot should be. (one frame).

02.53 Inside the cockpit of (02.53), pilot wearing gas mask.

02.54 Explosion in the sky.

02.55 Cut to the ground. Army firemen attempting to extinguish burning buildings. Fire illuminates the shot, the firemen themselves are only in silhouette. A jet of water follows the same spatial trajectory as the preceding line of fire from the gunners, this parallel image-composition links the aggressor and the target/victims.

02.59 High building starts to collapse in a mass of smoke and fire (silhouette). Matches the debris of the disintegrating planes (02.34), (02.36) etc.

03.01 Camera tracks the falling debris of the building's three stories, from the roof down. By the time the shot reaches the ground level we can see the firemen (12.55) below being hit by the crumbling masonry.

03.04 Firemen duck, mirroring the downwards movement of the collapsing building and the tracking camera.

03.05 Shot of an extremely long ladder with a fireman on the top rung.

03.07 Close up of (03.05), frame composition an inverted 'V', made from the ladder, and the jet of water sprayed downwards.

03.09 Dark image. Skyline lit briefly by an explosion - a dome can momentarily be made out (St. Paul's?).

03.10 People wandering through smoke and debris, one carrying a cross.

03.14 Man ringing warning bell, face obscured.

03.15 Firemen come running out of a prefab.

03.18 Underneath-shot of a plane wing with target painted on.

03.19 The three guns on the side of the plane fire.

03.20 Plane propellers start up, ready for take off. Side view, pans out to watch them taxi on the airstrip.

03.23 Two planes in the air.

03.24 Shot from underneath, as (03.18).

03.27 Partial view of pilot's profile, seen from the side of a cloudy windscreen of open topped fighter plane.

03.27 Shot of hand as the finger presses the fire button.

03.28 Hole tears the body of a plane apart.

03.29 Blurred shot of an erratic plane in flight, disintegrating, in the light from an explosion.

03.30 Another plane with a hole torn in it.

03.32 Sideways manoeuvring plane.

03.33 Front view, shaded of (03.32).

03.35 Plane (as above) starts to disintegrate.

03.35 Repeat frame (03.32).

03.36 Hole in plane, as (03.30).

03.37 Front view, as (03.33).

03.38 Shot overlaid with shards of disintegrating debris.

03.40 Close up of gas mask worn by the obscured pilot. Shot slowly brings the whole face into view.

03.41 Cut to "'V' for Victory" poster. Slogan 'Win The Peace'. Stylised black buildings with a shining white 'V' in the centre. See structural inverse of (03.07).

03.44 Street celebration scene, shot of family and lots of children. Camera pans sideways to include the banner: 'Victory / There Will Always Be An England', with crown motif above.

03.51 Arm chalks a 'V' on a wall, then walks off to the right. The person is obscured, but the sign remains in focus after his absence.

03.53 Two lines of female platoons, three abreast, converge to form a 'V'. (contrast with the German soldiers *diverging* formation, (02.22).

04.00 Overhead view of Churchill, waving to mass crowds. The 'V' salute is darkness against the white of the crowds' faces.

04.04 Shot of Margaret Thatcher, with three others (cabinet members?), slowed film sequence. PM's barred teeth, caught mid-smile, shows naked aggression.

04.05 Focuses on her 'V' sign.

04.07 Thatcher lowers her head, looks up through squinted eyes and raises her fingers in a gesture of insult (a frame much used on t-shirts, record sleeves etc.), behind her colleagues scowl and leer, made grotesque by the slowed running of the film.

04.11 Above shot is overlaid with a close up of the gesturing hand.

04.16 The 'V' grows larger, and Scargill's text begins to appear behind it: 'MY FATHER STILL READS THE DICTIONARY EVERY DAY. HE SAYS YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON YOUR POWER TO MASTER WORDS.' Bold, Roman type - compare with the 'handwritten' typeface of the published version.

04.26 Quotation credited: 'ARTHUR SCARGILL / SUNDAY TIMES / JANUARY 10, 1982.' Compare published text: '10 Jan. 1982' - more 'diary like', less formal.

04.35 Spoken text starts: **'Next Millennium'**. Grey screen, denoting 'absence', camera scans down to graveyard, contextualising the grey as sky, as (01.03), anaphorically marking the video's 'Leeds' as indistinct, unrecognisable, and so generated by the consciousness of the text speaker.

04.38 Shot of graves, camera scans left.

05.09 Cut to close up of grave, scans right. **'...beneath this plot...'**.

05.20 Cut to TH, side view, reading his poem aloud to an audience in some kind of studio/hall. **'Wordsworth built church organs...'**.

05.50 TH turns the page of his book, the camera angle switches to front head and shoulders shot. **'If buried ashes...'**.

06.06 **'...disappoint their fans...'** Audience laughter.

06.14 Cut back to graveyard, crucifix leaning to the right. **'...glory of their team...'**.

06.17 Camera scans foreground.

06.21 Graffiti on grave: 'NF' in red.

06.24 Different graffitied grave, white paint, slogan unreadable.

06.26 Camera tracks the falling snow to the ground.

06.28 Similar crucifix shaped tombstone as (06.14), leaning all the way to the snow covered ground. **'One leaning left's marked FUCK...'**.

06.32 Camera continues scanning right. Tombstone with blue graffiti: 'LEEDS V DERBY' comes into shot. **'...SHIT...'**.

06.39 Another graffitied grave, white aerosol: 'SOUL SODS (?) FUCK'.

06.41 Camera continues scanning. Beer can crushed on top of flat plinth-type grave.

06.42 Graffitied grave, white aerosol, message obscured: 'Pebb..'.

06.43 Close up of grave in front of (06.42), white aerosol: 'C..T'.

06.47 More illegible graffiti: 'ST...'.

06.51 Graffitied grave, white aerosol: 'SHIT'. **'...blackened dynasty...'**.

06.54 Graffitied grave, white aerosol: 'TIM'.

06.58 As (06.51). '...crude four-letter word.'.

07.03 Graffitied grave, white aerosol: 'AS'.

07.06 Houses at the side of the graveyard come into shot behind the graves. First instance of the living, human world contextualised with the dead. Also more 'colour', after the black and white of snow on graves.

07.10 Cutting in this 'inscription sequence' coincides with the start of each new line of stanza 11. 'The language of ...'. Close up of grave inscription: 'AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF...'. Gothic script, circular raised engraving with wording surrounding it.

07.14 '...a bit of Latin...'. Sideways slanting shot of inscription: '...OF THE ABOVE / WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE..' Plain, bold capitals, contrast with preceding shot.

07.16 '...or those who...' Inscription close up, semi-gothic but not as archaic as (07.10): 'IN MEMORY OF...'.

07.19 '...the hymnal fragments...' Inscription close up: '...AGED 9 / "IN GOD'S KEEPING"' Fancy script.

07.22 '...how people 'fell asleep...'. Inscription close up: 'FELL ASLEEP...' Black stone, white letters, dribbles of dirty snow over the stone.

07.24 '...Good Lord'...'. Cut falls mid line, the rhythm broken, speeded up at this point. Pair of gravestones leaning together, the right hand one is focused on first, reading: 'SACRED', black marble, white capitals.

07.26 '...brief chisellable bits...'. Cut coincides with the opening foot of the line again. Focus on the inscription of the left stone of above shot: 'ETERNAL REST'.

07.29 '...and rhymes...'. Inscription close up: 'GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN'.

07.32 '...to CUNT, PISS...'. Cut back to TH in the studio, and the live performance of the poem. Change from images of permanence to human speaker coincides with the poem's subject-change from the religious to the secular. TH swears straight to camera - speech act as performative, directly challenging the viewer. Enactment of the poem.

08.09 '...versus Vs.' Gestural enactment of the spraying of 'Vs'.

08.26 '...much at school.' Snigger from audience, highlighting their cultural/social breakdown: their laughter at the symptoms and causes of delinquency marks them as perpetuators of the problem.

08.27 'Half this skinhead's...' Painted text of VE day slogan appears overlaying the reading shot (above), displacing TH. Dissolving fade from one to the other. Camera scans down the message: 'VE DAY / WELCOME / HOME / BOYS' from the general to its particular context: 'WELL D(one - (not in shot)) FRYSTONE'. Crowds gathered around the message.

08.43 **'These Vs are all..'.** Gradual dissolving fade back to the studio. TH blends back into shot, appearing midst the VE crowd, imagistically linking present with past, *this* self with the post-war-childhood self.

08.49 **'...from LEEDS v. DERBY...'.** 'Versus' gesturally enacted, the two sides distinguished, right from left by hand movement.

08.52 **'...man v. wife...'** This division is *not* emphasised gesturally. Personal realm is emphasised by a glance straight to camera.

08.53 **'...Communist v. Fascist...'** Gesturality resumed.

08.57 **'...class v. ...'.** Cuts on 'class' to footage of the miners' strike, a man aloft on a crowd waving an NUM ballot box, and punching the air with his right hand.

08.58 **'...class...'** Cut to shot from behind the crowd, waving placards, and 'v' symbols.

09.00 **'..before...'** Shot from front, head and shoulders of crowd, as above.

09.02 **'...US and THEM...'** Shot composition structured around division. Police at the front, rows of black helmets, then the opaque division of the riot shields, separating them from the front of the pushing, jostling, crowd of strikers, making up 2/3 of the shot.

09.04 **'...personified...'** Division structure as above shot, in bottom left corner of frame, rest shows dispersed crowd, running strikers pursued by policemen. One isolated man begins to flee two approaching policemen.

09.05 Camera scans sideways as policeman begins truncheoning one striker as he falls to the ground, isolated man of above frame watches, uncertain whether to run or fight.

09.06 Crowd of policemen screening the violence, but a parting in their midst allows a brief glimpse that confirms the evidence of the preceding shots.

09.07 **'...by Coal Board...'** Cut to close up of 'arrested' youth, held roughly by two policemen, who drag him by his clothes.

09.08 A fellow striker tries to intervene but fails, the youth is led away still struggling and shouting.

09.10 A hand grasps the imprisoned youth's wrists to help, but in the dynamics of the struggle he is moved away again.

09.11 Frame is frozen, changing the image from active, verité documentary to abstraction, 'personification' of external human conflict, as textual divisions are superimposed on the picture:

HINDU	SIKH
SOUL	BODY
HEART	MIND
EAST	WEST
MALE	FEMALE

The policeman is slowly obliterated as the list grows, leaving the angry youth de-contextualised from the specific conflict, again emphasising his filmic role as symbol, 'caught up' in universalized opposition. The shot moves slightly, jerkily, like a 'paused' video, signifying that the struggle is not entirely 'static', but continuing.

09.32 'The prospects...'. A red swastika is 'aerosolled' over the text.

09.34 '...NF...'. A black NF symbol is aerosolled over (09.32).

09.38 'CUNTS' is aerosolled in brown over (09.34). No text is left visible, the semiotic has been superimposed over the typographic. At the spoken-textual cue, '..reddish colour...', the last, brown addition turns red.

09.45 '..the word...' the 'paint' starts to run, from the back towards the centre, and covers the entire image, blotting everything else out, till red - the colour of aggression, dominates. The specific disputes have gone, only 'discontent' and rage remain semiotically signalled.

09.52 '...mind...' Cut back to TH via slow overlay technique, as previous segue. Head and shoulders shot, paired with 'mind' as opposed to above graphics 'word'.

10.06 'How many...' Side shot of TH from audience.

10.22 '...like me...' gesturally underlined.

10.37 'My dad...' Cut to head and shoulders shot of TH, personal deictics of speaking subject.

11.22 '...Much is ours.' Spoken direct to camera, engaging the viewing audience in the 'ours' as addressee.

11.26 '...one in goal...' Shot of audience, blonde woman picked out. Film cuts with each new line of poem:

11.28 'When the ball...' Different audience shot, dark -haired woman listener focused on.

11.32 '...and the petals...' Cut to audience, two people listening.

11.36 '...though not so loud...' Different audience shot, stern looking older woman. All audience looks very middle class, representing the educated establishment, distanced from the poem's skinhead.

11.41 'They boot...' Cut to graveyard, column-type monument with 'UNITED' aerosolled on in white. Camera closes in.

11.54 '...I look at...' Rhythmic text-determined cutting ended. Camera continues to focus in on the *obelisk*, contrary to the text's deictic command of focusing on the graffiti (as above).

11.58 The Harrison family gravestone can clearly be read.

12.09 Camera scans down grave, reading the inscription: 'FLORRIE HARRISON...' (This is the grave referred to in "*from* The School of Eloquence" as having 'scarcely enough space' to inscribe the 'proper' form of Harrison's mother's name,

'Florence'. This videoimage is the first citation of the stone-actual, the first indication that this sentence is ambiguated, that 'Florence' indeed does not 'fit')

12.11 '...gazing...' Camera fixes on 'UNITED' mirroring the text.

12.17 '...dad and mam...' Cut to photographs of 'Dad' (right) and 'Mam' (left).

12.27 '...magic wand...' Image becomes brighter, glowing almost 'magically'.

12.35 '...except for dad...' The brightening continues until the screen is whitened out, obliterating the images (above), a motif symbolizing otherworldliness.

12.41 A pristine 'UNITED' is embossed on the brilliant white screen. '...*with* my mother.' A celestial version of the graffiti.

12.48 'UNITED' fades as a red graffitied 'RIP' takes over, camera scans downwards.

12.57 '...an' Momentarily blank, black screen, to emphasize the brilliance of the neon lights in the following shot. Camera cuts with each syllable of the poem.

12.58 'accident...' 'POW' in neon, one frame.

12.59 A cartoon-type explosion erupts from (12.58).

13.00 'ZAP' in neon, flashes twice.

13.00 Explosion as (12.59).

13.00 'ZONK' in neon.

13.01 Flashes three times.

13.01 Explosion as (12.59), (13.00).

13.02 The neon lights are blanked out as the above 'explosion' implodes, its centre spreading blackness, not light.

13.03 Blackness (one frame).

13.03 A neon hand paints its own 'sign', mimicking brush strokes, reading: 'la CAFE', over a star-spangled background, language as action.

13.04 Sign completed.

13.06 '...mindless spraying...' Cut to derelict industrial site, concrete wall topped with blue corrugated plastic, and a board with numbers on. White graffitied slogan: 'KEEP WARM, BURN BRITAIN'.

13.10 '...and to the nation...' White neon pub sign: 'ROYAL'.

13.12 '...kids use aerosols...' Graffiti in vacant billboard slot. Black highlighted in white, specious 'advertising' context. 'I (heart) LOVE / YOU MAD / (heart) GIRL'.

13.16 '...use giant signs...' Graffitied 'NF', white.

13.19 '...who's forged' Graffitied 'WANKERS' (response to above) in black marker pen, which is scrawled over/crossed out in brown.

13.21 'their fetters...' Neon pub sign: 'PRINCE OF WALES', with the 'N' in darkness.

13.27 '...(no prizes...' Swastika drawn on a white wall in marker pen.

13.29 '...letters!)' 'NF', as above.

13.30 'The big' Neon 'GUINNESS' sign with red harp symbol beneath.

13.31 'blue star' 'GUINNESS' over writes the above sign in giant letters that travel across the hoarding: 'INNE' (sic).

13.32 'for booze,' Neon scans the whole, enlarged name: 'GUINNESS' / PURE / GENIUS' final word has a band of yellow lights down the right hand side. The whole sign then fades.

13.33 'tobacco ads,' Cut to advertisement poster for 'GOLD MAKES JOHN PLAYER SPECIAL' featuring a stamper and inkpad.

13.35 'the magnet's monogram,' Neon sign for 'PHILIPS': black background with blue diamond criss-crosses which flicker up and down. Changes to show the 'Philips' shield logo.

13.36 'the royal crest,' Continuation of above sequence, 'PHILIPS' appears in lights over the shield. Deferred signature to make sense of the preceding signifier.

13.37 Diamond background filled-in to solid blue colour.

13.37 'insignia in neon...' Blank hoarding screen, the arm of a soldier, created from lights, appears at the left.

13.38 More of the soldier (above) appears, head and body, clothed in red uniform and bearskin hat. Marches to the right.

13.39 A second soldier appears.

13.40 A third soldier appears in the frame.

13.41 The first soldier has marched off screen.

13.42 The second likewise.

13.43 '...odd FUCKS' All soldiers gone, blankness.

13.43 '...when they're depressed.' Concrete wall with black graffiti: 'BLACK / BASTOD' (sic.)

13.46 'Letters...' Cut back to the neon lights - blue background, red 'NEC' , white 'C&C'.

13.48 White letters change into: 'COMPUTERS AND COMMUNICATIONS'.

13.50 '...in Düsseldorf...' Logo dramatised as starry sky with satellite (right) emitting a green ray.

13.51 Ray crosses the screen as the satellite spirals away.

13.51 Greeny-blue earth with red continents appears on the left.

13.52 Earth spins into full view and intersects with green ray.

13.54 '...KRUP. Arms are hoisted...' Neon logo: 'ROYAL', like the cigarette logo IN (13.33), gold on blue.

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13.58 White neon image with indistinguishable blobs at the bottom.

13.59 '...clandestine, genteel aggro...' 'face' starts to edge in from the right. Huge face, with top and bottom cut off. Black beard and moustache, white teeth, jovial, upper-class type - connoting Kitchener / Big Brother.

14.04 **'And there's HARRISON...'** red logo on scaffolding on a building site.

14.08 **'...I've taken in fun...'** Same logo reiterated, different site of office buildings.

14.10 **'...my name...'** 'HARRISON' logo repeated, different version, white letters on red, defamiliarizing the sign.

14.13 **'...on books, in Broadway lights...'** Neon advertising hoarding: 'NATIONAL THEATRE', travels from right to left, changes to 'TONY' in yellow lights.

14.15 **'...skins...'** camera cuts to closer shot of above display: 'TONY' is bigger so it can't all fit on the board at once. 'HARRISON' - again not quite completed as larger than the frame size.

14.17 Closer shot of above. 'HARRISON'. Fragmented so each closer shot obscures the meaning of the sign as a whole.

14.20 **' But why inscribe...'** Cut back to aerial shot of Beeston cemetery, snow covered, facing the University.

14.30 Camera slowly focuses in, and scans left.

14.31 **'This pitman's...'** dissolve fade from general graveyard to specific tombs.

14.32 White graffiti on grave, indistinct '...YOU'. Camera scans right.

14.37 Leaning gravestone with outline 'bubble' graffiti letters: 'HIP', in white.

14.41 Cut back to studio, TH head and shoulders shot.

14.48 **'They're there to shock...'** Looks round audience, glance meets camera directly at 'shock'.

14.50 **'...dead...'** glances upwards - mimetic gesturality.

14.59 **'Jobless though they are'** Cut back to Beeston hill, long shot of Elland Road football ground with floodlights on. Snowy, dusky picture.

15.03 **'how can these kids'** Close up of floodlights, deconstructed image of white squares against a bluey dusk. Not all of the lights are working.

15.04 **'even though their team's'** Crowd of football supporters at a match - image of blurred dots, faceless mass, as impersonal as the light shot (15.03).

15.06 **'lost one more game'** Shot same as (15.04) only from above - crowd clapping and swaying.

15.07 **'believe...'** Crowd shot from head height. One supporter on another's shoulders, gesturing for someone offscreen to join him.

15.09 **'...'Niggers'...'** A second supporter jumps up on to barrier.

15.11 **'...sprayed on...'** Camera cuts to a new angle: side shot, head-height, more supporters, clapping.

15.15 **'What is it...'** Camera facing the terraces, the safety barriers and netting can be seen at the bottom of the screen.

15.17 One man in the crowd (15.15) points to something on pitch giving the appearance of a response to the text's question.

15.19 **'What is it...'** Camera rapidly scans the front of the stands. Supporters are clearly visible behind the barriers, giving the illusion of being caged. Tracking too quick to identify individual people.

15.24 **'...xenophobic...'** Camera continues to swiftly scan, only the barriers are focused on, dividing the picture into segments, a spatial corollary of the division of time, but the supporters seem smilingly unaware of their 'cage' or jail.

15.32 *'So what's a...'* Cut back to studio, focuses on audience; man and woman seated with drinks on the table, emphasising the difference in leisure pursuits between classes. Marked sensation of 'openness' after the bars in preceding sequence.

15.35 *'...Can't you speak...'* Different shot of audience - one woman and two men, one with fingers over his mouth in classic/Freudian defensive body-language, vicariously preventing the obscene language, but no overt change in facial expression to register the 'shockingness'.

15.38 *'...Think of 'er!'* Middle shot of audience, larger segment included in the frame. One woman to the extreme left adopts similar body language to man in (15.35), as does another woman centre-back.

15.41 *'...Go and fuck yerself...'* Cut back to TH, head and shoulders shot, speaking direct to camera, adopting 'skinhead persona' - aggressive facial expression. Poem's textual speech-act becomes enacted reality.

15.45 **'"She didn't talk..."'** TH swings his head violently round as though in response to an attack from the side. Quick delivery, different persona. Front and side become spatial metaphors for the different personas. Mock over-emphasized voice of poet/Other, in the assumption of the role of moralist.

15.50 **'...turning where I thought...'** turns after the event, narrator's voice, 'out of persona', so towards camera but non-confrontational. Downwards gaze of reading, not acting (though emphasised change, 'acting' reading).

15.55 *'She didn't understand...'* Skin persona downward gaze, shifty, not directly answering the 'attack', only glancing up on confrontational, abusive sections, at the end of the lines: *'fucking 'art'!...fucking poetry obscene!'*

16.00 **'I wish...'** Side shot of TH, head-and-shoulders, distanced from his characterisations. Book from which he is reading (Bloodaxe Books single-poem edition of "v.") in shot, making the *textual* nature of the performance explicit. 'I' marked as personal by hand gesture.

16.07 **'...I can't make...'** Raised eyebrows and raised hand of helplessness, futility.

16.09 **'...call to Britain...'** Open hands, widened to encompass hearers.

16.12 **'...in the name of love...'** 'clenched' fist moved to heart.

APPENDIX ONE
'v.' - FILM SEMIOTICS TABLE

16.15 *'Aspiration, cunt!'* Cut back to football match, side shot of (young, male) supporters' heads.

16.18 *'Folk on t' fucking dole...'* Front 3/4 shot of supporters behind the iron struts of the crash-barriers. Symbolic representation of the dole as a cage - the spikes of the supports higher than the fans themselves, appearing restraining, viciously restrictive, segregating fan from fan in the frame's structural composition.

16.22 Continuation of above shot (and reiterating 15.15), only the shift of focus makes the barriers more 'overt' in being blurred so conveying more obscuring form. Angle of shot more upwards-looking, making the barriers seem higher, covering 1/3 of the screen. All images of 'aspiration' enacted by the uneasy tension of the match, the fans' wait for vicarious excitement is the full extent of this hope.

16.29 Cut back to TH in studio. Head-and-shoulders shot. Looks sideways (towards the alter-ego skin). **'OK, forget the aspirations'** quieter tone, conceding the futility of them dreaming.

16.33 **'Look'** TH looks left, to implied addressee.

16.36 **'I know...'** hand-gesture of emphasis breaks into frame of close up.

16.40 **'...Harp...'** TH looks up, over the camera.

16.42 **'...but *all* these Vs:'** TH looks around, gaze fixed above the audience, as though he can see the 'Vs' symbolically surrounding him.

16.44 **'against! against! against!'** shrug of shoulders for emphasis of each 'against'.

16.45 Cut to match footage: a crowd of supporters coming out after the match, looking round after the event, unhappy, unfulfilled. Text continues mid-sequence: *'Ah'll tell yer then...'*.

16.50 *'It's reading...'* Older male supporters running, once outside the grounds.

16.52 *'...the jobs...'* Younger fans jumping on one another, fooling about, letting off steam from the tension of watching an unsatisfying match.

16.54 *'...butcher...'* Cut to graveyard, close up of tombstone: 'WORDSWORTH'.

16.56 Camera scans to text: 'AT LAST', ironic gloss on the unsuccessful match. Continues scanning the whole text.

17.04 Close up of Gravestone inscription: 'ORGAN BUILDER'.

17.08 Scans up to snow nestled in the crevices of the carving at the top.

17.11 *'...Appleyard!'* Scans relief carving of stone, also snow-encrusted.

17.15 Carving of a cherub, 'freezing' in the snow.

17.17 *'If mi mam's up there...'* Cut to another snowy graveyard shot, one upright obelisk, the rest of the stones lean to the left.

17.22 Young boys / soccer hooligans start to appear over the brow of the hill, and run in between the graves waving their scarves. Though 'naturalistic', they are 'acting', the sequence (to 17.54, and at 18.49ff) is staged.

17.35 '*...When dole-wallahs fuck off...*' Cut to shot from behind the boys, camera tracks them, seeming to run as if one of them. Head and torso only of boy in front. Background blurred to indicate motion, unstable horizon, changing as if from the boys' point of view, mimetically enacting confusion and instability.

17.37 Camera tracks one boy, shot framing just his legs as he runs in between the graves. Literally / symbolically in his footsteps.

17.38 Scans out at the end of a passage between graves, and then dodges round a grave.

17.39 Camera continues to track boy, but slower than its subject, so that a grave that gets in the child's path fills the screen, with just the boy's arm thrown around it as he uses it to swing round.

17.40 Camera divides from the group of boys and moves round the front of a gravestone, tracking the boys as they continue straight ahead.

17.43 New camera angle. Close up from the front of boys running between the graves, one grave centre-screen. Tracks along as they run, but with a row of graves in front, a similar composition to the football barrier and supporters shot, as (16.22).

17.44 One tall grave momentarily blots the boys from the frame (as with the blurred barrier shot, above).

17.50 '*...'ere interred'.*' As they disappear from view, one boy stops to graffiti a grave in passing.

17.51 '*They'll chisel fucking poet...*' Close up of half of the boy's arm, holding the aerosol.

17.53 The arm disappears, and the boys can be seen running away in the background.

17.54 As if retake of (17.50), boys smaller, in the distance, jumping up and down and waving their arms.

18.00 Cut back to TH in studio, head and shoulders. '**Listen,**'.

18.03 Looks left: '**cunt!**' - aggression linked with his Lacanian alter-ego. Contrasts with the perlocutionary force of the 'Listen', connoting authority, before foregrounding the following dialogue as 'capping' the skin's.

18.05 '*I* **said,**' Close-up front-shot of face, slightly above, marking text-'I' as TH.

18.07 '**before you start your jeering...**' 'Start' is emphasized. Said to the left side.

18.10 '**...in a book...**' 'Book' emphasized; following "'s" de-stressed.

18.13 '**...ungrateful cunts...**' TH seems hesitant reading this section, his unease overcome partly by the assumption of an over-acted Leeds accent.

18.14 '*A book...*' Cut to audience, middle-distance shot. No apparent response to the text.

18.18 '**"The only reason...**' Close-up side-shot of audience, five people in the frame.

18.22 '...on yobs...' Even closer-in on audience - three people in frame, profiles overlapping.

18.26 '...'s to give..."' White blur on screen, bit of a blond perm of an audience member viewed over the top. De-contextualized white is the book TH is reading from, camera shot over his shoulder. Interacts with spoken text as cataphoric deictic - 'why I write', translated into book form already.

18.27 White moves down to show unfocused faces looking straight towards the camera.

18.28 Page turned over at the bottom of the screen, same unfocused blur as (18.27). Text as image.

18.29 TH facing camera, head and shoulders shot.

18.31 *'Don't fucking bother, cunt!'* Said to right (more 'moderate' half of TH's alter ego). Dismissive, emphasis on 'bother'.

18.33 *'Don't waste your breath!'* Same delivery as above.

18.37 "You piss-artist skinhead' TH as aggressor - looks left, ('violent' half of alter-ego). Almost assumes the skin's idiolect.

18.38 'cunt,' TH jerks his head contemptuously. Compared with the mock-theatrical characterisation of him as 'poet' earlier, the two personas are less distinct. TH goaded back into his 'young', or suppressed, self.

18.39 'you wouldn't know...' Head-and-torso side-shot, from right. Shows TH leaning forward menacingly. Staccato hand gestures for emphasis. Almost addressing the text as he looks down while reading.

18.41 '...the skin and poet' Looks up from text.

18.43 'united' Grasping gesture with right arm.

18.45 "fucking Rimbaud...' Punching movement, a gathering of force, potency of aggression and intellect.

18.47 '...*autre*...' Gallic shrug as fist touches his chest to denote Otherness - '..*je est*' hand beats the syllables for emphasis.

18.48 Pause, 'fucking you' points to audience, speech act. The two halves of the extreme each currently engaged in the dialectic.

18.49 *'Ah've told yer,...'* Cut back to boys in graveyard sequence. Close up of boy running, torso only in shot, up and down movement of his body - shouting. Looks like a thwarted attempt to communicate, justifying the existence of TH's text as his voice. Audience titters at text's 'no more Greek'.

18.57 *'Ah'll boot...'* Dark shape , shown to be the legs of the boy in preceding shot, in extreme close up.

19.00 *'Don't treat me...'* Can now see the graveyard where the boy is running.

19.04 One boy stops to aerosol on a grave, as (17.50), only different shot/retake; more attempts to communicate.

19.08 "I've done my bits...' Cut back to TH in studio. Looks round at audience, moderate voice.

19.14 *Yeah, ah bet yer wrote'* -'Yeah' said to the right, rest to camera, looking up on *'a poem'*, for initial stress, ironic, but not aggressive.

19.19 *'yer wanker you!'* Much audience laughter. Laughing with the skin, indirectly *at* TH.

19.20 Camera cuts away to show 3/4 shot of TH from side, to make laughing audience visible.

19.22 TH raises hand to quiet audience / text skin: "No, shut yer gob a while.' Said to audience, placing them in the role of skin, in need of convincing.

19.24 'Ah'll tell yer 'ow...' Literally positions TH as outsider needing to assert his authority again, raise his voice over the audience's.

19.27 A 'wobbly soprano' starts up, to echo text. TH wags finger to emphasise his story - working-class gesture of authority.

19.35 '...I can't say...' Delayed laughter after TH's childhood anecdote.

19.58 '...you say nothing changes...' Elongated 'say', implying audience as speaker here.

20.07 '...prick-tease...' More audience tittering.

20.08 '...I tell you...' Cut to political rally, 50's, black and white footage of a politician (Hugh Gaitskell?), smartly dressed, pointing his finger at crowd. Mirroring TH's textual and performative role.

20.12 '...rose / above...' Warbling soprano starts up again, a lone trace of the past which is now translated as textual explication of spent aggression.

20.15 Close up of Hugh Gaitskell, head-and-shoulders shot, addressing a crowd. Behind sit old men looking bored (/despairing?), their heads in their hands, denoting the speaker's insincerity. As with the boys in the graveyard, there is no sound to accompany the image, the politician is seen to speak, but the voice is that of TH, narrator of his own past.

20.22 Blank screen, 3/4 black, 1/4 white, central division semiotic. Less than 1 sec. footage of the falling fire extinguisher, which looks a bit like a space shuttle with a button at the bottom. Hits ground with a jarring thud, a definite noise that cuts through the indeterminacy of the wobbly soprano. Bounces back.

20.23 '...I hit...' Spray of water spurts from bottom left to top right, shooting across the darkness of the background.

20.24 '...ON knob...' Falling jet of water filling the entire screen.

20.27 '...orchestra and audience...' Nervous audience laughter. Close up of the spray of water, grainy effect, textural black and white. Everything else is blotted out.

20.35 Through the water we can see a small boy, running down the aisle of a Victorian Hall with an arched ceiling, past wooden pew-seats. shot up from

floor level, same structure as the boys running through the graveyard, with the tunnel effect of the row of graves replicated in the seating, the arched roof reiterating the tombstone motif.

20.38 '..."damned vandal"...' The spray abates and we can see the boy in the distance, though indistinct, almost like an after-image.

20.41 Image of boy strengthens slightly, and we can see him outlined against the light of the doorway, all the surrounding area is covered in spray again. The attainment of freedom after the rite of passage.

20.42 Cut back to studio, close up of TH's face. Skin persona: *'And then yer saw the light...'* Sarcastic intonation, to match the cliché of the text, connoting impression of staleness, delivered straight to camera.

20.57 Side-camera shot of TH's head and shoulders. *'Ah've 'eard all that...'* change of tone, bored, weary.

21.08 *'Fuckers like that...'* pace speeds up, aggressive, challenging the good intentions of the 'old farts' causing trouble.

21.16 *'Covet not...'* TH, said to the right, in broad accent, more like mock clerical than the aggressive skin persona.

21.23 *'Get thee behind me...'* Stress on 'hind', gestures over his shoulder with his thumb.

21.28 *'...dick...'* Jabbing motion with the index finger. Slight audience laughter at the vulgarity.

21.29 Camera starts to pull away, coincident with the end of the 'skin's' speech, as he loses attention. TH's tone becomes quieter, illustrating the unity proposed in the text with a circling motion, contrast to the jerky, aggressive body language of the previous section.

21.37 'Ignoring me...' TH's arms drop to his side, he slumps, projecting dejection at the failure of his attempt to communicate.

21.44 ''It was more...' Close up of TH, head-shot, indicating personal, direct speech, as opposed to the 'narrative'-rôle of the preceding shot.

21.46 *'Fuck, and save mi soul...'* Skin persona, said to the left.

21.57 Cut back to football stands, as (16.22), faces of supporters totally obscured, the *barriers* are in focus, covering half of the screen.

21.59 *'...class war...'* Same shot as above, only the fans are brought into focus.

22.05 *'...and start resenting...'* Shot of terraces from in front of the barriers.

22.11 Same as above, but side shot. One supporter makes a 'V' sign. *'...toffee, cunt.'* The rest of the crowd start applauding, as if approving the poem-skinhead's attack.

22.17 *'...Ah write mi own...'* Cut back to graveyard, pillar-type grave with 'UNITED' aerosolled in white across it's base.

22.22 *'...like this UNITED 'ere...'* Camera scans up the grave, inscription reads: 'FLORRIE HARRISON & HARRY ASHTON HARRISON'. Text anaphorically refers to the preceding image.

22.25 *'on some sod's stone...'* Camera pulls away to show the surrounding graves.

22.42 **'He took the can...'** Cut back to studio, shot includes TH and audience. TH gesturally enacts the aerosolling motion with clenched fist and thumb cocked over an imaginary nozzle.

22.56 **'He aerosolled his name.'** Extreme close up of TH's face. Mimes spraying gesture close to his face.

23.01 Pauses, looks to the right, 'reading' the hypothetical signature.

23.02 **'And it was mine.'** Said straight to camera, as a (punchline/)confession, then looks down, as though shocked, taking in the import of the discovery.

23.06 **'The boy footballers...'** Cut back to new graveyard shot.

23.12 **'...and drifting...'** Aerial shot of a street (from a hill). Outside the graveyard. A ball enters the shot twice from the bottom of the screen.

23.15 A boy-footballer comes into shot and dances around.

23.19 **'...when the skin half...'** Cut back to graveyard, as sunset begins.

23.24 **'Half versus half...'** The two towers of the Elland Road floodlights are now seen as darkness against the yellowing sky. In the foreground, a cross is silhouetted. Picture of negation, both living and dead blanked out in the dying sun.

23.31 **'As I stoop...'** Graveyard shot, focusing on a leafless tree, set against the sunset. **'...half dark, half light.'**

23.41 **'That UNITED...'** Back to studio, audience shot.

23.50 **'...soon recedes...'** Camera closes in on the audience, man and woman, looking to the right, slightly out-of-focus.

23.51 **'...mindless desecration'** Mirror image of above shot, two women looking to the left.

23.54 **'by some HARPoholic...'** Audience shot from the front.

23.59 **'Almost the time...'** Cut back to TH, head and shoulders, looking right. Conversational tone, said straight to the audience.

24.12 TH shakes his head. **'...I don't fancy..'.** He raises his book slightly. **'...playing Hamlet...'** so the book-as-text is imagistically foregrounded against his anecdotal delivery of this section.

24.13 Audience laughter at TH caught **'...swearing...'.**

24.32 **'...these shifts...'** TH mimes unease, looks around, emphasizing instability, gesturally and linguistically.

24.33 **'Further underneath...'** Cut back to graveyard, the sun nearing the horizon. Elland Road can be made out, with its four spikes, blurred in the distance. The

graves are partially-obscured by the dusk, lost in the darkened foreground of the shot.

24.42 **'A matter of mere time...'** Camera changes focus to the graves in the sunset, though the floodlight spikes of the previous image can still be seen.

24.50 Cut back to studio. TH, head-and-shoulders shot, head cocked slightly left, nose wrinkled in consideration: **'...say, 30 years...'**.

24.57 **'...suit me fine...'** TH scans his audience, emphasizing his statement, and challenging disagreement.

25.01 **'...but what I fear's...'** Long shot from the back of the audience towards TH. Less personal, to stress the universality of the topic.

25.06 **'...great worked-out black hollow under mine.'** Each syllable is stressed, and gesturally emphasized by a pressing-downwards movement of the hand, fingers outstretched, enacting the pull towards the centre of the earth.

25.13 Camera closes in. **'...clock face'** Describes a circle with his hand, looks direct to camera.

25.28 **'5 kids still...'** Glances up at audience.

25.33 **'...humming...'** Raises his hand to signal the audience to listen, as though the music were present as with the wobbly soprano sequence.

25.34 **'They never seem...'** Cut to terrace street as (23.12). Group of boys playing football in the road. Camera angle looking up from the ground.

25.37 **'...I hear a woman's voice...'** People of different races walk down the street, camera focused at torso level - kid's eye view. Kid gets called inside, and is led away by his mother, looking back to the football game that still continues in front of a family group.

22.46 **'...3 boys...'** Two kids on a street-corner playing cricket. A third comes into view.

25.50 **'The ground's carpeted...'** Cut back to graveyard, middayish. Ground carpeted with snow, not the textual 'petals', but connotes the same idea of virginal sterility.

26.05 **'...the HARP can...'** Sunset shot, idealized image of the sun as golden semi-circle on the horizon, bathed in its own reflected glow. No other presence to dilute the image.

26.10 **'...then go...'** Foot of grave, with a snow covered urn/jam jar on top, containing a couple of snowy daffodils looking sorry for themselves.

26.15 **'The bus...'** Backstreets of terraces, hung across with washing (sheets). Grey apart from a few indistinguishable light sources.

26.24 **'I look out...'** Camera as though from a bus. Passes blue furniture van parked in front of a row of shops.

26.26 Passes tobacconist and hairdresser.

26.29 T & L Moss, 'Fish, Fruit, & Veg' shop, open.

26.31 '...sun reddens...' Liz and Dave's video shop. Shops are lit up in the surrounding dusk.

26.31 'Home, home, home...' Sunset shot, as pure as (26.05) but now less than half is left on the horizon. Camera focuses in on the centre and the sun gradually sinks, the incandescent orange makes way for grey. Delayed image from the previous stanza.

26.44 '...to my woman, home to bed...' Cut back to studio, TH head-and-shoulders shot.

26.55 '...taps his stick...' Asian pensioner with stick walks past an Asian grocers.

26.57 '...past the corner shop...' Tracking shot of pensioner as he passes an empty shop, windows blanked out with newspapers.

27.02 Camera stops and swings round watching the pensioner passing 'Silverstone Auction Rooms'.

27.03 '...to the Kashmir...' Close up of sign: 'KASHMIR MUSLIM/ WELFARE ASSOCIATION LEEDS / THE MUSLIM / COMMUNITY CENTRE' - same message (presumably) is repeated in Arabic on the right.

27.07 'House after house...' Little girl in a long red coat crosses the street.

27.11 '...where we'd played...' Three Asian boys playing a chasing game in the street. Same terraces as (23.12) with washing hanging across. A girl watches, holding a toddler.

27.16 '...with stumps...' Shot down the middle of the street, focusing on Asian girl holding a pink umbrella. Boy on a BMX-bike cycles up to her and she runs off down the street, then corners and chases the boy.

27.23 '...dad's most liberal..' Close up of a shelf in an Asian grocers, exotic packets of food bi-lingually labelled. Camera scans left. In this sequence the camera seems to scan past the 'foreign' food items, and focus on the familiar in their strange context, showing them being edged out, as English is from the label, relegated to the bottom of the signs in the shop.

27.28 Another bi-lingual label (red). Fish and vegetables alongside packets of baby food.

27.30 '...smelt / curry in the shops...' Grapes, fresh fruit and vegetables above rows and rows of 'Mother's Pride' loaves.

27.33 Different signs: 'STOP' / 'WHISTLING LOLLYS (sic)/ LOUMI AVAILABLE HERE'.

27.39 'And growing frailer...' Long-view from the back of the shop - cluttered; boxes of crisps, shelves full of goods, overhung with yet more produce. Round mirror in the corner to deter shoplifters.

27.38 Young Asian man enters the shop.

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27.44 '...which meant much longer...' Close up of 'exotic' vegetables and foreign cans - centres on the traditional looking 'Nestles Milk' can next to ones containing unusual vegetables.

27.47 Camera scans along the vegetables and to the customer with his back to the camera, wearing a parka. A human example of cultural blending and assimilation as invoked by the shop.

27.50 'And as the shops that' Camera moves round to show the man chatting to three friends. One leaves.

27.53 'stocked his favourites receded' All remaining customers turn to pay for their goods, their hands full of unfamiliar (to 'traditional' English shoppers, Harrison's father) purchases.

27.54 'whereas he'd fancied beans...' Close up of electronic till check-out, which also registers the price on the scales - the weight changes in electronic leaps.

27.59 '...he found that four long treks...' Scale read-out changes back to '0' - (goods removed). Blurred Asian face moves behind it.

28.02 '...till he wondered...' Foreground - fruit, blurred, background - Asian in white overalls chops a pig on his block, meat hanging on hooks around him.

28.06 'The supermarket...' Close up of three jars: 'AHMED'S / PICKLE / MANGO IN OIL'.

28.10 '...where people bought...' Camera scans left to show close-up of 'Bird's Custard Powder - original flavour'.

28.16 '...check-out girls...' Scans down to show 'Butoni / Wholewheat Ravioli'.

28.25 '...cigs he'd have a chat' Blur-fade to show tins with an Indian face on the label.

28.28 'his week's one conversation...' Scans right to show boxes with a painting of an exotic Indian woman on.

28.32 '...put a stop...' Shot of Asian man in white overalls and matching white skull cap, weighing goods on his electric scales and putting them in a carrier for his young, Asian customer.

28.39 'And there,' Cut back to studio, TH, head-and-shoulders, shot from the left hand side.

28.43 '"Time like an ever rolling stream"' TH spirals his index finger in gesture of continuity.

28.46 '...that boarded front...' Points in front of him, beyond the camera, as though the place were there, just out of shot - same gesture as in the graveyard at the opening, only the invoked context *was* present there.

28.47 'A 1,000 ages...' Camera-cut to audience-shot; four people round a table.

28.52 '...and even more...' Close-up of female face.

28.57 '...on both Methodist...' TH head-and-shoulders, from the left.

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29.16 'Home, home...' Close-up of audience from right.

29.19 '...never to return...' TH close-up front-shot.

29.31 '...dad and mam...' Looks up to audience.

29.33 'Home, home...' Audience close-up.

29.42 '...perished vegetation...' Blur-fade to nightscape of an industrial town, gray black with specks of light, from the streetlights and windows. Camera scans right, murky indistinctness, smoky gloom.

29.49 Singing starts up: *Lulu.* (Harrison's wife, Maria Stratas being the first person to sing the complete score).

30.03 '...what was lush swamp...' Dissolving fade to coalfire in a hearth.

30.10 '...shilbottle cobbles...' Blur-fade to even closer up, but colours less vivid.

30.18 '...decay' Cut to different close-up of the fire, a more intense, vivid orange. 'the one we see'.

30.24 'the fern from the foetid forest...' Extreme-close-up of the fire as it begins to collapse. Transitory nature foregrounded.

30.28 'This world' Cut to black and white image of an explosion, with a rising dust cloud above skyrise office blocks and flats. An army truck fires two torpedoes to the right, iterating the opening war sequence.

30.29 'with far too many people...' Skyline-shot of rows of highrise flats, a black cloud hangs over the horizon.

30.32 '...starts' Army truck in a trench. Soldier manning a long gun. Another looks over the trench , a third walks away.

30.34 'as a taw' Cut to close-up of the gun barrel (above) pointing over the trench to the left. Vibrates as it shoots.

30.36 'then ping-pong, tennis' Snipers hidden in the grass, machine guns cocked - they fire.

30.38 'football...' Gunman wearing traditional Middle Eastern head-covering fires over a barricade of sandbags, towards a block of flats in the distance. Shoots twice.

30.40 '...spins...' Literal enactment of the text as the camera wheels from the gunner through his point of view, to see the flats in the distance, over the bridging wasteland with a few trees, to a rapid close-up on the flats.

30.41 A gunshot flashes past the camera straight to the buildings the camera is closing in upon.

30.43 '...and shots...' Camera focuses unevenly on the building as the flash of a bullet hits its target.

30.44 'As the coal...' Mounted riot police with shields gallop through the countryside to join a squad of foot-police.

30.47 '...cools...' Camera spins round to show the parting of the division of ordinary policemen to allow the mounted squad through. Continues to circle, to show the mass of pickets in ordinary clothes standing, and running from attack.

30.50 '...on the late-night...' Through the same gap as in above shot we see riot police on foot, armed with perspex shields.

30.51 We can see that the riot squad on foot (30.50) are following the mounted division. Pickets are to the front of the picture, just standing there.

30.54 '...old violence' Camera shot from behind (30.51). Pickets start to run.

30.56 The hemmed-in pickets start to run *en mass* but seem surrounded by police.

30.57 'and old disunity.' Tracking shot of horses galloping after a mass of fleeing pickets, like a hunt scene.

31.00 'The map...' Parade of Orangemen in full dress. Ordinary people stand and watch from the other side of a row of army vehicles.

31.03 '...flashed on again...' Group of angry people shouting, and children making 'V' ('fuck off')signs.

31.07 'Behind a tiny coffin' Older group of youths make the 'Victory' sign. Policemen in the background.

31.09 'with two bearers' 'V' sign is reversed to 'fuck off'.

31.11 'men in masks' By the side of a grave. A flag-draped coffin with a dress helmet on top sits on the ground. Four masked gunmen wearing military jumpers wait by its side.

31.13 'with arms' Close-up of one of the gunmen. Impersonal through the mask.

13.14 'show off' Close-up of a revolver stuffed in his trouser waistband.

31.15 'their might.' Three gunmen take up position over the coffin - slightly ludicrous - you can see their white shirted beer-bellies as their jumpers ride up. The fourth man watches and gives the command to fire.

31.18 'The day's last images...' Freeze-frame of the moment of firing.

31.23 '...and then a ball...' Blackness from the outside of the images' frame closes in, starting to make the image disappear, as though a TV has been switched off.

31.24 Only one gunman left in the circle of light.

31.27 '...screen' Blackness, the image is enveloped in darkness.

31.28 'Turning to love...' White image starts to emerge from the blackness, but indefinite, abstract, almost like the Chinese character for 'yin and yang'.

31.34 Camera closes-in and focus settles to show a clear image of a photograph of TH's wife (Teresa Stratas), head and shoulders side profile, wearing a cap, looking gamine.

31.38 '...has to mean...' Camera stationary. Face of Teresa centre-screen. 'UNITED' in white capitals appears printed over the top of the picture.

31.42 'Hanging...' 'U' starts to move down screen

31.43 'N' follows it.

31.44 'I' falls. Falling symbols of 'unity'-now-decayed or -released.

31.47 'T' falls.

31.48 'E' falls.

31.49 'D' falls.

31.54 '..falling had released.' 'U' stays at bottom to start a fresh 'UNITED', marking the transition from the old form to a new.

32.01 '...voice the bride...' 'UNITED' now completed at the bottom of the screen. Colour returns.

32.15 'The ones...' Dissolving fade as TH's face merges with the photograph of his wife, making the 'UNITED' a semiotic reality. A significantly long-held shot.

32.21 '...frays...' Transition to shot of just TH complete apart from a lingering trace of 'UNITED' and a suggestion of his wife's eye (centre of self, I) remaining, as semiotic 'anchor'.

32.29 '...Wanker!...' Opening skinhead voice - aggressive, jeering. Cuts across the tone of sincerity. No audience laughter at the insult, unlike its earlier instance, see (19.19).

32.36 '...alter ego...' Gesturality indicating the 'split' of TH's personas 'alter' - left cheek raised up, 'ego' right cheek raised, enacting the division of skin/poet within Harrison.

32.44 Picture of TH's wife (and accompanying graphic as of 32.15) starts to reappear over the studio shot of TH, the reverse/complementary process of (32.15), but this time with 'LOVE' in white capitals at the top. '...UNITED underwrites the poet...' TH points down for emphasis and 'touches' the superimposed graphic.

32.52 '..one's above...' Open-hand gesture up towards 'LOVE'.

33.05 '...erode the UNITED binding us...' Enacted by the new graphic staying 'intact', not falling as the previous 'United'. The image (picture-&-graphic superimposition) disappears suddenly, leaving TH.

33.08 'And now...' Directly addressed to audience.

33.10 'Next millennium' Cut back to graveyard, aerial-shot, masses of graves, no single one distinct, reducing everything to part of a universal pattern. Lights of Elland Road floodlights can be made out vaguely.

33.17 '...to find out...' Close-up of arched monument, with scroll reading 'THY WILL BE DONE'.

33.19 '...haberdasher Appleyard...' Side-shot of newish granite grave.

33.22 '...the pile of HARPS...' As (33.10) only closer, angled towards Elland Road.

33.26 'Find Byron, Wordsworth...' Snow covered small white grave: 'ARTHUR BYRON'.

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33.29 '...or turn left...' Close-up of a different grave: 'UNITED AT LAST / FRANK WORDSWORTH'. Delayed signifier for spoken text (above). Making the literary allusions embedded in a specific context.

33.33 '...one marked Richardson...' Two Elland Road floodlight stacks against hazy sky background, one lit up the other dark, repeating the polarity motif.

33.35 '...whatever new crude words...' Camera scans down to see a neat row of graves all awaiting the textually prophesied new graffiti.

33.42 'If love of art,' Cut back to studio, head of TH, speaks to the right.

33.45 'or love...' Looks up after 'love'.

33.58 '...one small v...' Gesturally inscribed with the tip of his index finger.

34.09 '...to get the soul...' TH screws up his right eye, almost as though his soul were being winkled out of him. For eye-as-soul semiotic, compare with his wife's image (32.21).

34.14 '...Earth.... diurnal...' Similarly emphasized.

34.24 '...like I chose in May...' Gestures towards himself.

34.36 '...won't shake them free...' TH makes a shrugging gesture of resistance.

34.38 'If, having come this far...' Cut back to the graveyard, aerial-shot, seen through branches of a tree, imposing the organic in front of death. Camera scans up.

34.39 Person walking on the path becomes noticeable - TH as in opening sequence. '...somebody reads...' TH walks to face his parents' grave.

34.59 *'Beneath your feet...'* Camera close up on the plain 'face' of the square Harrison-family tombstone, camera point-of-view mirrors that of TH. The 'inscription' is spoken by the living person, a gesture to be reversed by time. Camera closes in.

35.13 '...SHIT' Image of grey nothingness, a negative presence.

35.17 'find the beef,' Superimposition of a chiselled inscription that mirrors the spoken text.

35.17 'the beer,' As above.

35.18 'the bread' As above.

35.21 'then look behind.' As above. The chiselled lettering of the inscription contrasts with the italicised textual version, imparting a sense of permanence.

35.27 Image fades, the screen goes blank.

As the credits roll, a howling wind sound plays over them, echoing the bleakness of Beeston graveyard, on its windswept hill.

APPENDIX TWO

THE BLASPHEMERS' BANQUET - FILM SEMIOTICS TABLE

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00.01 Sphere - globe lights at Tandoori, black flower pattern against golden light inside, left light in focus, right light blurred series of dots. Sound of talking.

00.03 Shot of circles round chair inlaid with mirrors, gold embroidery -pattern of sun and radiating satellites. Circular camera motion round table.

00.08 Indian couple eating at restaurant table.

00.12 Empty wine glasses: right - upturned, left - upended. The upturned glass is filled with red wine.

00.15 Glass filled. Spoken text starts.

00.18 'There, on mirrored cushions...' Cut to chair shot (above). Circles chair, focuses on raffia back - circle design.

00.23 '..me...' shot of chair from distance.

00.31 '..that, that's Salman Rushdie's chair' close up on circular seat - 'O' of absence.

00.40 Light through raffia chair back, repeat of light pattern in (00.01)

00.48 'The poet who loved..' Scan's Tony Harrison's (TH) back - specious deixis.

00.49 'Omar Khayyam' - wine glass in shot.

01.08 '...often...' drinks wine.

01.21 '...and I'll...' shot from behind the chair.

01.26 '...and all those...' pulls back to scan table and TH drinking toast, alone, the table surrounded by darkness, the four empty chairs spotlit by golden disks - manifestly staged lighting, contrast to opening restaurant scenes.

01.35 After drinking, TH looks down, arms folded on table - slump, recognition of defeat.

01.36 darkness

01.38 Title sequence : The Blasphemers' Banquet. Graphics split in two : by Tony Harrison.

01.50 Rushdie, head and shoulders television interview shot, background of window and outside traffic. '...and frankly, I wish I'd written a more critical book.'

01.53 Waving stick with burnt book on the end. Flying pieces of black charred paper litter the sky. Sound of jeering.

01.54 Placard - same spatial structure as above: 'RUSHDIE MUST BE KILLED'. Shouting *'Kill the bastard!'*

01.56 Book seen to be on fire, anterior to (01.53). Gesturing arm in front, same plane as pole above.

01.58 Close up of Voltaire bust, greenish light plays over his face. Jeering plays over *'Burn him, burn the bastard, burn him to death*

02.01 Camera pulls away. 'When I see...' Reflection of burning book projected on bust.

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02.17 Reflection of bust in mirror behind.

02.18 Burning book suspended from wire contraption - backdrop of placards, eg. 'Right their Wrong'.

02.22 Back to Voltaire as (02.17).

02.30 Message of above placard reflected on Voltaire's forehead. Shouting continues through poem's text.

02.39 '...for having sung...' close up of burning book, as (02.18)

02.44 '...roots...' back to Voltaire focus in to close up. '...*auto da fés*...' made literal through reflection of burning book.

03.02 Centres on bust's eye socket '...am now a monument...'.

03.07 '...*Comedie Francais*...' pulls out to show whole (different) statue, in a luxurious setting.

03.12 Swoops past other statues in alcoves to audience. Gabbling noise, ségue from Muslim demonstrators to theatregoers.

03.14 Salman Rushdie on TV, as (01.50), but yellow lit, as Voltaire was, above. Speaking directly to camera but indistinguishable over the present audience.

03.24 Pans round audience then back to statue of Voltaire, overseeing the event. Overlaid with dappled effect.

03.26 Becomes increasingly blurred - like computer-generated image. Helicopter sound track.

03.27 News images of the Iranian war, sweeping shot of desert.

03.32 Blacked out front of screen, overlaid with quotation: '*I know that during my long life I have / always been right about what I said*'.

03.35 Credited: '*Ayatollah Khomeni*'.

03.39 Electronic, slashing chord sound track. Cut to image of white coffin being grabbed by millions of pairs of hands as it is unloaded. Coffin sways up and down like a boat.

03.43 Army in khaki. One man with loudspeaker, a second directing jet of water on the crowd. Scans out to show speakers on the same platform. Discordant white noise continues.

03.47 Return to coffin.

03.53 Different water sprayer, directing the jet on a sea of black veiled heads.

03.56 Close up of man bending over to kiss the coffin, from among the crowd.

03.58 Other people surge forwards to do likewise, pushing each other away, while the guards slap people down.

04.05 Camera pulls away, to show contrast of black heads and white coffin.

04.10 Man jumps out of military helicopter. Crowd hold on to the helicopter to prevent it taking off.

04.15 Coffin in the crowd as above, but blurred. Massed crowd sound makes up

white noise. Camera closes in and loses focus making the scene a blur of indistinguishable black with a floating white area.

04.27 Singing starts: *'Oh, I love this fleeting life'.*

04.27 Aerial shot of crowd. Indian/Eastern type of stringed instrument accompaniment.

04.40 White haze to the right from the spray of the soldiers' hoses.

04.49 Text starts up over same image. **'The Koran...'**

04.51 Closes in on crowd. **'...unbelievers...'** Slowed down film, the grabbing and shoving reduced to a gentle rocking motion.

05.09 **'The after life...'** water falling into a pool, blue and white reflections.

05.14 **'...Paradise...'** moves to right to show the centre of the waterfall, then follows the jet of water up to the top of the cascade.

05.23 **'...don't fade..'** reaches the top of the jet.

05.28 **'...things fade fast...'** 'rougher' water jet, thick cascades.

05.39 **'..water full of stars...'** literal image translation, water with dancing lights.

05.42 Yellow typed quotation overlaid above image: *'These are things which are impure;'* Indian/Eastern type of stringed instrument background music connoting Paradise.

05.47 *'unbelievers'*

05.49 list completed: *'urine, excrement, sperm, blood / dogs, pigs, unbelievers, wine, beer and / the sweat of the excrement-eating camel.'*

05.58 credit added: *'Ayatollah Khomeni'.*

06.01 **'And as a righteous man...'** spoken text begins, typographic quote disappears, leaving the water image.

06.06 Calm water replaced by fountain as 'Paradise' semiotic. Scans up fountain again.

06.20 **'...and while...'** 'rougher water again.

06.28 **'Down here...'** plastic cup floats in the still water of (05.39), still contains 'stars', but tainted.

06.33 Newspaper floats in same pool, is hauled in by net. Unreadable.

06.35 **'...hide...'** Salmon Rushdie's face swims into view as photograph on the front page of *The Times*. Headline readable: 'Bodyguard for Rushdie After Death Threat'. And contains the fatwa: 'I inform the proud Muslim people of the world that the author of *The Satanic Verses* book which is against Islam, the Prophet and the Khoran, and all involved in its publication are sentenced to death.'. The paper is fished out by net, Rushdie's 'face' stares out through the holes.

06.37 The pool now looks black and choppy.

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06.38 Cut back to refuse collector carrying the net to the rubbish bin and emptying it - 'yesterday's news'. Soundtrack of traffic noises.

06.42 Mothers (black and white) with children, crossing the road.

06.43 Three Asian women dash across the road. Camera scans left until they are obscured by the blurred white of the fountain.

06.45 Focus back in on the fountain until the screen is whited out by it.

06.50 Scans back right - fountain is the pivotal site of the camera's point of view for this whole sequence.

06.52 TH sitting cross-legged on the grass, talking direct to camera. Continued background noise of traffic (realism). **'This isn't Paradise...'**

06.58 **'...just over there...'** points to his right, beyond the fountain.

07.02 **'I bring it whole...'** shot from above of TH's lap and open hand, ready to receive the book.

07.03 Book appears as overimage - fades into existence, transparency to concrete, as metaphor of the act of reading itself.

07.07 Opens it and searches for page.

07.09 **'...here...'** deixis. Back to opening shot of TH (06.52). Fountain out of shot, but spray occasionally fringes the screen with a cloud of droplets.

07.42 Long shot of whole fountain and pond. TH appears small, inconspicuous amongst couples also sitting besides the fountain. Pulls out and up slowly, showing the urban context.

07.59 Fountain indistinguishable, one can only see the square, concrete buildings bleak contrast to the framed 'Paradise'. Sweeps skyline, and closes in on a dome.

08.28 Focuses in until the name is readable: 'Alhambra'.

08.30 Perspective shot of statue, Queen Victoria. Voice over text re-starts: **'And I've asked...'**

08.35 **'...half past nine...'** shot of Alhambra (Theatre), statue in background.

08.45 Female stage manager watches the red safety curtain rise. The orchestra strikes up *La Marseilles*.

08.48 Edward Petherbridge as 'the misanthrope' waits in wings, anticipating his entrance.

08.51 Bursts through out of camera's shot at start of play.

08.52 Cut to new angle direct to stage front, slightly above. Stage set with red carpet and gilt chairs. *The Misanthrope* begins.

08.54 Gargoyle/mask decorated with gilt, seems to speak opening lines of the play: *'Your dark philosophy's too bleak by half'*

08.57 *'Your moods of black dispair...'* Cut to different mask.

09.00 Shot of audience, pink faces in the darkness, white reflections from people's

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glasses, foregrounding the act of watching. *'...just make me laugh...'*

09.01 Return to stage, Petherbridge with his hands on (seated) Horovitch's shoulders. *'I think by now I know you pretty well. We're very like Ariste and Sganerelle, the brothers in that thing by Molière, You know, 'The School for Husbands', that one where...'*

09.11 *'For God's sake, spare us Molière quotations!'* Audience shot, though less focused. Laughter.

09.12 Dome of Alhambra. Back view of statue (08.30), figure 'watching' as a flock of birds take flight, frightened by the laughter started in previous shot.

09.15 Shot of statue of Queen Victoria, overlaid with: *'There is no laughter'.*

09.17 *'There is no laughter'.*

09.19 *'There is no fun'.* Laughter continues to swell throughout.

09.22 *'in Islam'* is added to complete each of the above statements.

09.24 Credited: *'Ayatollah Khomeni'.* Play fades back in.

09.26 Close up on statue's face. *'I'm at a loss to know..'* - detached speaker. Screen darkens a little.

09.33 Two males drink and smoke in the theatre bar. Poem voice over recommences: **'Priests may turn to piety...'**

09.40 TH in bar, drinking wine. **'...poetry and plays...'**

09.43 Shot of half-full auditorium during intermission. Camera scans slowly up the tiers. **'..those up there...'** while still scanning up.

09.53 **'Believing only...'** the topmost tier, scans audience (including me!).

10.10 **'... and only time...'** Shot of Victorian-style wall lamps.

10.06 **'...Big 'O''** lights are dimmed.

10.07 Blank screen.

10.09 **'that swallows...'** Spot light with three tassels silhouetted. Eastern image of moon, connoted.

10.14 Camera pulls away without refocusing, giving a blurred effect.

10.18 **'...fundamentalists...'** Just hazy white disk, tassel shadow lost.

10.22 **'...turbans or dog collars...'** Crescent of a shield can be made out at the perimeter of the light, discernible but defamiliarized; unidentifiable.

10.24 **'...Molière...'** Bust of Molière, darkness illuminated by candle-type lights. Chapel effect.

10.42 **'...no priest...'** Spotlight on the bust fades leaving only the teardrop shaped specks of light from the candle-bulbs.

10.45 **'...abjured the stage...'** Molière gone from view. Candle-lights continue to fade.

10.48 '...was buried...' Blackness.

10.50 'A fate... actors share.' Shot of the whole theatre auditorium in darkness, apart from spotlights and balcony lights, looks like a sky at night. All lights begin to fade.

10.58 Blackness. Singing begins: *'We live and die, and only time destroys us.'*

11.14 Sound of traffic. Spot of light which clarifies as gold leaf on a tomb stone. **'Bradford when Charles Rice...'.**

11.24 Scans up as focus settles. Tomb reads 'Charles Rice', confirming spoken text.

11.33 '...**Alhambra managed to survive...'** Sky shot, perspective from ground, looking up at stone cross. Scans right, traces skyline broken by near-distance obelisks and grave stones.

11.55 '... **Four Square Gospel Church...'** Shot closes in on horizon.

12.06 '..**gold dome...'** Picks out Alhambra, current 'reality' used as anchor for the past.

12.20 '...**Orient...'** Close up on gold-leafed 'O' on a tomb stone. Camera pulls away slowly : 'OM' **'The only influence...'**

12.26 'OMAR' cf. Closing sequence.

12.55 The whole text can be made out now.

12.56 '...**not felt a drop...'** Shot of the townscape with the 'bright gold dome' visible above its surroundings, the mosque's white walls contrasting vividly with the drab grey and brown of the traditional terrace houses.

13.03 'Still **domeless...'** Girder frame of new building.

13.15 '...**this gravestone...'** 'LO!' -gold leaf. Scans right as the text is 'read', though slower, not directly simulating the act of reading. Pulls back as singing starts: *'Oh...'.*

13.45 Scans past grave to sky.

13.51 Back down to distant city, slowly sweeping to the right. *'I love this fleeting life'.*

14.00 Rubble of disused graveyard.

14.15 Focuses away into the town, away from the markers of the past.

14.26 Picks out the Omar Khayyam restaurant and focuses in until it is centre shot, but the long focus makes the shot grainy, translucent, giving an unreal ethereal effect. Singing: *'Omar Khayyam...'*

14.40 Sign over arched doorway: 'Omar Khayyam'. Singing: *'Oh...'*

14.49 'O' taken over by male speaking voice. *'Oh that I could but rightly speak of the practical influence...'.*

14.53 *'...which the life of Christ ought to exert upon us all.'* Close up on iron framed square window panes. Black and white.

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14.56 *'He went about doing good, that he might influence...'* Camera pulls sharply away to reveal the whole building - the Omar Khayyam restaurant as the church it once was in a black and white photograph.

15.03 *'..Us, to do the same. O,...'* Shot from the same angle as photo, showing building in the present day, cleaned, and bearing current restaurant sign. Still black and white.

15.05 Colour returns. Text poem starts again: **'St. Andrew's...'** while the murmur of the preacher from the past continues, gradually fading.

15.10 **'...new sign..'** Inside the restaurant/church, close up of man drinking wine.

15.14 **'...Bombay...'** Onions dropped into a cast iron frying pan on a gassring.

15.17 **'Oust Bible bombast...'** Pan tossed dramatically, the whole pan aflame.

15.18 Arms of the diners; one reaches for wine.

15.20 **'...and imbibers...'** Two women, one drinking wine.

15.21 **'...month's grace...'** Construction site, skeleton of building built from girders. Parked cars. Sign: 'IMMAM D.R. SHAMS / EL DEEN AL FASSI / MOSQUE.'

15 25 Scans right to show the sign has its message repeated in Arabic.

15.30 Circles around the building site until it frames the adjacent restaurant. **'...sours Omar's...'**

15.30 **'...curdling..'** Tomatoes bubbling in a pan.

15.36 **'...curry...'** Man puts a forkful of food into his mouth.

15.37 **'...where there...'** General shot of restaurant activity.

15.38 Woman eating at a table. Drinking fruit juice (no wine).

15.42 **'...king prawn...'** Onion tossed in flames again.

15.44 **'...vindaloos...'** Chef shapes chappatis. Back wall decorated by a tapestry of India, mythical representation.

15.48 **'...Indian food...'** Back to the tomatoes in the pan. Stirred and removed.

15.51 **'...Good News...'** Blurred shot of female face, and the tilted neck of a wine bottle (phallic).

15.56 Repeat of the opening sequence up to (00.35). Laid table, red wine poured into glass.

16.01 The text begins when the glass is full: **'The blasphemers' banquet table...'**.

16.02 Aerial shot of five empty places, marked by upended glasses, and one filled with wine.

16.06 **'...will sit...'** Close up on the mirrored cushions of the chair. Camera circles.

16.21 End of repeated sequence. Voice of lost preacher reappears: *'A wine bibber, Oh, that we could imbibe that spirit!'*

16.23 Onion pan shot from the side, leaping flames evocative of hellfire.

16.25 Aerial shot through rafters of derelict church. Trees and vegetation growing inside. Its former congregation starts singing 'O Lord our help in ages past', continuing to (16.52).

16.28 Shot from inside the church: grass, black, rotten timber. Entirely collapsed interior.

16.30 Shot from outside the front to the church. Looks deceptively sturdy, except for the gaping roof-space.

16.33 Close-up on part of a sign depicting a stylized Arabian skyline with silhouetted domes and minarets, and a turbaned man riding a flying carpet.

16.40 Pulls away to show the whole sign: 'ALI BABA CARPETS / Wall Units, Furniture, Bedroom Fitments, Wallpaper.' Carved into the stone above this new sign is: 'CONGREGATIONAL SCHOOLS', showing the building's original use.

16.43 Decayed church viewed from the driveway. Wrought iron gates, flight of stone steps, barred door, smashed central window, overgrown trees.

16.46 Inside the church of (16.43). Empty, apart from structural debris.

16.50 Text continues: **'They sing of time...'** Camera moves slowly forwards, replicating the steps of a lost congregant.

16.52 **'...that bears us all away...'** text spoken over the same line sung by 'lost' choir.

16.53 Camera 'climbs' the three steps to the alter region, which is flanked with broken panelling.

17.00 Scans up the wall to where the cross used to hang. **'...his churches aren't!'**

17.02 **'...pulpit...'** focuses on left arm of the shadow left by the cross. **'...cross...'** scans right, spatial genuflection.

17.05 **'..where are they?'** Close up of the gap in the plaster work where the crucifix has been forced away, showing the bricks and remaining nail where it once hung. Sound of children's voices heard calling in an Asian language.

17.09 Red graffiti on a whitewashed wall: 'JESUS CHRIST'. Scans down.

17.18 Yellow plastic bucket, labelled 'Khiber / Pure Vegetable Ghee' discarded in the scrub beneath the wall.

17.20 Two Muslim (?) children playing among the gravestones. Text restarts: **'Where some of Bradford's...'**

17.24 **'Life flowers...'** Close up of girl leaning on a tombstone, peering shyly straight to camera. Two boys crawl past the camera, playing around the girl.

17.45 **'And then...'** Close up of pink rose, *after* textual reference.

17.53 Scans away, blurred focus on bars enclosing the churchyard. Cage of time.

17.57 Obelisk with cross seen between bars - oblivion.

17.59 Two sisters with white saris and long luminous green veils which cover their head and torso but not their face. 'Beautiful sisters...'.

18.09 'Innocent...' cut to obscene graffiti: 'Scar / face / bumbed his Dad / up side down / he licked his / mum fanny / out 200 Time / a minute.'

18.17 '..obscene..' pulls away to show context - door of church.

18.32 Stone wall, camera scans right, past 'Scar face' graffiti.

18.38 '...this message...' Black aerosolled sign on wall in Urdu.

!8.40 Scans down to show the pile of rubbish beneath.

18.54 '..thorny whys..' Continues to pan round the corner of the wall, picking out the jutting stones as semiotic parallel to the textual 'knots'.

19.09 Red fence and gate continuing from the wall. '... a fence...'.

19.19 Scans along fence top which is shaped like tiny minarets.

19.32 '... of everlasting night.' Cut to tombstone. Inscription reads: 'Not the labours of my hands, / Can fulfil thy law's demands / Rock of ages cleft for me, / Let me hide myself in Thee'.

19.46 Camera closes in on the 'O' of 'Not', as semiotic of the 'Big 'O'', then overshoots and looks behind the stone towards the town.

19.58 'Fear of loving...' Black and white photograph showing detail of the 'ELIM FOURSQUARE / GOSPEL CHURCH', its name picked out in white capitals over the windows.

20.01 Camera pulls sharply away to show a row of terrace houses to the left of the church, the front of which has carved 'SOUTHEND HALL'.

20.10 '...dooms...' Colour returns, the shot is clearly in the present day, signalled by the terrace houses now covered with plastic sheeting and scaffolding, undergoing renovation. A banner hangs under the carved sign reading: 'ANTIQUE & SECOND HAND FURNITURE'.

20.18 '...transform...' Screen all darkened, except from an obscured light-source that reflects from a wooden cut-out shape. Camera scans up and shows this to be the side of a pew inside the church, with people seated there.

20.22 '...to auction rooms.' The suggestion of a church service in the preceding frame is overturned.

20.26 Scans along the rows of the waiting bidders.

20.28 '...warmed ring...' Close up of hand, wearing a gold wedding ring and a diamond eternity ring.

20.33 'And numbers us..' Face of young woman, looking expectant at the proceedings. '...nothingness.' She looks down.

20.39 'The going...' Old man, profile.

20.46 Bang of gavel in the actual auction spliced into the textual auction sequence. Man looks round suddenly, and the distanced camera point of view is

interrupted as the auction becomes the 'real time'.

20.46 Camera swoop scans the room, everything blurred, to close-up of auctioneer's face. Speed suggested by lack of focus, closing in on the auctioneer's mouth as he speaks: *'Start me at a pound for the lot, I've a pound. Two? Have we two? Now it's at one, have we done? Couldn't you take something at fifty quid? Who was it? Mrs. Bennet. Right. Thank you...'*

20.57 Camera pulls away from auctioneer's desk. Hand holds up a ring dangling from a piece of sting. *'One five four, one fifty four is the gold ring, one five four. We should be a fiver - a tenner then. A gold ring, is this....must be at scrap value, that sort of money!'*

21.05 *'Start me at a fiver!'*. Woman shakes her head.

21.06 Cut to TH, also shaking head. *Three pounds then. Have we three?'*

21.07 Back to auctioneer and hand, as (20.57). *'Right, we haven't.'*

21.10 *'Put it down Brian'*. Ring is put down - goes off screen.

21.15 *'Silver frame, one five five, one five five, for the silver frame...'*. Silver photograph frame held up. Text starts: **'Bishops once burned...'**

21.16 Woman raises her hand to bid, watched by two men.

21.20 Young woman scratches her nose.

21.23 Cut to auctioneer's desk. Sign on it reads 'AUCTIONEER / D.BISHOP', confirming the texts' proceeding statement.

21.27 Rear view shot of two men, tapping their catalogues.

21.29 Woman and older man who adjusts his glasses - the bidders all seem fidgety, expectant.

21.32 Gold wedding ring, with lot ticket (140). Black background. Set up shot in otherwise naturalistic sequence. *'Gold wedding ring, lot one forty, gold wedding band. Fifteen for this, a tenner then - I've twelve pounds bid...'*.

21.34 Hand reaches across and pulls it from view, by its ticket.

21.36 Black background. Ring swings from its string, catches the light reflecting a two-dimensional 'O'. Auction soundtrack continues in the background. Singing re-enters: *'O I love this fleeting life'*.

21.43 Bearded man looks right. Camera follows his point of view and scans the auction hall.

22.00 Singing fades and the bidding soundtrack is brought back up: *'20, 35...'*

22.04 Camera scans row of people then swoops up to see a TV angled precariously on a wardrobe. The bust of Voltaire is 'on' TV: Voltaire seems to be watching the auction. Auctioneer: *'...thirty, thirty five. You can't beat tuning in to the mass media. Font of all knowledge is that. Are we all done at thirty five? Is that it? And it's Mr. Capstick, at thirty five pounds.'* Scans back through the audience.

22.14 Cut back to tv, which now has Salman Rushdie on (same footage as (01.50).

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22.17 *'Lot two seven six are three bundles of books...'* Close up of bundle of books and lot number sticker. Shot from above - top book on the pile *The Syrian*, Abul Ale.

22.20 *'..many tomes of ancient knowledge there. Here we go. Where shall we be? Twenty pounds, a tenner, a fiver...'* Camera scans down the spines of the books, which include Akhmatova *Poems*, Peter Wright *Spy Catcher*, Tony Harrison's *Selected Poems* and *Theatre Works*, plus other Penguin editions.

22.23 Close up on more book titles: James Joyce *Ulysses*, D.H. Lawrence *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, Voltaire *Dictionaire Philosophique*. *'..I've a fiver only bidden, seven, I've seven, nine ,ten, I've ten - are you trying? Twelve, fourteen, now I've fourteen, sixteen, eighteen, where it's sixteen. Are we done at sixteen?*

22.27 Close up on the bust/face of Voltaire on TV. *' All right, now we're selling! Lot two five three, now, which is... what's it made of? Marble? It's marble, isn't it, Brian?...'.*

22.36 Marble bust of Voltaire, as in opening sequence. *'This marble bust, lot two five three...'*

22.45 *' Right, where do we start on this? An unusual item, shall we say twenty, a tenner, twelve, I've twelve...'* Close in on the face of the bust.

22.50 *'Quickly at 12...'* Shot of auctioneer's face - contrast of animate and inanimate, Classical passivity and living 'ugliness'.

22.51 *'...12...'* TH raises finger.

22.51 Woman as (21.05) lowers her finger, in completion of TH's gesture. *'14...'*

22.52 3rd. bidder motions. *'16, 16...'*

22.53 TH nods. *'18...'.*

22.55 Back of woman's head. *'twenty, I've twenty now. Are you sure it's not twenty two? I've twenty bid....'.*

22.58 Bored looking man, resting his head on his hand looks round to confirm the auctioneer's *'Are we all done then at twenty?...'.*

23.01 Close up side view of gavel landing: *'Mr. Nickleson at twenty - Harrison at twenty* (laughs) *Well there's one thing that can be said - your fame's not travelled before you* (or 'your firm's not travelled before') *Am I right sir?...'*

23.02 Two women shake their heads, general laughter at the auctioneer's slip.

23.13 TH, smiling ironically, standing by the wardrobe (as 22.04), the TV has no image, just black and white lines like a blank video tape. Speaks the text/poem: **'Time, that gives...'**

23.21 **'..plate..'** Black and white transfer of Shakespeare on a commemorative plate.

23.28 **'...and make...'** Plate with colour transfer of a cardinal, sticker: 'lot 86'.

23.34 Basket filled with bric-a-brac: plates with the queen on, lot 14, brass jug, glass bottles, books etc.

23.38 Cut to TH **'.. to the falling gavel...'**

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23.40 Sound of auctioneer's gavel punctuates the text. **'..or the guillotine.'** Close up of plate with the queen on.

23.42 La Marseilles strikes up.

23.44 Bust of Voltaire with green light projected on his face, as (01.58), then switches to red.

23.49 Camera swings past the roundabout whose lights had been reflected in preceding image, and fixes on the base of a statue.

23.50 Focuses on a plaque: '14 JUILLET 1784', and a raised sculpted panel, while the flashing lights of the roundabout's rockets fly past still in shot.

23.52 Close up of the sculpture - 'Storming the Bastille'.

23.56 Back to the fairground ride. The background National Anthem continues.

24.07 Text re-enters: **'When a small boy...'** Tracking shot of a small boy riding a helicopter on the roundabout.

24.08 **'...mort, mort, mort!'** Blurred footage of a similar small boy shaking his fist. Part of a demonstration, banners.

24.10 Close up of placard - cartoon of Salman Rushdie holding a copy of *The Satanic Verses* crossed through in red, bearing the words 'LA MORT À RUSHDIE'.

24.13 Open roofed car, two people gesture, carrying banner: 'NON SATAN RUSHDIE'.

24.17 **'...a revival's due...'** Poster: 'COMEDIE DE PARIS / VOLTAIRE'S FOLIES'.

24.21 Cut to French Statue of Liberty.

24.25 **'When I see..'** Green light plays on the marble bust of Voltaire, black background.

24.28 **'..murderous protest...'** Back of statue, triangle of flashing coloured lights.

24.30 **'...prayer...'** Crowd of Muslims all kneeling in prayer, in front of them lies the funfair and roundabouts.

24.33 The kneeling worshipers all put their foreheads to the ground.

24.35 Camera point-of-view circles with the fairground ride, closing in on the helicopter (as 24.07). Text ends and a helicopter sound fades in.

24.43 A real helicopter is tracked in the sky as it flies behind a statue.

24.53 A hurricane/gale sound blends with the helicopter soundtrack, then a chant of *'Rushdie'* begins, spliced with a close-up of shouting faces.

24.53 Camera focuses on the placards wielded by the demonstrators - a horned Rushdie, bearing a trident, 'IT WASN'T MY IDEA I JUST WROTE IT'.

24.54 Placard is reversed: 'LONG LIVE RUSHDIE IN HELL'.

24.57 Cut back to shouting faces (as 24.53), scans crowd, slightly out-of-focus.

25.04 Different angle on same crowd.

25.05 Camera pulls back slightly, to show 3/4 view of the marchers and their placards: 'WITHDRAW SATANIC VERSES', 'UNITE AGAINST OBSCENITY'.

25.08 Man jumps in front of the camera, waving his placard which is whited out in the act.

25.09 Placard - cartoon of SR: 'HANG RUSHDIE BAN THE BOOK'.

25.11 Reverse of above placard, cartoon of Rushdie being beheaded, very gory, credited as 'Keighley'.

25.15 Return to the midst of the crowd, as (25.05).

25.16 Placard: 'RUSHDIE IS A DOG'.

25.20 Forest of placards, demonstrators themselves out-of-shot. 'BAN THE BOOK', and pictures of Khomeni.

25.21 Marching Muslims.

25.23 Tracking the helicopter in the sky above.

25.26 Turbaned small boy in the crowd.

25.28 Placard: 'RUSHDIE SHOULD BE PUNISHED BY THE (Islamic) LAW'.

25.31 Cut back to shouting, gesturing crowd.

25.33 Placard: 'RUSHDIE MUST DIE'.

25.37 Camera cuts to the front of the march, demonstrators moving towards the camera. Placard: 'FREEDOM OF OBSCENITY' (sic).

25.38 Aerial shot of march as it spills through a gateway into a main street.

25.42 Film changes to black and white. Sound fades, camera pans round the roundabout which is the route of the march.

26.06 Singing starts up: *'Oh I love this fleeting life!'*

26.09 Colour returns, the marchers are temporarily obscured from view by the greenery of the 'square's' trees.

26.18 Scans past the statue (above), camera describing an 'O' in its tracking to counter the sung *'Oh'*.

26.40 War memorial, monument with sculpture of prostrate soldier, 'OF DEATH' carved on the plinth. *'..life...'*

26.46 Scans a second statue, that of Lord Byron. Soundtrack of Muslim demonstrators - repetition of opening (01.54 - 58). *'Burn him! Burn him to death!'* Individual voices are electronically processed to be heard over the general hubub of the protest. Contrast to Byron's mute, pensive stance.

26.54 Text begins - **'Lord Byron heaves...'**

27.00 **'..march by...'** White banner: 'BAN THE BOOK' , a second reads 'ARREST RUSHDIE', and some others written in Arabic script.

27.05 '...1824...' Close up on the statue of Byron's face.

27.23 '...undermined...' shot moves into blur fade.

27.28 Refocuses on a water-colour cartoon of Byron, his hair being pulled by a black winged devil while he writes.

27.36 Detail of (27.28), a hand holding a quill pen, writing.

27.40 Scans back to (27.28), then pulls back to show the whole of the cartoon.

27.54 Statue of Byron, head in his hand, from rear 3/4 view. '...have patience...'

27.56 Cut back to the march. A wooden scaffolding carrying a 'hung' Rushdie effigy, tongue gaping, and a copy of *The Satanic Verses* round his neck, is carried by the crowd.

28.03 Perspective shot from ground looking up - demonstrator wearing a white headband. Soundtrack as opening and above and (26.46) *'Rushdie, bastard!'*

28.04 Cut back to march, camera angle now at head height, parallel with the effigy. Demonstrator prods the effigy with an umbrella.

28.09 'And down the river...' 'Postcard' type shot of the National Theatre from across the river.

28.12 '...the National Theatre...' Close up of the light-sign outside the theatre, which reads 'NATIONAL THEATRE / 7.45 tonight / in the LYTTELTON / THE MISANTHROPE'

28.20 '...branded...' '...BY MOLIÈRE'.

28.22 '...the Satan' red light, black arm of a statue, running fountain.

28.26 Night, illuminated Post Office tower, red-lit fountain fronted by statue.

28.31 Inside the foyer of the theatre, statues seated in alcoves.

28.37 'The most irreligious...' Molière statue, seated in front of a mirror, lights clustered at the side.

28.40 'I got the same...' Side view of Voltaire.

28.47 Crowd chatter. Three thuds, then the light on Voltaire fades, and a play (in French) begins.

28.50 'Molière's' Blank screen.

28.52 Head and shoulders of a man in a blue, traditional, African shirt top moves back and forth. Camera pulls back to reveal that he is vacuuming the carpet in front of the statues featured above. '...mask away...'.

28.58 '...'till my play...' camera pans along then up to the statue of Voltaire.

29.01 '...prophet...' Noisy theatrical performance of *Mahomet* over the text-poem.

29.02 Actor wearing a white dog collar and surplice, carrying a green sign with silver stars, reading 'MAHOMMET' (sic) (the extra 'm' crossed out).

29.03 Glass doors of theatre with posters advertising 'VOLTAIRE'S FOLIES'. Family passes in front of the camera and obscure them.

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29.07 Close up of the poster.

29.08 Male actor: *'Clitandre á dit.... Il est enfin venu!'* to an accompaniment of drum beats.

29.13 Man, kneeling, beats his chest: *'Allah!'* Sequence is repeated.

29.19 Cut back to the first man, as (29.08).

29.23 Kneeling man begins to chant *'Allah! Allah!...'*

29.33 Cut to Voltaire, looking slightly to the left as though watching the performance. The chant 'Allah' continues.

29.38 Camera closes in on bust of Voltaire, until it just frames the face. Text re-enters: **'Though not much...'**

29.54 The sound of the play is faded back in.

29.55 Cut to the stage. Four people stand in a row arguing amongst themselves, each holding placards reading: 'MUSULMAN / CATHOLIQUE / JUIF / PROTESTANT' respectively.

30.02 A clap of thunder is heard and all actors are silenced; they look towards the heavens.

30.07 Side profile shot of the faces looking surprised.

30.10 The 'Catholique' : *'Jesu? C'est Jesu?'*

30.13 Protestant: *'Mon Dieu! C'est mon Dieu!'* and kneels so we can only see his forehead in shot. The Catholic also kneels.

30.16 'Musulman': *'C'est Allah, Allah!'* in a muezzin-type call, and bows.

30.21 Front shot of the stage. The Musulman waves his placard, the rest bow and scrape. Juif: *'Jaweh, tu á venu!'*

30.22 Voice of 'God' speaks to the kneeling actors: *'We have to...'.*

30.23 Cut to head and shoulder shot of Ian Paisley in full religious regalia, in front of a microphone. *'...preserve and maintain in this island, true Protestantism'.* Thunderclaps start up and continue progressively louder, emphasising each of his speeches stresses, accompanying each of his gesticulations. *'...and a Protestant way of life. And I have news for the Roman Catholic church today: we Protestants* (crash) *are here* (crash) *in Ireland* (crash) *to stay!* (crash).

30.45 Red 'JUIF' placard held by actor from the play.

30.46 A rabbi preaches from a lectern to a group of skullcapped listeners: *'You know someone who wants to, who wants to kill you - get up first, and go and kill him first!* (Waves sheets of paper and bangs a book (the Torah?) for emphasis) *That's Judaism, that is Judaism. That's sanity!'* (Taps his head). Thunder continues to roll and add emphasis.

30.56 Blue sign held up reading: CATHOLIQUE. Voice starts up over this image *'It is without question the most blasphemous...'* (Thunder clap).

30.59 Cut to studio where a nun wearing a brown habit is being interviewed. *'...the*

most disrespectful, (crash) *the most satanic* (crash) *movie that's ever been filmed.'* She sits with folded arms, nodding her head for emphasis, very didactic.

31.07 Green 'MUSULMAN' placard brought to the centre of the shot.

31.09 Khomeni raises his hand (crash), black turbaned man at his side. Both turn to greet a huge crowd.

31.12 Fat bald man in his shirtsleeves holding a microphone jumps up and down a hall, amongst confusedly ecstatic worshipers. Montage soundtrack begins - jerky random electronic pulses and rhythms, to echo the increasingly rapid splicing and demonically 'possessed' images. Muslim chanting is stylized into a repetitive 'Rush-die, Bas-tard', (31.15) etc., the evangelist's message is trapped in a lock-groove 'Beware - ask of the way', as (31.17) etc., the TV-preacher's sermon disintegrates into a primal monkey scream, as (31.26) etc.

31.14 Different hall, rows of outstretched hands, reaching out for Christ, but out of their original context they evoke the gesture of a Nazi salute. Desperate faces of (mainly women) worshipers as they jump up and down.

31.15 Cut to head of a Muslim wearing the white headband which signifies mourning, jumping up and down, his forehead blood splattered. He is beating his head and shouting.

31.17 Camera angle from the side of a stage, following an American evangelist lay-preacher, holding a huge microphone, punching the air and shouting.

31.20 Crowd of demonstrators waving placards (low camera angle cuts off the actual messages, leaving a forest of sticks), again jumping up and down.

31.21 Cut back to (31.17), evangelist preacher waving his arms. Background contains a religious painting depicting Jesus holding a lamb.

31.24 Cut to Ayatollah's funeral, a mourner carrying a child in his arms and hitting the child's (?his son's) head, similar to (31.15), followed by another man in flowing white robes hitting his own head.

31.26 Head and shoulders profile shot of suited TV-preacher, holding a microphone and clapping his hands.

31.27 Ayatollah's funeral, mourners beat their heads till they bleed. One man carrying a child who is beating its own head and crying, his face covered in blood. The father is not bleeding.

31.28 Cut back to (31.14), the sea of outstretched hands.

31.29 Cut back to American TV preacher with microphone, as (31.26).

31.30 General crowd scene from the Ayatollah's funeral footage.

31.32 Cut back to 3/4 rear view of American tv preacher, as (31.26), shaking his fist. *'Holiness 'aint no works. Hey - holiness 'aint no miracles. Hey - holiness...'.*

31.33 Overview of heads and shaking fists at the Ayatollah's funeral, as (31.30). Many bloody scalps, and blood splattered faces and T-shirts.

31.34 Cut back to American evangelist preacher (31.17) shot from behind as he

approaches a (crippled?) old lady, who looks up at him expectantly. Preacher travels down the side of 'pews', each congregant nodding as he passes, then he turns and walks straight to camera, closing in until all else is blocked out, then runs off to the left.

31.38 Cut to black-suited American TV-preacher (same programme as (31.26)), on formal stage, set with flowers and music stand. Runs to the right, then acts as though possessed.

31.41 TV-preacher (above) turns round to confront the audience.

31.42 Close up of bearded Muslim mourner, bloody head, as (31.15).

31.43 Preacher in shirtsleeves jumping up and down (as 31.12).

31.47 Ayatollah's funeral, camera point-of-view slightly above the crowd, showing the bleeding heads. Child beating his head with a white stick comes into shot, behind him a toddler is doing likewise, as (31.27).

31.49 Conservative looking woman, 50's, seated in a wooden pew, shakes as though possessed and crosses her hands in a pseudo-hand-jiving motion. Camera cuts away as she raises her arms.

31.50 Muslim mourner, as (31.15) and (31.42).

31.53 Preacher, jumping, as (31.2) and (31.43).

31.54 Cut back to funeral, continuation of (31.27) and (31.47).

31.56 Repeated segment, as (31.49). Possessed woman.

31.57 Muslim mourner, as (31.15), (31.42), (31.50).

31.58 Cut back to the evangelist preacher, as (31.34), raising his arms. Camera circles him.

32.03 Extreme close-up of a bloodstained head and soaked white headband, as the mourner beats his head continuously. Grief-crazed eyes.

32.09 Camera pulls back gradually to reveal the head is that of a child, being hit by his father - image quality slightly blurred. Detail from (31.27)?

32.12 Crowd of mourners, as (31.33).

32.14 Camera closes in on one particular head in the middle of the crowd which has no hair left on the patch that is being beaten. Soundtrack: rolling thunder as the garble of preachers is silenced.

32.18 Behind the head focused on in (32.14) camera fixes on a very young toddler being hit, blood covered, as (31.47), blurred film quality. 'Eastern' string-music drifts in.

32.22 Man carrying older child, beating his head. The father has a blood-soaked shirt, as (31.27), but wider frame shot - taking in all the child. Man moves towards the camera and the child is obscured by another mourner's hand in front of the lens.

32.27 Face of the child back in shot, still beating his head. Singing: *'Oh...(sigh) I love this fleeting life...'*.

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32.48 Screen covered by falling body of water - cleansing image. Becomes more ominous swirling ripples, a mixture of black shadow and white reflection. Montage soundtrack is replaced by the general 'Eastern' string-music.

32.55 Leaflet swims into vision, headlines readable: 'WHAT CAN WE DO?' and 'KEEP THE ISSUE ALIVE'.

32.59 Water ripples, more of the leaflet can be read: 'FIGHT FOR MUSLIM RIGHTS'.

33.04 Singing enters: *'Oh, I love this ...!'* Cut back to the war memorial, dappled with shadows, as (26.40).

33.14 *'..fleeting...'* Camera scans down to the plinth at the 'foot' end of the tomb, where is inscribed 'HERE WAS...'.

33.21 *'..life!'* Two wine glasses on a table, one upturned the other filled, as opening shot (00.12). The glug of wine being poured can be heard.

33.25 Inside a restaurant. Barman reaches for glasses. A fountain can be made out (blurred) in the front right corner.

33.28 TH seated at otherwise empty table, amongst other diners in the restaurant. TH sips his wine. Background noise of talking.

33.32 TH smacks his lips in appreciation of the wine, then begins the text poem: 'There's me...' Points to the empty chairs as he counts the absentees.

33.39 '...can't come...' Waiter passes in front of camera, momentarily obscuring TH, stressing the freedom and mobility of the restaurant against Rushdie's confinement. Camera tracks slowly forwards.

33.50 Ferocious sound of flames. Close up side-shot of two flaming pans, red filter to connote hellfire.

33.31 Chef making chappatis, as (15.44).

33.53 Close up of TH as he speaks direct-to-camera, performing the 'invitation'. Camera circles the table, as in the opening sequence, maintaining a close-up on TH.

34.49 '...Muslim *men*...' Back of TH's head. Negative deixis.

34.50 Opening sequence repeated. Close up of mirrored cushion, as opening (00.31), raffia chair back, as (00.40), etc.

35.03 '...toast your talent...' Head and shoulder shot of TH, raising his glass, spotlit, black background. Camera circles left.

35.17 '..raise my glass...' TH gestures his raised glass.

35.19 '..brilliance...' Glass directly in front of TH's mouth, his eyes looking over the rim, straight to camera.

35.25 '...blasphemy...' As above, tips glass slightly, as challenge/salute.

35.26 TH looks down and drinks. Camera continues to circle slightly past, then pauses.

36.06 Singing re-enters: *'Oh...'* Following the text's: 'Omar writes...'

THE BLASPHEMERS' BANQUET - FILM SEMIOTICS TABLE

36.23 Shot from the right of the 'Omar Khayyam' restaurant sign. Scaffolding is erected around it, and two men stand by, waiting to dismantle it. Each takes out a knife and they prepare to cut away the letters.

36.33 *'...Omar Khayyam...'* Three letters (YAM) already removed lie face down on the scaffolding platform, redundant.

36.39 *'...Omar Khayy...'* Camera shows the truncated restaurant sign, whose shortened typographic form is echoed by the curtailed song.

36.49 Close up of single discarded letter on floor - camera angle makes it impossible to determine which - signalling its semiotic obsolescence.

36.56 Close up of 'R' and man reaching behind to cut it off.

36.59 Camera tracks right to the second man who is leaning down, fiddling with loose wires in the transparent backs of the letters - deconstruction as process.

37.02 *'...Ohhh....'* Close up of black 'O'.

37.08 *'...mmm...'* Scans right to black 'M', and incorporates the now blank space to the right of the letter.

37.12 Hands remove the circuitry from the back of the letter-shells on the floor.

27.15 *'....Ohhh...'* Singing intensifies as both pairs of arms hold the 'O' upright as it is lifted down. The dislodged letter is moved towards the camera, and as it gets nearer the song gets louder. There is a remaining circle of wire left on the wall.

37.20 Close up from the left of the wire 'O'. A pair of snippers pause for a second then cut through the circuit. The singing is instantly cut off, and the screen is plunged into darkness.

37.24 Voltaire's bust 3/4 spotlit from the left, background of darkness. As credits begin to roll a trickle of blood runs down the right-hand side of his face from the back of his head, down his eye, to his cheek.

37.26 THE / BLASPHEMERS' BANQUET / BY TONY HARRISON. Music by Dominic Muldowney. Sung by Teresa Stratas. [...] Director, Peter Symes.

CHEATING THE VOID

Oblivion is darkness, memory - light.
They are locked in eternal struggle.
Which of these forces really shows its might
when death's doors are thrown open by a switch?
5   These people are all dead, and yet they walk,
the first, in fact, to move on celluloid.
Though they're silent and will never talk,
their very movement seemed to cheat the void.
'Death's no longer absolute' wrote the reviewer
10 having seen this film in 1895.
Do our TVs and videos make it truer,
and help the dead seem more alive?
Out of the metro to the upper air,
the dead brought back from underneath the ground.
15 And a century since the film by Lumière
Out of the Metro, coloured and with sound.
Napolionic Paris cleared it's plague filled tombs
and first showed Europe more hygienic ways.
They stacked the dug up bones in catacombs
20 and opened a green place called Pere la Chaise.
Paris pushed, promoted and PR'd
to induce the city's dead to settle there,
and reburried Eloise with Abelard
and brought in la Fontaine and Molière.
25 And by process of promotional exhumation,
of endorsing heroes long ago decayed,
lured both great and small to emulation,
and now draws tv crews and tourist trade.
The tour starts here, with voices in your head;
30 hear one corpse sing what another corpse composes -
follow their music, let yourself be led
to where the shell of genius reposes.
Composers rot, but their recorded notes
are all we need to make them seem alive,
35 the singers buried here have crumbled throats
but the voices they vibrated with survive.
And that - what's that, a bird?
Follow the leafy paths to track the sound,
and maybe find it's not a thrush you heard
40 but Mez Mezrow's clarinet from underground.
The Muse, one of Memory's nine daughters
looks, and doesn't like what she beholds -
the lyre finally unstrung when Leathe's waters
take Chopin underneath her chilly folds.

CHEATING THE VOID

45   Drawn down into Oblivion,
     and drowned in Eternity's white noise and endless hiss
     from where the waves wash up the surface
     of divas from the same dark depths like this.
     Adelina Parté, Callas and the former from scratchy wax
50   from before the first world war,
     sing 'Casta Diva' from Bellini's 'Norma',
     then Callas on Histler's tracks gives an encore.
     Offspring of Eddison's first phonograph
     (intended by him only for dictation)
55   enables us to listen to Piaf
     and engineer her vocal exhumation.
     Oblivion, that all our art defies,
     Oblivion, where all of us must go,
     Oblivion, that's gazed on by the eyes
60   of this graveyard's greatest painter, Jerico;
     who went on painting till the very last
     defying the dark void through his last days
     till he changed his pain-wracked body for one cast in bronze
     still painting, here, in Pere la Chaise.
65   His master work, the raft of the Medusa
     blown by the wind and battered by the waves,
     reproduced in metal, but its sculptor/reproducer
     believing no male organ much suits death
     makes the dying man more modest for the frieze,
70   and gave the death-offending member a bronze veil.
     But Jim, who doesn't, *didn't* care who sees,
     for unveiling his on stage got thrown in jail.
     'Death and my cock are the world', said Jim -
     that may have been, but now I rather doubt
75   there's much left of that vaunted part of him-
     or nothing he'd *feel* like pulling out.
     The void may well be cheated by a voice,
     composer's quill, the artist's brush or pen
     but Memory might only have one choice,
80   as stone, in Kensal Green, £11.10.
     Mr. Kemp the mason, Kensal Green.
     Professional friend to loving memory
     of the firm of J.S. Farley who have been
     naming the void since 1823.
85   Memory puts up names in chiselled letters
     meant to last beyond the mourner's day.
     Oblivion makes descendants soon forgeters
     and lets the weather wear the names away.

Appendix 3.

CHEATING THE VOID

The spider spinning on the holly bough,
90   the moths that spiral in the shafts of sun,
are all the visitors the dead get now
where Memory's strangled by Oblivion.
The stone that still reads 'Watson' 's going green.
Lichen furs the letters of each word -
95   Crevasses to be crossed are all they mean
to millipede and ant and ladybird.
The first Oblivion is death, the next neglect,
and finally the third,
    when moss and ivy blank out mason's text
100   and no one cares who's body is interred.
Vandals might strip tombstones of their lead,
jerk ring or jewelled bangle off a bone -
of value to the living, not the dead.
But Oblivion can do such work alone.
105   Bodies with breeding, a better class of bone
first drew dead clientele to Kensal Green
which claimed a royal corpse to set the tone -
a princess made it *the* place to be seen!
This, as Mr. Kemp would say 's a 'solid tomb',
110   one of the first, and solidest erected here,
and the deferential swish of the worker's broom
keeps common dust from settling on Sophia,
Sophia, daughter of King George III,
(though precedence beneath the earth's a jest,)
115   by choosing Kensal Green to be interred
gave it the caché to attract the best.
Lords and Ladies, late and early nipped,
beneath heartsease, forget-me-not and yew -
what are they now? A stone with chiselled script
120   saying 'Sir William Casement' - Who?
Late of Bengal, but now of Kensal Green,
Sir William Casement oversees these kids,
jobless for a year, employed to clean
his lichen encrusted cariotids.
125   Juprassi, sepoi, subrada
used to serve his slightest whim -
now, things being in Britain what they are,
these have no choice but to bow and scrape to him.
The circus owner joins the social set.
130   Though the nobs are no doubt snubbing him in heaven
Ducrow's bones are rubbing shoulders with Debrett.
For 300 times '£11.11' - inscription extra

CHEATING THE VOID

Pegasus the winged horse helps him fly,
his Colossus of equestrians, Ducrow
135   without his hat and gloves, into the sky -
and angels from the next tomb watch his show.
Before the blessed's astonished saintly faces
Ducrow still cracks his circusmaster's whips -
putting God's chariot horses through their paces
140   and the spangled horsemen of the Apocalypse.
Ducrow dismounts where bourgeoisie Genoese
made monuments more lavish than his own.
The chiselling banker's chiselled effigies,
the solid burgher's even solider in stone.
145   Matzini, buried here, serenely stated
(before he died) that 'death did not exist'.
Others hedge their bets and get translated
from flesh into marble, by a realist.
Flesh perishes but marble's meant to last.
150   They squandered money they'd amassed by trade
to cut a dash in death, not to be outclassed
by competition in the colonnade.
Not just a hat and gloves, as with Ducrow,
but *them*, not just their laces, their limbs
155   what they wore on top, but all the frills below,
and every detail etched cried out for more.
The delicate brocade, the flimsy lace
the widow's tear drop falling from a lash -
every feature Memory could trace
160   provided the remembered had the cash.
'*I* didn't have it, but I swore I would.
I'd save my *liri* , so that when I died
I'd stand among the nobs - I'm just as good!
(though they sniff a bit to see me at their side...)
165   They don't like hawkers at the colonnade
and I sold necklaces of nuts and rings of bread.
Though alive they might despise my lowly trade
they can't feel quite so snooty when they're dead.
Coin by coin commissioned, head to toe,
170   the nutseller enshrined among the rich,
not sorry to take my rest from life below.
Glad that my marble kin still works my pitch.
I worked too hard to have kids of my own,
and having kids is all I'd say I miss.
175   I feel a wee bit jealous when that child of stone
gives here mamma a long lingering kiss.

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CHEATING THE VOID

Sunshine is life, and here the sunny Med.
with honeymooners, beachballs and blue skies
seems an unlikely landscape for the dead.
180 But even the idle rich have got to die
the best of life so close, so out of reach.
How tantalising to be good and dead
with all those sunburnt bodies on the beach,
when you're mere marble and no eyes in your head!
185 The sun, the sea, the half-clad shapes
topless torsos, thighs lapped by the waves -
all have a date with death, no one escapes.
Stretched out as if to sunbathe in their graves
they see them sunbathe and they see them swim -
190 if a dead man's eyesight can survive.
So much *joi de vivre* and yet, says Jim
[No one here gets out alive]   (sung)
Ok, Jim, but there's no need to shout -
go back and rest your bones in Pere la Chaise.
195 Everyone knows they wont get out of here alive,
but like their holidays.
These waters so inviting in the sun
that people dip their toes in, swim in, float in,
can darken any day into Oblivion
200 and a final sail in Caeron's fiery boat.
This island of the dead's so short of space
most graves in Venice have a ten year lease
and each cross with the dead's ceramic face gets moved
and those who want to rest in peace
205 get their bones collected from the common pile
to make room for another boat-borne box.
The dead spared exhumation on this isle
are the famous and the Russian Orthodox.
Which includes Stravinski and Diagalev.
210 Our sand machine exhumes the 'Rite of Spring'
to summon the flowers up, the dead
are deaf to music, birdsong, boats - to everything.
To these drums that shake the earth down to its core
invoking Spring to turn the dug soil green,
215 to the furiously following First World War
shaking all the Centuries we've seen.
Time running out for Europe, and for man.
Oblivion in our century overtaking
Memory pursued here to a land
220 where men of stone bring God's heart close to breaking.

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CHEATING THE VOID

What does Christ gaze down on from his cross?
A century where innocence has died
and mankind finds no meaning in the loss
of millions almost worse than crucified.
225 Film machines exhume the ones who died
and bring this baby, Mia, back to view.
But Oblivion with his bombs and genocide
is almost neck and neck since World War II.
Innocence, all unaware how time
230 can make her playmates petrified.
Graves are fun to play on and to climb,
she doesn't know the meaning of 'they died'.
Locked in eternal struggle, which one wins -
Oblivion, Memory; darkness, light:
235 maybe Oblivion and Memory are twins
like here on this gravestone, left and right.
Machines have maximised Oblivion's slaughter
that **** films on Lumière's machine
and this Muse in Milan here, Memory's daughter,
240 doesn't seem to care for what she's seen.
That emotion in the Muse's face is fear
that shows itself through her half-covered eyes
as the Century darken over baby Mia,
and Oblivion's smoke stacks blacken Europe's skies.
245 This bloke, in case you think so's not recruiting
graveyards don't have problems keeping full.
It's not a human enemy he's shooting -
it's Herr Blunker's early morning rabbit cull.
The dead don't register the rifle's sound
250 though once for days on end it's all they heard,
burrowing for their lives into the ground.
Now rabbits burrow down where they're interred.
Herr Blunker, rabbit culler, takes a prize.
2000 killed a year here. But the war
255 when it came rabbiting to Hamburg from the skies
in just one day bagged 50,000 more.
We'd sooner that Oblivion destroyed
some memories, like these Hamburg streets.
Some film we'd sooner pitch into that void
260 that Lumière's invention sometimes cheats.
In 1943 the Allied raid intended to subdue the German nation
caused fires that reached 800 Centigrade -
200 more than needed for cremation.
The lawns of Oldsdorf where still mourning mothers

CHEATING THE VOID

265 search level grass where every loved one shares
a common grave with 50, 000 others
but want to claim a blade of it as 'theirs'.
'Remember me, but ah, forget my fate'.
Impossible in Hamburg. History refuses
270 to have that motto carved above her gates
for she's the least forgiving of the Muses.
The gates of death are opening once more,
not to let souls out, as in the Lumière,
but into Caeron's ferry for the farther shore.
275 He starts the outboard with a stony stare.
Why do the ferried close their chiselled eyes?
What do the passengers not want to see?
Their destination where oblivion lies,
or what they leave behind in Germany.
280 Caeren's ferry's chugging on the wharf
for those who do not care for what they've sen
from this launching stage of stone here at Oldsdorf,
from Venice, Genoa, Milan and Kensal Green.
From Non Mouton and Pere la Chaise
285 by Caeron's eyes are never known to close.
He sees the sad procession and his gaze
pierces Oblivion's depths, like Jerico's.
Tours go back to where they started -
always A to A, not A to Z.
290 But in this ferry boat once you've started
Caeron chugs back empty for more dead.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SEMIOTICS OF THE "*V.*" VIDEO

all my images are of the war[1]

The first sequence of images after Harrison's introductory preamble focuses on footage from the WWII, and forms a separate pre-textual entity, what I am calling a 'promovideo', to which the (written) text does not (and can not) refer[2]. Thus, before the re-creation of the poem the *context* is marked out using a commonly accessible arena of conflict to serve as meta-symbol, underpinning the entire verbal text.

A4.1. HITLER *V.* CHURCHILL

The use of newsreel footage of Hitler and Churchill provides a corollary for the fictional reality within the text, and with the inherent schematized, embedded interpretation of 'History', the viewer is initially presented with a set of oppositions - "V's" - which have become established as 'sign' in their own right. So when we see Churchill's victory sign (1.57) and Hitler's salute (2.17), the division between Good and Evil is distinct, unambiguous.

However, this worldview is challenged structurally, imagistically, in the parallelism of screen positioning. Each leader is addressing a crowd, using rhetoric and gesture to incite action; and whilst promising freedom from Nazi domination, the ambiguous linguistic structures of Churchill's egocentric, colonialist ordering of 'our country' before 'all mankind' is directly comparable to Nazi expansionist philosophy, coupled with the aggressive lexical collocation 'clash', 'march', 'invigorated' - the overtones of fanatical, fascistic 'purification' little differ from the 'implied' (literally 'unintelligible' to the majority of the audience) discourse of Hitler with which this one is paired. Further, the switch from rhetorical declaratives to the indecisiveness indicated by the modality of 'I trust' and 'generally' subverts the initial simple opposition - victory is promised, but the 'freedom' people fought for is still only a 'hope', and within this lies the seeds of dissonance. The phrase 'generally united' already projects the oppositions to be explored forty years later in "*v.*", which become cataphorically part of the 'further journey'.

So these opening speeches reflect the technique of the whole film as the gap between image and word provides a dialectic which explores the conflicts around which the videopoem centres. Even while the audience reacts to these familiar images along partisan lines, the basis for these responses are being challenged - as indeed their response to the skin is similarly to be questioned - in the linking of all 'fundamentalist' stances, British and German, and in establishing the encoded ambiguity of all textual material: the accepted, conventional rhetoric of Churchill is demonstrably misleading, violating at least the maxim of manner[3], in presenting doubt within the rhetorical framework/speech-act of promising. This irony is re-enforced by the cheering masses who evidently have encoded the speech in the manner it is *delivered*, directly compared with the German masses believing Hitler's comparable/opposing promises which are now seen as misleading and false, where Churchill's retain the aura of veracity and 'greatness'. Harrison is setting up the tenor of his debate, as the problems (and deliberate misinformation) of communication between separate groups is placed within a historical context or precedent, and we are presented with a structural and thematic

link with the contemporary text, the harbinger of disunity, the false promises here bearing the fruit of discontent in 1984 (the year of "v.'s" broadcast), and indeed the 'past' of the poem, the gravestones being the 'present' of war, its survivors the new dead around whom fresh conflict circulates.

A4.2. THE AGENCY OF CHAOS

The introduction of this promo to prefigure the thematic structure of the narration, serves to breakdown the distance between the viewer and medium. In choosing the WWII, Harrison denies the audience the possibility of detachment, immediately manoeuvring them into taking a stance and relating the 'fictive' world of the reconstructed historical reality with that of the present.

The audience section who are more conversant with the literary and cinamatographic conventions will be aware of the structural significance of the dumb show, and consequently seek to reconstruct a narrative from the given montage, yet ironically this will serve to defamiliarize this 'common' material as its unexpected positioning is almost metaphysical in its philosophical role as adjunct, so whilst the 'tv' audience, devoid of expectation, will freely enter the text, it being part of their cultural context, the understanding of genre and dramatic structures re-energizes the 'stale' material for the 'educated' audience in linking its dialectic with unexpected issues.

Once the gap between text and audience has been so deconstructed then this dialectical engagement ensures further, continued participation within the main body of the narrative, this enforced thematic modality re-enforced by the structural semiotic of the film point-of-view is subtly arranged so that the bomb explosion (2.28) leads the viewer to demand a thematic causality stronger than the preceding cut of processional Nazi soldiers, the desire for temporal progression in a text perpetuating a need for a definite cohesive signified, emphasized by the conventional structural technique of news footage. This is semiotically enacted first externally via the sweeping searchlights [2.31] - the *absence* of narrative closure is signalled, then this signifier is changed to signified [2.32] as the searchlights are presented from an angle of cinema verite - the lights projecting from behind the camera, placing viewer in the role of *actor*, metaphorically 'seeking' his own causality within the given structure, whilst becoming a deconstructed signified and part of its multivalence.

This is co-existent with the cyclical narrative sequence of planes, bombing, searchlights, torpedoes demonstrating the amorality of the conflict as it becomes system rather than cause, its own 'chaos structure' transcending a controlling logic: planes take off, bomb, are bombed. The structure of division posited at the outset (Churchill V. Hitler) is now overriden as the inanimates of war become deictically *causa sui*: who fires at whom becomes immaterial in the momentum of conflict *for its own sake*. History becomes an inevitable process, events lack originators, the symbols are divided from that which designated their sphere of reference. This is evidenced structurally via the focus on conventional *yet* depersonalized images of war [2.33]: the 'event' dominates the actor, the explosion blankets the image in a whiteness intercut for only *one* frame to reveal the gunner at the centre of this 'moment' - *subliminally* the consciousness of a human presence is registered but the *realisation* is not triggered, leaving the viewer to construct a narrative reality devoid of characters/actors.

A4.3. SEMIOSIS IN BLACK-AND-WHITE

Deep-structurally, the binary opposition of light and dark dominate the shape of the video, their symbolic portents implicit within the fabric of the footage used make them integral, indivisible in their signification. Black-and-white motif defines the fictional-historical context (B&W as a sign for its 'original' cultural milieu). Again this makes a link with the mime, silent movies, yet contained within this hermeneutic is the re-ordering of its textures into imagistic oppositions which stylize the static 'reality', taking it beyond representation (verisimilitude) to become, as the narrative, its own re-organizational principle.

The image-sequence continuously deconstructs itself as black/white divisions cut the screen in two across complementary diagonals - the searchlight-white [2.31] is countered by the path of the torpedo [2.32]. This is then microcosmically patterned in the intercutting of totally black or white screens with tiny elements of dissonance - white explosion [2.33], black with white specks of debris [2.34], repeated [2.35]&[2.36], [2.43]&[2.52]. These absolutes of opposition interspersed with rapid shots of 'action' kaleidoscopically re-generate the divisions around the key elements of war-debris and smoke, which are serving on the level of signifier, as well as the pure oppositional-colour semiosis.

This semiosis is mimetic of the *processes* of war, cutting through an imposed artificiality (the blackout and the searchlight) and thereby making the underlying documentary 'reality' secondary (hence the absence of actors), caught in the text almost as an accident of the overriding organisation of the rapid cutting frames [2.33], [2.52], [2.53].

Having established this deep structure, the sign/signified relationship is again destroyed as the reality of the videoic *narrative* is defamiliarized. Building on the structural markers, a longer sequence [2.55-2.59] of conflict between ground and air (searchlight and torpedo) is localised into a situational parallel; the diagonal focus centres now on the jet of a firehose - the *consequences* of preceding action, yet still emphasizing the perfect patterning of structure on an infinitely reflexive level. The blanket light/dark frames become momentarily tied, as the buildings and firemen are silhouetted against the brightness of the blaze and continuing explosions. Light is still the energising symbol of the composition, causing the complementary blackness; humanity is 'blacked out', being-acted-upon, passive, powerless. This is underlined in the narrative structure as the building begins to crumble [2.59], and the camera scans downwards tracking the falling debris, storey after storey, keeping it as subject of the narrative to which the people below have to respond, by fleeing.

[2.57] provides semiotic cohesion with this encoding, as the diagonal sub-structure is mirrored around a central axis forming an inverted 'V' composed of a fully-extended ladder from a fire engine and a downwards jet from a hose - the solitary fireman precariously balanced at the top of the ladder again is structurally displaced as actor (although 'creator' of the semiotic, it is the image and not the event that takes primary significance in the viewers' encoding). This can be seen as the pivotal frame of the 'dumb show'-promo, as it combines the black/white motifs and unites the diagonals in a moment of polysemy, which is then 'textually' evoked anaphorically in [3.41], a poster of a 'V' with a radiant white victory sign illuminating the horizon, bordered by black (silhouetted) buildings. The graphic stylization evokes that of the film-verite footage, only the essential hermeneutic is distorted, the black, *inverted* 'V' of [2.57] is a countering re-enactment of [3.41].

The montage denies the possibility of a stable/static point of view, presenting a dialectic of chaos, its own organising function. Yet this defamiliarizing substructure does not lose either section of its potential audience; the non-literary deal with it on the surface level of topic, are well able to handle the erratic cutting as their exposure to video technique has developed an ability to encode and assimilate visual information without the need for overt explicature, and the expectations of the literary audience are met with the codifying shots ([03.07],[03.41]) which provide a point of closure to which the semiosis has been moving.

A4.4. VICTIMS SURVIVING

This dehumanizing/alienation is presented vividly in the sequence [03.10] to [03.14], as the victims are shown as post-apocalyptic refugees, wandering in a defamiliarized landscape of smoke and debris (again the two opposing elements of the discourse) almost as if on a pilgrimage - enforced by the carrying of a cross, and the momentary illumination of a cathedral dome [03.09]. But these people are outside the context of the verite footage, an image which is not part of the traditional/conventional portrayal of conflict, but a microcosmic lexie of anomie referring to the filmic tradition of cross-structural alienation found in sociocritical fictional film - at the close of *Koyaanisquatsi, On The Beach* and characterising the Tarkovskian quest motif.

Thus, the disorientation of life in and through war is presented symbolically, as a separate aesthetic construct and not as part of a narrative sequence *per se*. The aimless wanderings of the shell-shocked survivors present as sign of the individual displacement, ironically within a separate sub-genre, break with the main deep-structural argument of the video. The 'actor as absence' motif which overrides individuation is broken, to focus on 'actor as person', unable to 'act', function*less* on a humanistic level (hence the quest-motif construct) but because of the use of verite as fictive reality, this displacement can only be foregrounded by the deliberate use of an un-reality - a separate aesthetic construct, whilst showing *both* are at once reality and fiction.

To stress this section's isolationism, this sequence re-establishes itself within the same topic [03.14] of the depersonalised attempt at preventing the atrocities with the ringing of the fire-bell, capturing a specific 'moment' within the non-naturalistic spatio-temporal ordering of the video. But again the human face is hidden by the bell, we see the sign of action and not action 'itself'. This is further enforced by the scrawled sign 'Don't come/and/tell/ring/this like/"Hell"'. The person is prevented from his 'natural' (within an oral-based community) authority of taking action, instead he is forced to co-join with the sign, once more giving it autonomy in their mutual becoming. Man-as-automata is controlled by *the semiotic of* war, an interpretation to be strengthened by the following footage of the firemen responding to the sign. Free-will is negated as war determines responses by imposing a newly-created network of signifier/signified relationships; man has to re-learn to *interpret* his environment.

The second cycle of combat footage [03.18] to [03.40] is a reductivist progression from the [02.28] to [02.55] section; the colour-semiosis is replaced with a structure of movement and time, a dialectic centred around a pair of aeroplanes, symbols of affirmation and negation, power and weakness, being and absence. The first frames emphasize these essential elements of the planes pre-movement [03.18] - the 'target' on

the wing - precursor of vulnerability - and [03.19] the three guns on the side of the plane - icons of aggression - each wing carrying its own opposition.

The viewer witnesses the planes at their moment of becoming [03.20] as the genesis of motion is evidenced 'statically'; the whirring propellers signal life, then they taxi along the runway to launch themselves as autonomous functions of war. This brief period of emergence parallels that of the alerted firemen; they were responding *to*, losing identity in being acted upon, whereas the planes seem structurally to create their own purpose/state. Their parasitic selfhood is emphasized by the impersonality of the goggled pilot, obscured by his machine [03.27], a person unknown and unknowing, pressing the fire button [03.27] according to the dictates of war, no longer 'responsible' for his individual actions, but an actor in the re-forming reality of which he has become a part.

This evidence of human complicity acts as catalyst to the ensuing dance of matter and time, as the images are condensed, refined, made elemental. This Dyonisian dance centres around the machinations of power, symbolized by the gunhole, through which bullets are fired, an icon of aggression, the destructive force, and of the grace of manoeuvre away form this centre of destruction (thus the two opposing forces), and by the planes, circling and attacking, each aggressor and victim within the patterning of war. The dance only ends when one finally becomes victor [03.29]; one half spirals out of the dance, into negation, destruction, only to be replaced by another, (or the same). The dance resumes, the pattern dictates that each force be countered, every element has its complement. The stylization of conflict-as-chaos is evidenced by the frame-by-frame juxtapositioning of weapon hole and manoeuvre [03.30] to [03.38] until the power struggle reaches its 'climax' once again with the repatterning of destruction overlapping the symbol of its creator so uniting the two forces in one frame, as a symbolic culmination of the elements of war.

Again this sequence is ended with an epilogic shot of a de-personalized victim, wearing a gas-mask - the antithesis of the goggled fighter pilot, the 'groundview' of the battle for the skies. Having brought these contraries together, the sequence is again terminated with the emblematic 'V' poster discussed earlier, punctuating the narrative approximately every forty seconds, thus, while deep-structurally the narrative of chaos spirals reductively into self-negation, the idea of conflict always re-emerges as controlling force.

The final forty-second section of the dumbshow turns the signifier of conflict, 'V', into the symbol of affirmation - Victory - an ideal propounded by the propagandic poster, with its slogan 'Win The Peace'. As the preceding narrative has worked itself out, then peace must be indeed 'won', evidenced by the street gathering around the victory banner, yet these people seem as much dominated by peace as by conflict - the *antithesis* of war is as strident in its own being as the victory it underwrites by 'There'll always be an England'. The state is victorious, enduring, even unchanged by conflict and the crown ensignia above cataphorically evokes the forthcoming line

> Arms are hoisted for the British ruling class
> and clandestine genteel aggro keeps them up.   (stanza 36)

A child's arm chalks a 'V' on a wall and disappears, evoking the impersonality of the war sequence, as the 'actor' disappears leaving the sign as central signifier of the event - 'victory' is the dominant force, replacing 'conflict', but victory, like conflict, for its

own sake. People are not integral, it is the structure of history itself that underwrites the text.[4]

This idea is semiotically enacted in [03.53] with the converging of two female platoons to form a 'V' - part of the victory celebrations, sacrificing the individual as part of a mass perspective. This image produces an anaphoric cohesional dialectic with [02.22], the Nazi procession beginning in unity and significantly diverging. One symbolises conflict, the other marks peace. But again the animate is submerged into the signifier, humanity fills the vacuum created by the gap left in the sign/signifier divide.

The anaphoria continues structurally as the closing images recall the opening ones - Churchill's 'V' continues the semiotic chain, but is re-ordered after the semiotic of war marking his salute as a blackness against the mass of white faces, again the earlier structural divisions are present even in 'peace', and unity.

Finally, the semiotic is brought into contemporary history as Thatcher re-cycles the old symbol of unity [04.05] but the connotation of aggression and division is carried with it. A different technique is used to defamiliarize the present as the temporality is reversed via the use of freezeframe and slow-motion. As a schemata of war reveals a causality ultimately alien to those viewing it as past participants, subconsciously realising that *their* history has been codified without their participation in it being recorded (rather as with newsreels of the time failing to report defeat, death - any of the miseries of war - hence the depersonalised footage which served as source material for this montage), so the deconstruction of the present reveals a separate reality imperceptible *during* the present. The reasssuring smile of the P.M. when focused on becomes the barred teeth of an aggressor. Likewise the static 'V' sign of a photo opportunity undergoes a spatial transition to reveal the obverse perspective - the famous 'Prostitutes' gesture of insult. Again we have the dialectic of action and image, affirmation and negation, each underpinning the other, as each reality becomes just one of many.

The division in audience interpretation as inference lies in class, age, voting behaviour etc. Each individual interprets as their own history demands, though because of the influence of the promo this can no longer be stable - to those for whom the 'V' gesture was unambiguous, the re-organisation of history might have demonstrated that within each victory lies the *imago* of conflict which achieved it, which therefore will surface again, so the sign of achievement necessitates the negation, subjegation of others and ultimately of itself to make this possible. This is a vital idea to precurse the reading of "*v*.". For the audience to whom 'V' is always a sign of insult and aggression, the 'v' places Thatcher within a tradition of domination of selfhood, superseding that even of contemporary politics, arguing for a world patterned by aggression and antimony - thus the slogan originally linked with this semiosis in 1980, 'we are all prostitutes' widens the area of debate beyond that of those subjugated by governmental policies to *all* as secondary to forces which comprise of dominance and submission; the individual as mere function.

Imagistically, this interpretation is foregrounded by the overlapping of this 'prostitutes' snap with a close up of Thatcher's hand-gesture 'V' which gradually dominates the screen [04.11] again the individual act becomes pure 'event' as semiosis de-contextualizes the gesture and places it in the role of dominating symbol. Thatcher's dual act of negation and affirmation is in turn superseded as the historical will appropriates it as part of the chaos, force for destruction.

It is at this point that the textual poem enters the discourse, Deleuze's history of *ressentement* having provided the backdrop for the poem. Against this sign of pure negative semiosis/power, we are presented with an 'authoritative' *individual* answer. Significantly, the semiotic message is typographically varied to suit the new medium - a simple bold type-face lends the quotation an authority created by the generic set of news typeface, official documents etc. To the 'literary' mentality the neutrality of the statement's presentation focuses the attention on the content, the 'oral' viewers take the print as a subconscious signifier of 'quality' and status - the use of the printers' 'a' places the text within the realm of impersonal generation, lending a didacticism to the statement in its being reproduced and therefore a detached proposition of implicit truth-value, divided from the speaker by the withholding of a name, a context and therefore separated from the fallibility of human assertion.

> *'My father still reads the dictionary every day.*
> *He says your life depends on your power to*
> *master words.'*

ARTHUR SCARGILL

At this point in the video the absolutes of the dialectic are engaged, the gestural semiotics become pure sign, and the text is brought to being seemingly without a speaker. This opposing forces are signalled textually, with the concept of 'power' and 'mastery' foregrounding the struggle for primacy - indeed within this context 'life' does 'depend' upon the control of power to be able to negate the opposition, otherwise the contrary force will gain ascendancy, this being the central message of the 'dumb show'. The ten seconds of this epigraph fixes this central opposition before the statement is credited and perception is violently altered, changing the thuggery of Thatcher with an advocation of knowledge, learning, as the thesis to overcome its negativity. Scargill as popular symbol of 'bully boy' and the familiar political power relationship is momentarily restored (this is the year of the miners' strike), though not fully, more re-renewed, enhanced by the typesetting lending an authority to Scargill, placing him within "The Sunday Times'" understated 'neutrality', again defamiliarizing the message via the medium; the educated audience are presumed to be aware of the truth-value of his statement as indeed their position of privilege eminates from their understanding of this concept. They are forced to revalue their dismissive attitude to Scargill, as their implicit acceptance of the statement prevents a derogatory response. The oral-based audience will be similarly disoriented; the message appeared contextually and ideationally to belong to one of THEM, at odds with the propagandist popular press image of 'Loony Red Arthur'. It is particularly important to note that the full ten seconds allotted to this message is to allow even the slowest reader to absorb the content, even the common reluctance to avoid typography and wait for the next image is defeated by the continued focusing on the text, so that it is instilled deepstructurally either by the amount of time it is in view for the fluent literates, preventing deiction, progression, or because of the perlocutionary force of the video in necessitating its being read, putting its televisual authority behind these words, and generating the effort of comprehension which fixes its message.[5]

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[1]Tony Harrison, explaining what made him a poet, in *Bloodaxe Critical Anthologies I: Tony Harrison,*
[2]See chapter seven.

[3]Grice; see Levinson, *Pragmatics*, page 101.

[4] This is the movement Harrison seeks to counter in Anno Domini and his Gulf War poems, where the 'history' of the individual at the centre of conflict is foregrounded over the historic-proper.

[5]The text of "*v.*" has the same epigram set in a more 'personal' type face - more mimetic of hand writing using the American 'a' - locating it within the context of ecriture as 'act'. Indeed the quotation seems more like an extract from a diary rather than the disembodied voice of a 'power', so making the debate centre puely around the force of *language* - mastery and defeat, the dialectic internalised as the nature of the *reader*ship focuses the conflict within this familiar arena, whereas the video is widening the agenda to introduce the further internal duality of semiotics (pure) to engage both sides of the (uz/THEM) division.

A MICROANALYSIS OF THE 'EXTENDED SEQUENCE OF FUNDAMENTALISTS'
([31.12] TO [32.27]) IN *THE BLASPHEMERS' BANQUET*

Videoically, the unity-in-pure-isolation of each montage segment in the 'extended sequence of fundamentalists' can be marked in the shared motion of each of its 'actors'. Every fundamentalist from the various religious groups expresses his or her desire through semiotic gesturality, and the rapid montage-cutting of the video replicates the internal perpetual motion of its subjects; each preacher, nun, convert, congregant, acts out their desires in unconscious body language that is foregrounded by the video capturing the instant of its coming-forth, translating it into a intra-segmental dance that links each separate event as part of one enactment of the same desire.

This whole section cuts across context to capture the emotion, the expression of desire that animates the entire swath of fundamentalists. The middle-American women who streach out their arms towards salvation [31.14] iterate the gesture of the Nazi salute, the crossover from religious to political fundamentalism invoking the same universal desire for completeness beyond the individual. The following syntagma [31.15] of the bloodspattered Muslim, beating his white headband in a gesture of mourning continues the waving hand motif, and is thematically intertextual with the Christian iconography of its co-textual segments, blood as stigmata, purgative, and white cloth as marker of purity, worn by Jesus and re-enacted by the lamb in his arms, in the following segment's background-painting [31.17].

Throughout the sequence the same gesturality is reiterated, the waving, beating hands, the ecstatic dance of the preachers and mourners, all posessed by a religious frenzy that legitimizes the freeing of desire, but that is removed from the context that engendered the response, re-citing its 'original' motivation as pure drive, Artaud's 'living gesture'. This is accompanied by the soundtrack that reduces the contextual backgrounds to lectonic trace, the carefully-constructed religious diatribes crystalise in a static mantra that curtails all referent to the original source in its re-presentation as syllabic transcendental signifier, the divorce from meaning foregrounded by the minimalist re-stressing that corresponds to the body's drive rather than retaining its reference to a coherent language system.

The punctuating chant of the tv preacher [31.26], [31.29] etc. *'Holiness 'aint no works. Hey - holiness 'aint on miracles. Hey - holiness...'* loses its sense of referent as the linguistic becomes secondary to the phonic reiteration of 'hey - ho', the message bound by the rhythmic impulse that produces it. 'Holiness' serves a desemanticised function in that its repetition severs it from its signified, its chain of negative definitions ('aint no...') makes it corrolary to the video's 'Big 'O", the phonic chime enacting microcosmically the death drive, as its presence *creates* a void, its citation as 'nothing' concrete but a trigger to enact the emptiness it invokes. This pattern is followed by the Muslim chanting of *'Rush-die, bas-tard!'* [31.15] etc, again the centering on the

obscene word (certainly in terms of Muslim politeness codes) signalling its purpose as desemantisized aggression, the semantic content secondary to its hypnotic mantra effect.

The evangelist's reducivist message: 'The world...passeth away!' [31.17], [31.21] etc, posits the anihilation of all contextual reality, legitimating the enactment of a year-zero freed from governance, a passage that embraces the will-to-death inscribed in religion, with its message of deferral, such that in the sanctified freeing of desire (for death)[1], coincident with the 'passing' of the world, the subject enacts their desire in abandoning subjectivity via the ecstatic transference vested in a spiritual Other. In the cohesive gestural manifestation of desire throughout each segment, the video manipulates the generated 'Third Meaning'[2], the extra diegetic signification, via the pacing of the sequences. Initially the segments are speeded up after an initial key citation which all subsequent re-insertions will evoke, such that the minimal contextual features that create the impression of distinction between the instances are paired down until the basic gestures of the 'actors' are captured in one blurred 'ur-context' that is specific to the video.

Within this montage sea of desire, there can be found specific punctuating syntagma, corollary to the seeming arhythmia of the soundtrack, around which the chaos circulates. This structuring sequence is the footage from Khomeni's funeral which shows the children of mourning fathers being beaten on their heads until they bleed, in a graphic transferential enactment of the mourning/sins of the fathers, inscribing them within a system in which they are yet too young to consciously participate. Specifically, this sequence breaks the chain of desire that sutures the other co-textual syntagma, as those are defined by their specular subjects inhabiting their liberated semiotic impulses, whereas this sequence features the *transference* of parental psychosis onto the next generation. The gesturality of the adults is reiterated, but the motivation is re-situated not as an enactment of repression but a mimesis, a socialisation in-process. The act of the adult mourners, figured in the co-textual close ups [31.15], [31.42] [31.50] etc. becomes involuted in a mise en scene with its source documentary counterparts, the dis-ease of one generation incorporated by the next.

The initial crescendo-effect of the increasingly fast montage sequence obscures this intruded sequence [31.24], its brief two-second duration blending it with its co-textual counterparts, participating in the overall diegetic of fanaticism and hysteria. This, plus the 'decoy' *adult* Muslim corollary to the other religious sects [31.15], serves to create the viewer's implicit acceptance of what is shown without bringing-to-consciousness its specific content. It is only via the accumulated effect of the repetitions that the segment begins to have a greater significance than its counterparts, the distinction

between the will to act, and to be acted *upon*. Its two-second insertion [31.27, 31.47], at increaingly short intervals, leads to its key aporia at [32.03]; the extreme close-up of the bloodsoaked head foregrounds the brutality, maintaining its ambiguous referent as either the adult Muslim *or* a child, before the pulling away in slow motion to make manifest that which had been obscured by the rapidity of the montage and videoic gesturality.

The highlighting of what has turned out to be the Muslim child anaphorically iterates the Bradford children [17.20], who are reflexively shown to have maintained their innocence amindst the 'filth' of their environment, making the current wave of fundamentalism have a specific face and carry an identifiable threat. The image of ritual purging by the Iranian *Shi-ite* Muslims is calculated to have a shock value amongst Britain's moderate Muslims, provoking a questioning of allegiance with their extremist counterparts.

This distancing device, coupled with the spectator's alienation caused by the montage's curtailment of identificatory desire in its 'cruel representation' of the repressed motivational drives of fundamentalism, allows the video to project the intrinsic psychosis that prompt the need to curtail *other people's* freedom, as the child is born victim to the control of a regime (social and religious), signalled in his passive participation of the mass-hysterical behaviour of the funeral crowd. Again the relinquishment of responsibility is underlined by the video's return to the general funeral documentary [32.12], before returning to the specific child-image, picking the toddler out from within the crowd [32.18].

Theocentricity is presented as a collective will-to Truth, the protesting Muslims of the opening documentary sequences (Doc 2 etc.) are portrayed as similar in their expression of anger to the mourners' violent grief. Such similarity posits a shared motivation, the desire to establish a unitary truth that simplifies and orders existence, extremism relieving the burden of individual responsibility. While the faith of Islam obviously has rational followers with justifiable arguments against Rushdie's (fictional) criticisms, the video here is targeting the fundamentalists whose belief in *a* Truth curtails the freedom of ideas and actions that fall outside those sanctioned by their version of the fundaments of Islam. The collectivised subscription to 'one truth' is seen to curtail individuality *per se*, which is countered by the video's re-introduction of its motif, culled from Khayyam, *'Oh....*(sigh) *...I love this fleeting life'* [32.27], the 'I' claiming governance of his/her own life, a gesture of affirmation and self-determination that the child portrayed in the slowed-down accompanying image is being prevented from ever having. The 'life-denying fundamentalists' of the montage sequence are shown to be in the process of limiting freedom, ensuring the continuation of the deferal

of the pleasures available in 'this fleeting life'. The emotive nature of the image creates an immediate response as the empathetic desire to 'help', generated by the video's iteration of similar documentary genres, famine/disaster news-footage which carry the incitement to act embedded within their narrative structure, is thwarted. This *has happened*, is beyond help, and continues, beyond help, to happen in a 'different' time.

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[1]The gestures all point towards 'death': Muslim anger towards Rushdie is indistinguishable in its *enactment* from the ritual expression of grief at Khomeni's funeral, signalling their mutual origin as the 'same' desire.
[2]Roland Barthes, 'The Third Meaning' .

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