

## Week Seven

12/8/00 Friday's Rock, Moby Polyphemus

Since the brain can be said to be truly “floating” in the cranial cavity, its tissues saturated with fluid and surrounded by the body’s inner sea, it has, like the oceans of the planet itself, a low albedo. This means that the brain’s absorption of solar and cosmic radiation is extremely high relative to the surrounding area. The relatively shallow surface structures, where the so-called higher cognitive functions reside, are constantly stirred by electrical storms, emotions, survival instincts, everyday, immediate preoccupations, and cosmic energy. These are the electromagnetic and chemical tidal fluctuations that generate our usual chronological envelope. We experience this more or less constant storm as time, a walk (or a stagger) in a meandering, but more or less unidirectional flow, from birth to death. But below this surface agitation, there is a deeper and more stable column of calm, leading down, if we may use that metaphor, into subsurface currents of time that are far from being unidirectional. These ROIs — Regions of Interest — make their presence “known” to the individual during periods of apnea, for example, or REM sleep, or even while deeply absorbed in some activity such as reading. It is during these physiological and/or psychological hiatuses (or soundings) that our habitual chronological orientation may be disrupted, and in extreme cases, other chronologies may be experienced.

Dr. G. G. Bernole  
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Although warm-blooded like ourselves, some adepts are able to regulate their breathing and vascular functions by exercising unique forms of internal control. By such practica, these adepts decarbonize the blood while simultaneously oxygenating muscle tissue at a rate which far exceeds the capacities of most landgoers. Mastery of these techniques enables the adepts to "dive" to extraordinary depths, penetrating to levels of reality unknown to ordinary seekers, even to those who are highly practiced in similar esoterea. Upon surfacing, these masters spout few if any remarks concerning their dives, and stalkers, as the adepts' devotees are sometimes called, make only the most metaphoric and unscientific references to these dimensions.

According to stalkers, these adepts are unlike dreamers or other clairvoyants who descend to archetypal domains by means of "reading" images. Instead, they make use of an echolocation or sonar technique, which is applied through the coordinated action of the cochlea of the inner ears and of the sinus cavities. By this means, the adepts are able to zone-in on certain species of truth, which serve the function of physical food, sustaining them even through the most unnaturally prolonged periods of diving. The stalkers claim that these truths, or "prey," are rendered palatable by means of a "stunning" maneuver which is accomplished by transmitting a very high-frequency sound that creates a short-term spike in the local intensity of pressure. This abrupt increase in pressure incapacitates the prey and makes it available for assimilation. How the adepts adapt their own bodies to withstand these intense pressures is not definitely known, but stalkers maintain that adepts protect themselves by regulating temperatures throughout the body, and especially in the head, while expanding and contracting inner cavities by melting or solidifying viscous bodily substances. Also, during diving, or even on the surface, the cycloptic "bindu," or single eye of the adepts atrophies, or perhaps evolves, to an atypical physiological state, unlike that of any other mammal. The anterior chamber is almost non-existent, being reduced to the narrowest of slits between the pupil and the cornea. The eyeball is thus fixed in its socket, seemingly making peripheral vision impossible. Notwithstanding this physical limitation, stalkers claim that the adepts possess a perfect 360-degree spherical vision. Perhaps this is so, considering the other savage talents displayed by them. That being acknowledged, it can only be stated that the eyes of these adepts remain closed or "glazed" while diving, and it is not known if they can process images at all. These physiological mutations have not prevented stalkers from maintaining that the adepts possess an inner vision related to their echolocation abilities, which, the stalkers claim, is more sensitive than optical receptors, and therefore render surface sight superfluous. Beyond these unverifiable and contradictory assertions, all transfigurations in the metaphysiology of the eye must merely be noted as scientific anomalies.

None of these speculations regarding the various feats of prowess attributed to the adepts have ever been definitely proven, and there appear to be no current methodologies which would permit an unbiased scientific verification. The stalkers simply say that of the three possibilities — the known, the unknown and the unknowable — the capabilities of the adepts

must always remain in the last category, since they are beyond the investigative powers of ordinary human sensory apparatus. This is so, and must always remain so, say the stalkers, because the reality-dimension of the inquiry takes place at a "smaller" and more "surface" level of consciousness, and the small and shallow can never comprehend the large and deep.

In the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, stalkers, who ironically claim to love the adepts, became so numerous, so determined and so sophisticated in their activities that it was feared that this particular family of adepts, already rare, would become completely extinct on this plane of existence. Alarmed by this development, international metaphysical associations enacted regulations against their own vested interests to curtail the most egregious of the stalkers intrusions. As a result, the decline in adept populations was slowed, although not altogether halted. These protections have at least stabilized the existence of the adepts within our vector coordinates, and, for the time being, it seems that a few of them can still be made available to the predation of stalkers. However, most stalkers must now content themselves with observations made at a safe distance, which has, predictably, made stalking far less effective. Whereas before, stalkers "would kill" to know, now that very knowledge is itself dying out.

This circumstance has brought about a fresh set of perhaps insoluble problems. Because of their rarity and distance, this family of adepts has been removed from the awareness of ordinary men and women, who have, as a consequence, relegated these species to the domain of legend. The adepts are still with us, but the vast majority of humans will likely spend their entire earthly sojourn without enjoying even the most tangential contact. This is tragic, since without at least a shadowy knowledge of diving, it is unlikely that these unfortunate individuals will ever taste the deeply flowing elixirs of primal truth.

*12/9/00 Saturday's Rock, Aesklepios, the Folly Master*

Thou passest on the path, if haply thou dost  
mark this monument,  
laugh not, I pray thee,  
though it is a dog's grave: tears fell for me,  
and the dust was heaped about me by a master's hand,  
who likewise engraved these words upon my tomb.

Early Greek Epitaph,  
Quoted by Eleanora M. Woloy  
in  
*The Symbol of the Dog in the  
Human Psyche: A Study of the  
Human-Dog Bond*

The *sêma* (grave marker), unearthed in the ancient Attic *deme* of Myrrhinous, is unique among Grecian artifacts in that it portrays, not a human being, but a dog, presumably the theomorph of Artemis (Selene). This life-sized statue, dating from about the middle of the fourth century, is exceptionally well preserved, and is both incised and painted in such a precise fashion that it is clearly intended to be the portrait of an actual animal, and not a mere archetypal generalization. She (the dog) possesses withered dugs and an exquisitely preserved muzzle, painted in a flecked manner to suggest grizzle. These characteristics, along with the sag of the skin around the eyes and one tattered, drooping ear suggest an older animal, possibly a beloved household companion. The *sêma*'s inscription gives credence to this hypothesis.

'I, Dexikleia (famous sheep herder), have entered *Gaia* at this sacred spot to prepare a way for my household (*oikos*). I am called fame-strong (*kleisthenes*) and great fame (*megakles*) because of my devotion and sagacity in service. The reader of this inscription is blessed by the Goddess to bruit my renown.'

The dog is in a sitting posture, as if on guard, and is also unusual in that she has three front legs, two resting on the earth, and one (the duplicate left) raised as in supplication or greeting. Between her front paws lies a naked infant — a girl — no doubt a reference to the Athenian practice of exposing unwanted female progeny. That the babe too is being honored, also unusual, there is no doubt, since her head is adorned by a diadem (*stephane*) composed of a string of pearls surmounted by lotus flowers. She holds a similar blossom in her tiny, dimpled left hand. This ornamentation of the child recalls the *sêma* of *koure* erected two centuries earlier at the time of the tyrant Peisistratos and discovered in the same area. This suggests to some that the *sêma* is "an homage" to those monuments of the earlier period, and was intended to trade on their fame.

Richard Wunsch  
*Attican Funerary Statuary*  
trans. Blasius Jorg Erhardt  
(description of a work in a  
private German collection,  
presumed to have been  
destroyed by the Allied  
firebombing of Hamburg in  
July of 1943

*A Sojourn to Epidauros, in which arrogance is exposed*

I am an Athenian Citizen, Theopompus by name, a father and an esteemed member of one of the city's most ancient and venerable demes. By occupation I am a maskmaker and actor for a theater troupe. I mention this because the epiphanies, which led first to my disease and later to my cure, seem to be intricately involved in the aspects of my art. Every year at the Hekatombaion, the Panathenaia festival culminates in a competition of plays, the execution of which may laud the performers with honors or tar them with ignominy. Preparations, adjustments and arguments concerning the details of performance all boil at a feverish pitch until the sacred time arrives. At the revelation, all of these contentions shoot skyward like a hot fountain from the bosom of Gaia, resolving themselves in the airy spectacle of the performance. It is a time of great anxiety and great exaltation. The polis, at this year's festival, granted our play the ivy wreath in the category of tragedy, and for a few days following, maskmakers, actors, designers, singers, poets, musicians and the whole company of thespians restored themselves through feasting and celebration, toasting Dionysus, and thanking him for his favors.

I believe my illness began at a symposium of this sort while I was foolishly regaling my fellows with an account of my recent triumph. I was perhaps too much under the influence of the Chthonian Reveler's vine spirits and was exuberantly reenacting my performance, strutting about on the highest buskins and gesturing magnificently. Desiring to complete the effect, I asked my slave, Diodotos, to fetch me the white-haired mask denoting the most elevated persona of the tragedy. But the rascal returned with the flat-nosed mask of the meanest messenger, and my companions, perhaps already amused by my profane exertions, burst into rude laughter. Immediately, I was inundated by an influx of choler. I cursed Diodotos for his crafty satire,

and while lunging to strike him for his insolence, I tripped on my own buskins, falling and biting my tongue. Thus, the Erinyes promptly avenged my impetuosity. Remorse filled and cooled my distended veins. For although Diodotos was no more than a Scythian slave, he was a very able assistant and a member of my household, almost as valued as Dexikleia, my treasured dog.

The bit tongue developed an abscess, which no herb or incantation could relieve. Daily the lacuna whitened and the organ grew more imponderable. It garbled my speech, a symptom intolerable for an actor, and reduced me to an infantile condition, slobbering and inarticulate, unable to take any but mashed or liquid sustenance. I drank heavily, attempting to drown my despair with uncut wine.

Days passed without respite, and then one night, in the midst of a petulant fever, I awoke from a fitful sleep and a harrowing dream.

I dreamt I was in a waste landscape, a desert as dry as bones, alone, and lost in the grip of a parching heat. Here and there a few desiccated plants lay shriveled on the sand or collapsed against the furnaces of boulders. My tongue was swollen with thirst and lacerated by pain as if it were crawling with stinging ants. I knew that the specter of death was growing in my heart. And then I saw her — the speckled bitch, not black, not white, but ragged of coat, both wild and tame together, her nose to the ground as if she searched for water. Desperate, stumbling, I followed as best I could, until the dog reached an opening in the earth, where she descended with a sucking sound. The ants descended with her following the scent trail left by their companions, retreating with their tiny burdens back into the mound. A wind, like a vacuum, grabbed my encumbering elegant white chiton. I clawed at the scorching sands to remain above ground, but the vacuous maw, like the mouth of Tartarus, pulled me down. I woke up howling and drooling in my fear, consumed with terror of the dark-faced Lord. That day, I resolved to make a pilgrimage to the Aesklepion at Epidauros.

The preparations and journey were arduous, but uneventful, the chief inconvenience being the cramped quarters on shipboard and the necessity of keeping intimate contact with diseased supplicants, which included, not only women, but disgusting sorcerers — the peddlers of human organs and exposed female fetuses. The deck of the old merchantman also reeked from the crush of sacrificial and provender animals, as well as many slaves. The

Etesian winds were blowing hard, and the old sow of the merchantman struggled and heaved through the deep swells, while stinging breakers showered those on deck with the salty-spume of Poseidon. Our progress was nauseatingly slow. All the various perverse conditions of the voyage, and especially the cramping of an Athenian citizen with these hoards of disreputables, added to the discomfort of my affliction, and multiplied my anxieties.

I disembarked at Hermione, a small harbor tucked at the foot of a wooded steep below the sanctuary. There, the supplicants were met by a novice who guided us up the path of a steep ravine. This climb proved laborious for the sickly pilgrims, plus our difficulties were compounded by the necessity of having to carry, drag or drive the pigs, goats, dogs or fowl intended for the blessing of the vates' knife. Often we were forced to stop beside the cataract's stream to refresh ourselves with drink from the divine waters. Our guide advised us to keep a wary eye for snakes, which in that region were known, not only to infest the ground, but also to dangle from the overarching trees. He assured us that most of these serpents were not venomous, but the supplicants nevertheless stepped carefully and craned their heads to peer into the threatening wind-tossed canopy. Our climb was accompanied by much rustling in the foliage, which the novice explained as the movements of feral sheep, goats, dogs, and such like creatures, who, over the years, had escaped the altar's sacrificial stone, and now haunted the island's wilds. So it was that as we labored towards the sanctuary, we constantly felt the stare of inhuman eyes. At eventide, we arrived at the Katagogian, the sanctuary's hostel, and rested there in the shadow of Mount Kynortion. The novice explained to us that the Mountain's name partook of two meanings: "dog" and "ascent." I wanted to question him further about this, but the condition of my tongue and my slobbering, slurred speech shamed me to silence. I also had a professional curiosity concerning the magnificent theater, which I saw looming above the hostel and located only a few steps up the mountain, but I was too exhausted from my journey to satisfy this interest. In any case, our respite was brief, for we were soon visited by the hierophant, who, in a kindly but firm manner, informed us that we must proceed to the thelos before nightfall and offer our sacrifices to the God.

After partaking of a bitter libation, we entered the temple furtively, subdued by its sacred pall. The porch was faced so that the dying light illuminated the enthroned statue of the healer, who presided, solemn and bearded, on a floor of black Eleusinian stone. The aspect of the temple was grave, dark.

Below our feet, we could hear the gurgling of a spring, which seemed ominous, rather than healing, like the last flow of blood from the sacrifice. As a maskmaker, I noticed that the locks and beard of the God were carved in the Dionysian fashion. The observation filled me with wonder, since I had always believed that Aesklepios was a noted son of Apollo. The visage, too, might have been the effigy of Zeus himself, except that it was not so severe, but rather looked upward, with eyes unfocused, as if blurred by an inward gaze. The expression was one of an exquisitely poised stasis, and its arrested movement projected the impression of a powerful emotion, an emotion that one could almost call "suffering," if suffering were possible for a God. His face lacked the calm of the Olympians, and seemed instead to be assailed by mortal pangs, as if human anguish impaled him, inciting his compassion to assuage it. Another aspect of the monument also goaded my curiosity, and that was the presence of a small, hooded figure standing near the God, as if to offer council or convey to him the requests of supplicants. As I looked down at this mysterious little carving, I spied a strange object on the marble tile, as perfect as a seed, but molded from some kind of metal that I had never seen before. For some reason, I felt compelled to pick up this object and as I wrapped my hand around it, clenching in fear for the coming ordeal, it imparted to me a strange sort of comfort. It was as if this bizarre amulet were attached to a strand of wool that pulled me through my present illness and wound me round the distaff of the future. While I pondered all of these things, the bitter aftertaste of the libation had made me even more acutely aware of my lacerated tongue. I was beginning to feel a vivid strangeness creeping over all of my senses, so that I marveled greatly that the sanctuary had been able to inoculate me with its powerful influence in such a narrow span of time.

We did not remain long before the God, but surrendered our sacrificial offerings to the vates, and were led solemnly, but expeditiously to the thelos. This sacred feature is a kind of rotunda circled by a labyrinth. On our way, the hierophant recited some of the words carved into the stone tablets expounding the glories of the God's cures. The exterior of the rotunda is painted in bright colors, but inside, the base of the circular walls was black marble, although these surfaces too were adorned with enigmatic painted images. As we circled the labyrinth, I noticed the form of a weeping Eros, whose forsaken bow and lyre lay broken at his feet. Another painting depicted a manish-looking and drunken woman swilling an inebriant from a transparent glass vessel. There were other pictures too, but I scarcely perceived them, except to note that their sequence, as we moved into the

labyrinth proper, heightened my sense of mystery and awe. Then the labyrinth demanded my full attention. It was cunningly constructed of concentric circles, which were connected by openings that forced the supplicant to traverse each loop completely as he traveled towards the center. Nearer the center, it became darker, as the already dimming light drained from the blackened stones. I felt that I was not only going *in*, but also *down*. I saw a carving of a staff wound round by a snake, and remembered the warnings in the ravine. I also saw a pedestal sculpted like a tree stump, where a mouse sat perched above the strewn bodies of plague or war victims. I was terrified that the God would appear in one of his animal forms, as a snake, or a rat, or a wolf, and as I drew closer to the center, I thought I could hear quiet weeping, the round O of a stifled wail, and then a sound which seemed like some ghoulish combination of hissing and growling and gnawing. My heart pounded furiously and my tongue burned with such an excruciating fever that I fainted from exhaustion and sheer terror.

For a long time I sailed underground on a black river, winding through narrow, fetid tunnels. I lay in the bottom of a long boat, carved like a wooden sarcophagus, and just wide enough to hold my rigid body. Mosses and serpents dangled overhead from an archway of lush foliage. I was stiff with the rigor of death. My mouth had been sewn shut, and my face had been painted in a barbaric manner, as if I wore the mask of a dog or a wolf. I could feel the layers of the paint insinuating themselves into my flesh. My teeth were growing. My nose was lengthening into a muzzle, and my fingers became clubbed and clawed like paws. Then suddenly I was in a bright room, doing the "dog dance" on the raised altar of the Athenian theater's thyrmele. On the steps, instead of the citizens of the polis, was Diodotos with all the slaves of Athens. They were laughing at my rude antics, and ridiculing me as I sniffed and licked myself. Their faces grew larger and larger as they laughed, their eyes protruding, and their tongues writhing round in their mouths as if transmuted into maddened serpents. Diodotos rushed to the altar, and as the slaves howled their approval, he made me lick his hind parts like a dog.

I must have been carried back to the Katagogian, for when I awakened, it was dawn. A novice had come to attend me. I started to tell him about the dream I had incubated, fretful that it was an ill omen, so hideous and humiliating were its images, but as I blurted out my many sorrows, I noticed

that I could speak, and that the swelling in my tongue was mercifully subsiding.

12/10/00 Sunday's Rock, Fergus's Druid Dreamstone

Neither by ship nor land canst thou find this road, O reader, to the trysting place of the Hyperboreans. . . In the banquets and praises of that people Apollo chiefly rejoiceth, and he laugheth as he looketh on the brute beasts in their ramping lewdness. Yet such are their ways that the Music is not banished, but on every side the dances of maidens and the sounds of the lyre and the notes of the flute are ever circling; and with their hair crowned with golden bay-leaves they hold glad revelry; and neither sickness nor harmful eld mingleth amongst that chosen people, but aloof from toil and conflict, they dwell far from the wrath of Nemesis.

Pindar (trans. Sandys)  
*Pythian Odes*

Our great Chieftain, the lusty Bran, he of the powerful and magical Crow-Clan, he whose mighty horse pranced, defiant and proud of his royal charge, his arched neck hung with many bloody heads, this same Bran, the beloved, by use of signs and sigils, made choice of the hill, below which we would wage the sacred battle. When his voice roused us to follow, gladly we followed.

The sacrifice on the eve of the fray was unusually docile, but the Druid read the spiritless death throes and prognosticated good fortune. Whether this omen favored us in this world as victors in the strife against our enemies or in the next world as bathers in the lustrous pool, he of the white shroud could not or would not tell; and Bran, the wise, respected his rectitude.

By nightfall, beneath the last gasp of the waning moon, we completed our ditching and banking of the hill. We had pierced the wickerwork barbicans with sharpened alders thirsty for the entrails of our foes. Our work done, with glad hearts, we reveled, both to cheer ourselves, and to demonstrate to our enemies how lightly we held the coming trial. Lusty cries bruited about the cauldrons set over the roaring campfires, not only from the warriors, but from the womenfolk as well, joyful to feast and to fornicate. The children

played, merrily shouting, and our animals added their bellows, baa-ing, and neighs to the pandemonium. We were happy to be together, to be raiding and feasting and fighting, and Bran, the great reveler, was happiest of all.

Yet there was that pall of the dying moon, and the languid sacrifice. The Romans were odd. They broke the sacred vessels and objects and felled the sanctuaries of the oak groves with impunity. They were fierce and capable warriors, but they seemed not to want to die, protecting themselves with shields and armor and helms. Not one rode into battle naked and alone, but instead, they huddled together, advancing in tight order. Yet, cowards that they were, still their cunning tactics and fine weaponry made them formidable. Also, they were perfectly willing to take prisoners and let them live, using them or selling them as slaves. These abominable customs and sacrileges redoubled our fury and our joy in fighting them.

At dawn, we were awakened by the cawing of ravens, playing about the stockade and plucking the eyes and wormy flesh from our trophy heads. Bran laughed heartily at the sight of his crow-brothers feasting. This gave us good cheer, and we roused ourselves for the blood feast. The barbarians emerged from a small copse at the eastern crest of the opposing hill, disguising their numbers at first in the dense foliage, and placing the rising sun at their backs, so that their helms and shields glinted blindingly. Thus, their phalanx rolled inexorably towards us, first down through the scoop between the hills and then like a great, black, shinning river, they surged unnaturally up the grassy slope. At the sight of them, Bran bellowed, and warriors, women, children, beasts and all, released a deafening tumult, our roarers and beaters adding to the din as though seven times seven rutting bulls all lowed for their cows at once. Amid this clamor, Bran led our charioteers forth. We shot down the grassy slope, splitting the enemy's ranks, our long, curved wheel-blades hacking at trunks and limbs. When the cowards dropped their shields to slash our horses, we flung our war clubs and our short, sharp spears, then rushed into the fray with swords and daggers, great Bran, in the midst of the tumult, the fiercest of all. The enemy fell back at our brute charge, and yet, what seemed the crowning of our triumph was fated otherwise. For at that instant, just as our clan was widely scattered all about the field, two other forces, hidden in the trees, closed swiftly round us from opposing quarters. The force retreating turned, as on command, and made a solid stand. Now we were forced to fight on every hand, doubled and tripled by their skillful swordsmen. Had each of us the strength of seven oxen, the cleverness of seven wily vixen, the tireless

fierceness of seven mother badgers, we could not gain the Roman's broken branch. Bran was a whirlwind of immense destruction, wounded and bleeding from great, gaping gashes, but still he continued wielding bolts of thunder. And yet he had to signal a retreat. We fought and fled, dragging our trophies with us, dispatching wounded kinsmen as we ran. But at the pleas of Bran, our Crow-clan hero, our golden adornment and our sacred head, we ceased the madness of our flailing slaughter and bore his wounded body from the battle.

The Romans fought for ground, and not for spoil, and so they let our crippled clan escape. The blessed Bran, the royal Bran, was dying, and as he bled, he begged his kith and kin, to hack his head from his beloved body, and bear it with them as they sojourned forth. By this device, he prophesied that he would give wise council and good company, from where he reveled in the world beyond. And so we left our kinsmen in the field, and led by Bran's head raised upon a stake, we made our trek unto a sacred tor.

That night we feasted without stint, joyful and proud in our carouse, notwithstanding the blood of both foe and kinsman now crusting our weapons. Of that, we had no remembrance, nor did we recollect any sorrow in this world. And it was claimed by some, when we awakened, that two score and nine years had passed in revelry, where we were pleased with seven times seven delights. Nor did we ever in our gladness know irksome pain nor want. The cauldrons were ever filled with mead or meat. The women were ever plump and ripe and ready. Through all that time the wondrous head of Bran did sing and keep us joyful company.

(The severed head is the remnant of our waking consciousness, still lucid in the dream. It sings from place to place, from time to time, and we, who are so severed from our souls, acknowledge its dominion in our lives.)

### **Sacred Well**

The large, well-lighted, sterile room  
Constructed for the emptiest of labors,  
Suddenly floods from underneath, through holes  
Provided for the flushing of our sorrows.  
Our dreams are unresolved. We keep on sleeping,  
Hoping to find the answers we've rejected.

Dreamer, the well is fouled, but it is yours.  
Go back and ask the angel that you've slighted  
For waters pure enough to quench your thirsting.  
You have endured your longings long enough.  
Go down into the tunnels where the roots  
No longer block the flow, but bear your love.

12/11/00 Monday's Rock, Sandro Lingam

**amor sceleratus habendi** (ASH) A wayward phenomenon exclusive to *Homo sapiens extravagantus* in which two physical entities are related in a manner that depends on whether one is decreasing or increasing at the expense of the other. The repeated measurement of strain against stress, with one of the two *Ses* first increasing, then decreasing, will produce for some couples a graph that has the shape of a closed loop. This is known as the *negation reinforcement cycle* (NRC). The NRC's most familiar mathematical form is produced by plotting the magnetic flux density (B) within a ferromagnetic material (like blood) against the applied magnetic field strength (H).

If the material is subsequently demagnetized (as in the case of extensive separation, disavowal of affections or death) at O, it will reach saturation at P as H is increased. As the field is reduced and again increased the loop PQRSTP is formed. The QED is axiomatic and no additional illustration is needed. The area of this loop is proportional to the energy loss (depression) occurring during this cycle. The value of B equal to OQ is called the *remembrance*, or *retentivity*, and is the magnetic flux density remaining in the material after the saturating field has been reduced to zero. This is a measure of the tendency of the patterns of the magnetic domain, a.k.a. the lover's aorta muscle, to remain distorted even after the distorting field has been removed. In extreme cases this distortion sometimes results in a peculiar and specific type of *poesis*, the praising in verse (*vers*) of what the Troubadours referred to as their *fin' amor*. The value of H to OR is called the coercive force (or coercivity) and is the field strength required to reduce the remaining flux density to zero. It is a measure of the difficulty of restoring the symmetry of the domain patterns. In cases of *poesis*, *coercivity* must usually be applied to the point of the physical death of the remaining (*retentive*) entity, or until some more domineering field entrains the magnetic domain.

Various Scientists of the  
Collective  
*A Dictionary of Elementary  
Awareness Science*

Stream

An incubus bewitches him  
Who suckers for her love.  
Those bodies which are curved like hers  
The prophets warn us of.  
Fly straight to her,  
Unholy words,  
And ask her,  
If it's true,  
That she eschews  
A nightgown  
And slumbers in the nude.

He turned the words over in his mind, as he stood on Ussel's only bridge, watching the creek turn black, its flow smoothing and slowing as the waters froze. 'Too cold,' he thought, interrupting his own question about the second word of the first line: 'incubus or succubus?' Do I want a succubus in the first line and a sucker in the second? Oh Lord! Send me your succor. Help me mold the *vers*! Hmm? What do they call this trickle, I wonder? One of the many vessels filling the Dordogne. Backwater village. Black water stream. You are a black ribbon, my dirty darling, but you will be frozen virgin white ere dawn.'

The sun slipped the last of its light through the naked willows, cutting gold slashes across the blackening stream. The withies clicked ice-branches in the wind. His tethered mare shaking her withers and swishing her tail from where he has tied her to the thick bridge timbers, is shifting her feet to shake the bitter cold. 'Methinks this is too sad, my jolly *jongleur*!' He knew that in an instant he might collapse, cave-in from grief, and dive in the shallow waters. For a moment he watched the water and weighed his options. 'More likely to freeze than drown *in this* tonight. Then look a damned sight in the morning, stuck in the ice, spooking the shepherd lad with eyes frozen open, a ghastly *Jovens* shivered for his love. No, too foolish, even for a poet. Go to the edge, yes, but not over it. That is the essence of the subtle art. Then

"incubus" it is. Besides, an incubus is male, a succubus female, that makes me the devil, not her. There are too many suckers already in these words. Ah, yes, and probably down there in the streambed too, sucking on stones in the cold.' He spoke the stanza aloud, softly, to weigh the sounds. 'That's it. The rest can stand. He took out a piece of charcoal and wrote, his hands and the parchment palsied by the wind. 'Best I can do before the night descends. Smut for a nun, and a dead nun, too, at that. Time to find shelter and trim a few sticks for a fire.'

It was true. The Abbess had confirmed it. Amadée de Joi, his *fin' amor*, was dead. He held her very death scroll in this hand — the words of others praising her in death, while he, who wore his heart out praising life, stood mute and pondered emptiness and loss.

'I should be in Narbonne where it is warm. But for those Carcassones or Beziers or whatever Williames now rules Montpellier. Got to keep moving in any case, or the Compte's hounds will lick my carcass clean. Pah! All these landed, titled fools plowing the vineyards under with the heavy hoofs of warhorses, looking for honor and *donzells* to defile. But for the words we poets paste on them, their exploits would be mouthings in the dark.'

A few starlings gathered in the chattering willows. Their skreeking broke his thought.

Starling, take flight,  
Tomorrow  
At break of day  
And go  
To the tomb  
Of one  
Who falsely died,  
Betraying me  
With worms;  
And ask her  
Why  
Of all God's brides  
She should so falsly  
Play me.

"Break of day," that's anybody's line. How's this: "as day invites." No, "as night retires." That's graver, suits the theme.'

Starling  
Take flight  
At dawn  
When night  
Retires  
Visit  
The tomb  
Of one  
Who  
Falsely  
Died.

And ask her  
Why  
Of all God's  
Brides  
She chooses  
Worms  
To quench  
Her dark  
Desires.

'Yes, set them free, the ultimate rivals, squiggling through the flesh. She will be wanton now, and lie with many who in her life refused to lie with one.'

The blue of the shadows deepened into black. The starlings puffed their feathers in the cold. 'If I could set fire to your womb with words, I would. And pluck the seed from your burned body. And raise a child to heal the world with verse.' The mare shook her withers again, as if to remind him of something he needed to do. He looked down from his perch athwart the bridge, dropping her death scroll into scrolling waters, along with the frozen pearls of his tears. This was the edge. And he had just gone over.

12/12/00 Tuesday's Rock, Serenity Pitt, the Zen Master

Master and servant are names as old as history, but given to those of far different condition; for a free man makes himself a servant to another by selling him for a certain time the service he undertakes to do, in exchange for wages he is to receive. And though this commonly puts him into the family of his master, and under the ordinary discipline thereof, yet it gives the master but temporary power over him, and no greater than what is contained in the contract between 'em. But there is another sort of servants, which by a peculiar name we call slaves, who, being captives taken in a just war, are by the right of nature subjected to the absolute dominion and arbitrary power of their masters. These men having, as I say, forfeited their lives, and with it their liberties, and lost their estates, and being in the state of slavery not capable of any property, cannot in that state be considered as any part of civil society, the chief end whereof is the preservation of property.

John Locke  
*The Second Treatise of  
Government*

Although not abstemious, Serenity yet endeavored always to "rise with an appetite" as well as to sit with one, and this was especially so at his midday meal, since he was feign to tax his afternoon's Industry with the Stupor of Intemperance. It was his Habit, therefore, in lieu of too much Leisure devoted to victuals, to eat sparsely and speedily, and then to surrender his offices to Thomas, his son, servant and clerk, and invest some minutes thereafter outside the confines of his professional Seclusion to walking the nearby quays. It brought relief to his Mind to witness the Tumult of arriving and departing vessels and to immerse himself in the bustling of Commerce. The creaking of gangplanks strained by burly stevedores and their weights of cargo — shoes stitched in Liverpool from cowhides harvested in Brazil, coffee in hemp bags from the Country of Sheba, oysters from the fens of the Chesapeake, casks of Continental manufacture — nails, buttons, crockery both plain and fine — and silks and laquerware from the land of Khan or the far off Japans — these things stirred him with the satisfaction of Mercantilism. They reminded him of the Prosperity recovered through Global Industry and through the respite given by the modicum of Peace restored after seven years of war. However, this glow was not without the dusting of a shadow. For as a Man of the World, Serenity understood the vicissitudes of Investment. He knew that each of the Numbers marching

evenly down the columns of his account ledgers were but the orderly Abstractions derived from a disorderly and arduous, nay, even a dangerous Process — from risks at sea, from the drought or drench of sparse harvests, and from the ceaseless Toils of his Human Brethren, both Slave and Free.

The course of his exercises did also subject him to the casual buffeting suffered by all Mortals, both animal and human, on the crowded quays. And as Serenity was presented with all these things Temporal, he was also prompted to Universal Musings: what quality of Spirit gave such poignancy to the dog's Devotion, the horse's Patience, the Maternal Instincts of the calm-faced cow? And why were some of God's Children pressed with such arduous Labor while others were rewarded for lounging, or, worse, were able to profit from the sneaking manipulation of their fellows as indentured servants, or even as slaves? And why did He, who made both the nether Sun and the Inner Light, spawn such great quantities of flies? Serenity brushed a swirling swarm from his head, just as a carriage drawn by well-bred horses clopped merrily by him, carrying a bright cargo of Philadelphia's freshest and finest — gaily attired young girls escaped from their drawing rooms on a lark to giggle at the crudity of Labor or at a sturdy Quaker strolling and swatting flies. His brow darkened briefly with Judgment, and Penn's words leapt to his mind: 'Excess Apparel is a costly Folly. The Trimmings of the Vain World would clothe all the naked one.' And then, softening at their Youth, their Freshness, he remembered his own two eldest daughters, Hope and Divinity, much like these girls in Demeanor and Ebullience, and recalled also that Penn himself was once unjustly censored for Worldliness because he condescended to wear a wig. But it was no less a worthy than George Fox, the original and truest Friend, who defended his eminent prodigy by noting three pertinences which absolved the great Admiral's son from Vanity, *viz.*, that first, it warmed Penn's head in winter, as he was bald since the age of three from a fever; that second, it was a small and "very civil thing," not costing upwards of three shillings; and that third, however bad the Vanity of wig-wearing, Censoriousness was worse. Serenity smiled inwardly at this humorous Remembrance, and were it not for his natural Reticence, he might have suffered his Exuberance to convey a gesture of communal Familiarity to the frolicsome maidens. Yet he kept his hands discreetly clasped behind him, nodding good-naturedly at the carriage, but suppressing a wave.

The Time drew nigh for him to return to his accounting. He deemed that he had taken his fair share of what the good Woolman extolled as "moderate

Care and Exercise." Serenity had an Inheritance to bestow to his successors, one that we wished to amass in Fear of the Lord, in Honesty, with Equity, and in Uprightness of Heart — but Lord, Lord, the Teeming of Life throbbled brightly here, and the ciphers in his Book spelled Tedium.

Back at his desk, in the dust of the darkened office, Serenity poised his quill above straight columns. He had dismissed his son Thomas for the young man's own repast, and was alone now with his numbers and his thoughts. The quill, though it was the feather of a goose who could pierce the very heavens in weightless flight, yet seemed to weave, as it scrawled its numbers, a chain of leaden Weariness round his heart. For a moment, all the deeds and assigns of property, of which his business consisted, seemed to take on an enormous weight, the displaced mass of so many manipulated or murdered things, filling the hollow spine of the quill with the crush of unresolved Grief and unjust Suffering. A column of light fell through the pane of the window, and pressed a cloth of gold across his eyes. For a moment, the books and the quays fell from his vision, and he saw a naked stripling in the byways, unseemly in the street on market days — an honest Englishman, who, like Isaiah, proclaimed, while barefoot, humble buttocks blazing, the coming Shame intended for the Mighty — bare Nayler in Bristol denouncing a Naked Culture!

12/13/00 Wednesday's Rock, Grace Maryanka  
Closing Time 8:52 p.m., C.S.T.

Alas, the kaleidoscopic eyes starting off into the distance and shadowed with melancholy might enable us perhaps to measure distance, but do not indicate direction. The boundless field of possibilities extends before us, and if by chance the reality presented itself to our gaze, it would be so far beyond the bounds of possibility that, dashing suddenly against the boundary wall, we should fall over backwards. It is not even essential that we should have proof of her movement and flight, it is enough that we should guess them.

Marcel Proust  
*La Prisoniere*

It was just past seven, and the last of the day's light was draining amber from the treetops in the Bois de Boulogne as Alexandre entered the Pré

Catelan and was greeted by the Maître'd. "Monsieur, Degleef (he always butchered the Russian name) awaits Monsieur at his table."

"*Trés bien*, Olivier, show me to him, *s'il vous plait*." Alexandre enjoyed the tight-assed air of false-noblesse of the servants of this country. It made him feel that he was revered by aristocrats and elevated his already much exalted opinion of himself. Serge was waiting at the usual table. As he approached, the impresario bared the point of one crocodile tooth in his bulldog face, his Chinchilla-white forelock falling down from its dyed black, slicked-back mat. The bulldog rose, his damp eyes, shaped like Portuguese oysters, swiveling down on his shorter friend. Alexandre observed that the impresario's famous tooth was grinding, whether in this moment with mirth or with agitation, he could not tell, although, he knew, in a few minutes, *that* mystery would be solved. Upon greeting, the two men bear-hugged with a huge, grunting gesture. This much disgusted the Parisian elite seated at the surrounding tables, who then proceeded to demonstrate their hauteur by clearing their throats and dabbing their pursed lips with napkins. This was one of many of Alexandre's and Serge's *petites blagues*, for they only greeted this way in the finest restaurants and hotels and never when they met in private, and never *ever* in the drawing rooms of Saint Petersburg, where French manners were always scrupulously observed. The men talked fast, as a way to cram as much venomous wit into each phrase as they might, but there remained an air of tiredness in their talk, as if they were hurrying languidly towards death.

"*Pardonez-moi* for the delay. You have not been too inconvenienced by the wait, I trust. I have been unavoidably detained."

"*Nyet*. Several members of the esteemed Jockey Club have visited the table and presented their calling cards, in order to pay '*hommage*,' as they call it, to the "genius of the new age of Dance.'" Both men laughed. "The same bloodless sons of their bloodless fathers who clutch the title of *Comte* or *Duc* like so much wilted celery. All no doubt vying for a back stage tour to procure an assignation with Mother Russia's version of *les petites rats*."

"*Oui*, the same who bellowed for the guillotine *après le début du Sacre du Printemps*."

"*Da*, the same. They all pine for a return to *La Décadence*. Though most now would prefer the *danseur* to the *danseuse*."

This was a common theme of the private jokes they shared at the expense of the foppish *abonnés* whose dissolute lifestyles and old money had been supporting them in the west for many seasons.

"*Oui*, Le Comte de Montesquiou-Fezensac and Le Duc de Clermont-Tonnere are going to indulge in yet another noodle-duel to expunge the latter's scurrilous remarks about Le Comte's '*relations militaires*.' The seconds have been chosen for the business on the basis of the firmness of their *derrières*. It is rumored that they are to toss their titles at one another after flouncing a distance of twenty paces."

"*Da! Da!* It would perhaps be a good thing if the *Boche* attacked again as they did in the 70's, and then these dandies could sleep *ensemble* in the barracks, returning to their carefree service for the Fatherland that they have since so regally pillaged."

Both men covered their mouths with their napkins, their eyes swimming with mirth, as they struggled to stifle their rude exuberance. A pause ensued while the two composed themselves.

"*Oui*, but Serge, I must tell you why I was so late. I have just come from *Le Docteur*, who was called once more to Maryanka. She collapsed again today after rehearsal."

The impresario drew in his breath. "And the verdict?"

"*Rien*. Nervous exhaustion. The doctor has prescribed some noxious yellow fumigation with which Françoise, over-protective as always, has filled the hotel suite to exorcise what she calls '*le spectre*' of pneumonia.

"It is near, you know. Vaslav is complaining. About everything else, he is crazy — raving of God and revolvers — but about dance, he knows. She still has the grace, the upper body, but the strength of the ankles is going. She knows it, and she is trying to cover for herself with these imagined respiratory collapses, trying to take a rest, so the joints have a chance to recover. She is hiding it — "

"Not from us, but from herself." She has not been the same since the . . .

“Da,” It was stupid of them both. He is young, foolish, impetuous. But she should have known.

“Da.”

“I know a doctor here in Paris who could have taken care of that thing with a little scrape, a flick of the wrist, no blood, no bother. But she would have none of it. She has always to go to extremes. And now it has come to this.

"*Da.* The days are gone when she can do thirty *fouettés* in one place. And besides, she does not really approve of ballet *à la Fokine*. But it is the same as always. She will weep. She will rage like a very devil, but tomorrow she will dance like an angel. She will do the *flic-flac* like lightning, like a girl of fourteen. Do not worry, my friend, I have seen it many times."

"*Maintenant* it is different. Now it is her mind, *aussi*. She has met an invalid nobody, the son of some stockbroker and a Jewess, who was the darling of society in the late 80's and who now lives in a cork-lined room on the Boulevard Haussmann, writing his timorous memoirs. It is he who has recommended *Le Docteur* with the cure for the asthma."

"The yellow fumigations?"

"*Oui.*"

"She has no asthma. She has the wind of a racehorse."

"*Mais alors* the invalid has flattered her, asking questions about performances in the past, bringing her mind back to her youth and her premier triumphs. And now she swears that he is the greatest genius in France, and that only he understands her sacrifice, her art."

"Who?" *Le Docteur?*

"*Non, non*, the invalid. Plus the Doctor has the cure for the asthma."

"*Nyet.*"

"*Oui. C'est vrai. Mais* that is not the worst of it."

"Nyet."

*Non*, now she is seeing also *les apparitions*.

"Nyet."

"*Oui*."

"When?"

"Last night."

"Where?"

"In her suite at the Ritz."

"*Robhá!* She was always a peasant!"

"*Oui, mais* she is now convinced that the apparition is stalking her."

"How?"

"From the mirror over the mantel."

"Nyet!"

"*Oui*, and there are voices too. *Non*, sounds — 'echoes' she calls them, 'whistles and creaks from unnamable icy depths.'"

"Whistles and creaks!?"

"*Oui. Mais* that is not the worst of it, my friend."

"Alexandre Nikolaevich, you have come like a demon from hell. A month before the season and you are telling me that my *prima ballerina assoluta* is old, crippled, asthmatic and mad!"

"*Oui. Mais* that is not the worst of it, my friend."

"Not the worst! You are a devil! A demon!"

"Oh, my dear friend, the worst is that *she likes it*. She calls it her visitation, a message from her soul from the depths of the sea.

"A peasant! She was always a peasant! A bitch! An ant! The spawn of a drunken serf!"

12/14/00 Thursday's Rock, Giles Nagual

The mood of midlife liminality is frequently expressed by adjectives like "lost" and "confused" and by such images of "wandering alone in the desert," "lost in a city without a map," and "flatness, two-dimensionality." The mind is hopeless, and persons feel themselves drifting in perilous waters.

Jan O. Stein and Murray Stein  
*Psychotherapy, Initiation and  
the Midlife Transition*

Risky Business: Prelude

Hissssssssssssssss. Yipyipyip! O-whuuuu! O-whuuuu! The pipe hissed and the fat little terrier mix kecked and howled, and as the dog scampered for the shade and safety of the pick-up's undercarriage, the two men in the crawlspace, looked at each other with some alarm. In the gloom, one of the men, with braids and a red Geronimo bandana headband, said: "I think our canary just died."

The other man, the one-eyed plumber in the lead of his goffer, as the two inched forward toward the hissing coupling, said: "Oy. Bullet knows what he knows. But this is just steam, I am thinking."

"Just?" You say that like it's a good thing."

"High pitch means small hole."

"Red Man think evil spirit in pipe angry. Try escape. Maxwell's Demon make heap big trouble."

“Don’t sweat it, Benjy, it’s just a pinhole in the solder. We can seal it with a dab of epoxy putty. Sets by chemical interaction. No need for the surface to be dry. We’ll be outta here in a jiffy.”

The plumber kneads the two components of the epoxy with stubby sure hands, the goffer holding the flashlight, which catches the forehead of the kneader as he concentrates on his work, a thin flap of skin providing translucent covering for a circular gap in the skull, which alternates, as his heart labors, between a bulge of crimson, and a deep, collapsing incarnadine shadow. The hiss is plugged and the dog’s howls recede into his more habitual snorting whines, and the two men, exhausted by their exertion, lie flat on their backs now, looking up into a maze of copper piping threaded through the floor joists. The bandanaed goffer asks: “What is this anyway, Hi? It’s not like any plumbing I’ve ever seen.”

“It’s not the water pipe, that’s over there. This I think is the underside of a Tesla vaporization generator. Those two pipes over there, the big one and the *klainer* one beside, the ones with the thermal covers, they gotta be going all the way down to *Gehenna*. Tapping an underground water source to produce the steam. The boiler’s underground, and the condensate powers a set up above in the house of a turbine, a generator, a condenser, and a vacuum pump. The earth does all the work, and the energy comes from recovering the latent heat of vaporation. Once the shaft is dug, and the set up is in place, except for the little maintenance work that we’re doing now, the energy is free. Very clever boy chick, I am thinking, this Professor Lawson.”

“Lawhead,” corrected the other.

“Lawhead. Yes. But must be a lot of pressure in that condenser. (Poot.) Risky business, I am thinking.”

“Speaking of risky business,” says the goffer, wrinkling his nose, “perhaps we better crawl out of this pressure cooker, in the untoward off-chance that your boy chick is not as clever at controlling all these pressures as you seem to think he is.”

“Why?” says the fat man. “Bullet’s quit howling.”

“Still,” says the goffer, “Red Man knows what he knows.”

Both men crawl, stopping for air now and then, and also to listen, to listen, like deer in the forest, as if their lives depended upon it. But the hissing has stopped. For now. ( Poot.) And yet, another softer sound seeps down from the house above them.

“Odd,” says the goffer, the wings of his nostrils flaring, “sounds like frogs chirping.”

“A lot of frogs that would be, And little *Scheißers* too.”

The two have inched their way back to the light, and standing up, they saunter towards the pick-up. The little dog runs out of the shade of the undercarriage and begins furiously biting at the plumber’s cowboy boots, slobbering profusely on the spur strap of the instep and on the upturned toes. The plumber squats down, ruffs up his familiar attacker’s hackles, and says.

“Yes. Yes. Death from the ankles down. We’ll go home now, Bullet.” Then he adds at an octave higher pitch. “Are you papa’s boy? Hmmm? Are you Papa’s good good boy?” Inciting the dog to new heights of jaw-foaming frenzy. Then, dragging the dog on his boot, the plumber puts his tool box back in the truck bed, and replaces the wrenches he has been carrying in his two-gun holster with the matched Colt Peacemakers that belong there. Appropriately armed (thank God and the NRA for Arizona’s frontier-friendly gun laws), the plumber swaggers, John Wayne style, in spite of his pudgy thighs, *True Grit*-John Ford tribute eye-patch and all, to the driver’s side door. There, he retrieves his cowboy hat from where it’s been hanging from the truck’s radio antenna, (tossed there, McClintock-like, before his crawl-space diving. Then, giving his jeans and gunbelt a hike, he spits, and says, “Tonto.”

“Yes, Kemo Sabe.”

“I feel like we’re being watched.”

“Yes, Kemo Sabe. Tonto feel this too.”

Both men, their hot necks crawling, look around at the surrounding houses and skies to see if . . . then the white man breaks the spell. “There’s a

divinity that shapes our ends rough hew them . . . by the way, have you had time to read the last Lieto file?"

"Yes, Kemo Sabe. Heap big interesting. Like white man playin' In-din."

"Cut the bull pucky, Benjy. We're all playing at something. All of us, as you keep reminding me, captivated, consciously or unconsciously, by the imago." He picks up the frantic dog and throws him in the cab of the pick-up, then tilts his hat back to give the pulse in his head-dent the freedom to throb, the freedom to think, as it were, before he spits again, and speaks. "Now what about those rock totems? And this Nagual *Rebbe*? Hmmmm? What 'a ya make of all this *narrishkeit* about Ho-bo-bo and Sipapu?"

"Don't know, Hi, but I think maybe I know the canyon from that text we got a couple 'a couple weeks ago."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. It's a place called Fish Creek Canyon, out east of Apache Junction, in the Superstitions. The bridge. The live creek. The willows down stream. The big boulders up. The cave. It all fits. We could go check it out. Look for clues."

"You mean, the text is not just symbolic, not just literature?"

"Not just? You say that like it's a bad thing."

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Apprentice and Nagual walked slowly, deliberately through the desert landscape, as if listening, or as if they were trying to sniff their way. Eventually their wanderings formed a spiral. Perhaps they had found a scent or a vibration. The Nagual said: "The cochlea of the inner ear are connected to nerve endings in the medulla and at the base of the tongue. The breathing we practice activates these nerves. This is why we are silent. We are hearing the inner breath, the voice we call Ho-bo-bo, the voice of the whirlwind."

"Nagual, what is this voice?"

"The stars whirl overhead, irradiating particles of earth, the tiniest silica forming receiver discs. Thus we are cradled in webs of radiation. This is our guidance. This is Ho-bo-bo's voice. This is the way we locate the Sipapu."

"Nagual, what is the Sipapu?"

"The place of placental flowings, the heart of the maze, the birth of entoptic forms, the womb of emergence."

"Nagual, explain."

When the eye is closed to the outer Monad and open to the breath, six forms manifest: the grid, parallel lines, dots, zig zags, nested catenary curves, and filigrees. There is also another, the Uniter, which we see in fast flowing water, in the shape of the wind, in the motion of the stars.

"Nagual, explain."

"These Holy Ones manifest according to seven principles: replication, fragmentation, integration, superpositioning, juxtapositioning, reduplication and rotation.

"Nagual, I don't understand. Please, explain."

"You will see for yourself when we are finished walking."

Their walking finally came to a conclusion. On a circle of ground, nine paces across, no more, in open terrain, unmarked by plant or stone, the Nagual bid them sit. They sat. They waited. It was late in the day. It was three in the afternoon. The old man looked at the sky and said to the young one: "The time has come for you to close your eyes."

At first, the apprentice saw nothing, heard nothing, felt not a single thing, beyond the desert heat and the crouch of his posture. The Nagual pressed the eyelids of the young one, gently to start, but with steady, increasing pressure. That's when the phosphenes emerged: light grids at first, like widely spaced strands on a loom. But then the Nagual pressed harder. The grids became moirè-like, each strand as of wool, one strand entwining another. The fabric, intense, multicolored, floated on space as if it floated on

water. The fluid lines became more agitated, broke up into beads and rolled into luminous dots. Each dot was endowed with a sense of its own volition, though taken together, they massed in a manic swarm. A far off voice chirped stately, radiant words:

"These are the males. This is their mating lek."

A second, smaller swarm of lights whirled in. These were the "females," larger, more luminous. The dimmer, more numerous males began to mob them. After a time, the females emitted a squeaking — "the liberation symbol" — and the males began to darken. The males grew dimmer, struggling, as if dying. And then the female forms dispersed themselves, their lights departing in diverse directions. Now it was totally light, and nothing was seen.

The Nagual spoke: "Your culture has misinterpreted the nature of mind. The body is only a lek, the mating ground. Awareness is territorial. Phonemes, sounds, form words, the big words, the ones made by the radiations, the scent, not the little words, the squeaks of greedy bipeds. These are the words, which form Ho-bo-bo's book. Do you understand."

"No, I do not."

"Did you not witness the swarms of dancing lights, the rituals of their age-old disciplines?"

"Yes, but I don't understand what I have seen."

"I will explain it. Listen. Here is power. The cellular structures of the human body are vast eusocial networks of ideas. You think of your form as something monolithic, something that grows from a zygote to a fetus, is born, develops, ages, disintegrates, dies. This body of yours is only a circle of scent, a place of emergence for the luminous swarms."

"Are these the swarms I saw with my closed eyes?"

"Listen, and I will explain what you have seen. The swarms are unique flecks of sentience, evolved to live in symbiotic nests. Some of these flecks are sessile, some are mobile. Taken together they form a colony, a biomass of separate entities whose hive adds up to one."

"Nagual, tell me. How do the separate flecks become the one?"

"The one is every separate human birth. The flecks are aspects of the birthless mind. The stridulations of celestial clicks connect the nests across both space and time. This is a truth. Now do you understand?"

"Oh, Nagual, I see the light, but I am blind!"

## Interregnum: Seventh Week's Summary

That statute, in turn, requires that any controversy or contest that is designed to lead to a conclusive selection of electors be completed by December 12. That date is upon us, and there is no recount procedure in place under the State Supreme Court's order that comports with minimal constitutional standards. Because it is evident that any recount seeking to meet the December 12 date will be unconstitutional for the reasons we have discussed, we reverse the judgement of the Supreme Court of Florida ordering a recount to proceed. { . . . }

None are more conscious of the vital limits on judicial authority than are the members of this Court, and none stand more in admiration of the Constitution's design to leave the selection of the President to the people, through their legislatures, and to the political sphere. When contending parties invoke the process of the courts, however, it becomes our unsought responsibility to resolve the federal and constitutional issues the judicial system has been forced to confront.

The judgement of the Supreme Court of Florida is reversed, and the case is remanded for further proceedings not inconsistent with this opinion.

Pursuant to this Court's Rule 45.2, the Clerk is directed to issue the mandate in this case forthwith.

*It is so ordered.*

Per Curiam  
Supreme Court of the United  
States  
N. 00-949  
George W. Bush, et al.,  
Petitioners v.  
Albert Gore, Jr., et al.  
On writ of Certiorari to the  
Florida Supreme Court  
[December 12, 2000]

Only the seventh week of Awareness Exercises and I can already see that these interregnums have degenerated from rule-making, to confusion, to shoddy hermeneutics. The idea that the interpretation of texts can somehow free the ponderous mind from the confines of interpretation is a self-contradicting folly. The interpretation is perhaps the mind's attempt to stop, or at least slow, these words that are always moving. Now it occurs to me (ponderously, slowly) that the movements of these narrations are embodiments of Time, of what Foucault, or some other tedious French intellectual, calls *èpistèmè*. Their idea being — as best as I understand it — that words, specific vocabularies, are windows into discrete historical epochs. And that while sentences keep up a constant surface dialectical oscillation or narrative flow, the individual words, or even the individual sounds composing the words, like eddies, arrest that movement, and allow us the chance to see into the depths. The *èpistèmè* are windows, windows that we can not only “look through,” but literally “drink from.” That is to say, the words re-immense us in alien flows of time, not only in memory, but — in accordance with certain neurotransmitter activity — in actuality. We find ourselves re-experiencing fourth century B.C. E. Athens, or first century C.E. Briton, or Philadelphia in the years leading up to the American Revolution. A word from a novel by Proust thrusts us back to Paris on the eve of the First World War. These words, these *èpistèmè*, somehow stir the living descendents of those times, *i.e.*, our own brain cells, with life, or lives, the lives that were lived, and are still being lived, in the ocean of Time. The words resurrect the then and there to the here and now. But we (I) want to know about people, about events, or, in extreme moments of lassitude, about ideas. We (I) want to know about our personal immediate future, and not about an impersonal distant past. Words do not interest us, and, as such, we are their captives. We speak or write them, and they arise around us like imprisoning stones. Then we proceed to paint word-images on the ever-thickening walls and imagine ourselves to be free. And if a word arises that we don't understand, we complain. We cast it out. We refuse to read it. And we beat our heads on the familiar walls in an all-too familiar and ever-recurring frustration. But now, I (we) think of those medieval copyists in their cloisters, laboriously writing scriptures with letters of gold, and painting vines and birds around those letters: the unreal and the real, the slave and the free, mixing together in the sacred book.

## The Controlled Calamity

The back and forth fiasco of the presidential election had compelled me to alter my television-watching habits in the direction of a more astringent austerity. Now the mute button was no longer a sufficient filter for the news, I was also driven to dispense with the picture. Since my return from Alpharetta, I have squandered my days watching the distorted reflection of my poor dogsbody in the dark convexity of the slightly irradiated TV screen. I find that the news thus absorbed is more accurate than the preprogrammed fare. The imperturbability of the set reminds me of what the old Elizabethan cunning men called a skrying stone, and in this stone I see, or I imagine I see — this distinction means so little to me now — the dark events of the future. Now, more and more, every surface in my world has become as physically opaque and as metaphysically transparent as the seven rocks that hold me in their thrall. My only contact with the outside world is through the newspaper, fittingly, I suppose, through words. My subscription has not yet exhausted itself, and I am too inert to muster the gumption to call the Chronicle and cancel it. (I no longer read the front page anymore, and make a deliberate effort to hide it from view, having already exceeded my physical capacity to absorb more lies. But still, I liked to do the Jumble and to read the obits and the “personals” section of the classifieds.) Thus, it came to pass, that I discovered the news of George W. Bush’s selection as president through an extra-official news source.

How do these stories begin in Gothic novels? “It was a dark and stormy night” — actually it was — pretty much across the entire U.S., but in Houston, too, and I was sitting on the couch, Diva on my lap, watching the blank set, when I heard the pop of small arms fire and the yahoos of my neighbor, Lamar Schiller. In the freezing rain, no less, Lamar was bouncing his corpulent, shirtless, but excessively hairy body around in his yard, in a macho celebratory display. His cavorting included, in addition to the gunplay (not alas, for him, an altogether infrequent activity), the ritual revving of his enormous SUV and the repeated tossing in the air of his cowboy hat — the winter one, (felt, black), not the summer one, (straw, hemp), nor the dress one, (white, Stetson). Naturally this hullabaloo set off his Rott Weiler, John Wayne, whose miserable lot was to wallow in his own feces while staked to the infested, denuded gumbo clay of Schiller’s doodad-cluttered back yard. Lamar was infamous in the neighborhood for his fights with any one of his six ex-wives, his accumulation of motorized wrecks —

cars, trucks, motorcycles, motorhomes, boats — and his penchant for general crudity and procrastination. In fact, the neighbors had coined a verb to describe his kind of behavior, *viz.*, “to schillerize.” Leave your Christmas decorations up until July — you’ve schillerized them. Let a broken tree branch hang from a tree for two months after a storm, it’s been schillerized. You get the idea. Schiller loved Dubya almost as much as he loved his gun collection, and it did not take me long to determine that the upshot of this firing of weapons and burning of petrol had something to do with the supposedly undecided election. Well, as the old Pogo cartoon used to say, “Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> fell on Wednesday this month.” The Supreme Court had ruled (not the Florida one, the U.S. one) and Gore had made his concession, and I thought, as I sat in the schillerized hovel of my own life: ‘Let the cascade of catastrophes begin.’

Then something strange occurred: a possession that I call in retrospect “the Controlled Calamity.” In a kind of ritualized rage, I went through my house in a cold-blooded fury. No vandal ever trashed the premises of his detested victim with more creative fervor. I tossed fruit into the whirling ceiling fans. I slashed flour and sugar bags and whirled their contents around the floors and walls, not omitting to empty the contents of drawers onto the floor and to pour their newly vacant cavities full of whatever condiment was most viscous and repulsive. I tipped over the refrigerator and kicked the moldering contents into every corner of the house. I smashed unwashed dishes in the bathtub, slopped cooking oils, ketchup, salad dressings and honey into the flour and sugar; and I disgorged the contents of the medicine cabinet — which I wrenched from the bathroom wall — making a slurry-like vomitus of Preparation H, Pepto-Bismol, Keopectate and various antacids and antihistamines to coat the carpeted floors. I tossed my clothes out of the closets and rabidly tore them to ribbons. I overturned mattresses and upholstered cushions, slashing out the stuffing and flinging it on the sticky walls like so much Xmas tree flocking. I broke every mirror in the house, including the one in the living room armoire, and with one possessed and well-placed kick, I imploded the cathode tube of the TV set. I concluded this orgy of destruction, by stripping myself and shredding my clothes, finally, jerking off my adult diaper, and making confetti of its chemical fabric, tossing it in the air over my head, as if I were some perverse hero dishonoring myself with my own one-man tickertape parade. I was as systematic as I was maniacal, and starting from the kitchen, I made a counterclockwise revolution through every room of the house, ending the spiral of terror in my erstwhile office (a.k.a. “the rumpus room — the house

being built in the 50's when rumpusing was considered a normal part of a family's daily activities). I don't know how many hours I was consumed in this ceremony, but at some point, I must have passed out from exhaustion. (Although the whole episode had awakened in my body an uncharacteristic and nearly superhuman physical strength — like that of those wild men who run amok when their wives leave them and cannot be felled by gunfire or persuasion or that of those frantic mothers who lift cars off their babies or that of saints who fling great stone crosses a country mile). I awakened some hours later — naked and sweaty, in spite of the freezing cold — with Diva staring at my gnarly head, and the whole house covered with a pulsing membrane of busy and contented fire ants.