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II. SUMMA LYRICA: A PRIMER OF THE COMMONPLACES IN SPECULATIVE POETICS

Introductory Note

My purpose in the *Summa Lyrica* is to bring to mind "the poem," as an object of thought and as an instrument for thinking, consistent with my account of poetic practice in the foregoing conversations. In particular, I intend to facilitate (and exemplify) *thinking* as it may arise in the course of inquiry directed toward the meaning of poetic structures. The *Summa Lyrica* proceeds by stating—aphoristically—some of the commonplaces by means of which poetry and poetic purposes are accounted for in the West. As a primer or handbook of commonplaces, it is designed to befriend the reader of poetry (always supposing that the reader of poetry needs a hermeneutic friend) by constructing a culture in which poetry is intelligible.

In aid of these intentions and purposes, the attempt has been made to make this work total (a *summa*), that is to say, to place individual analyses in the context of a version of the whole subject matter. This is of course not the same thing as attempting to make the work complete (supposing that were possible). What *is* attempted is to identify the alliances and relationships of the specific terms and situations in poetic analysis (in something like the same way that they arise in my own mind, when my mind is engaged with poetry), as far out toward the horizon as possible (an aphorism is a proposition with a horizon), and thus to circumscribe a horizon in which poetry rises up and is present *as in a world.*

The basis of order in the *Summa Lyrica* is the procession of commonplaces *(loci communes)*, assertions which are possible to be made (and generally are made) in the presence of poems. Commonplaces are not pieces of theory but points of outlook. In the commonplace (as in the aphorism), everybody can start from the same spot, because discourse is *bound* into the authority of a human presence. Theory of poetry does not participate in the nature of poetry (as perhaps the theory of something else participates in the nature of that thing)—except insofar as the theory of poetry is also something that somebody says. In the *Summa Lyrica,* an attempt is made to stay inside the business of the thing, and to use the matrix of particular personal presence

as a system of paths along which to move among realms of being (for this reason there is also a web of cross-references from title to title in the text). Flowing from the commonplaces are comments *(scholia)* which show, in increasingly open styles of discourse, how the commonplaces are amplified and serve to make audible the world-wide-and history-long discourse which is always going on (30.6) in the presence of the poem—with the intention of putting poetry and poetic knowledge in service of human interests.

Above all, therefore, this is a text for use, intended like a poem to give rise to thoughts about something else.

The Primer

Immortality I (14)

1. The function of poetry is to obtain for everybody one kind of success at the limits of the autonomy of the will.

   Scholium "in the wake of language." Here we conceive of poetry as doing moral work, as having a function in the same way as a machine has a function but a machine that speaks. (43)

   Like language (but not identical with language)—perhaps it would be well to say "in the wake of language"—poetry makes promises to everybody and keeps its promises only to some. So when we say "the function of poetry is to obtain for *everybody* one kind of success," we are running ahead of the fact (but doing so in the name of the fact), and raising the question of *justice*.

   By "success" we mean "outcome." Poetry serves to obtain a kind of outcome (a success is any outcome) precisely at those points in experience where the natural will is helpless.

1.1 The limits of the autonomy of the will discovered in poetry are death and the barriers against access to other consciousnesses.

   Scholium on limits. Poetry thematizes the abandonment of will of the speaking person as speaker. "Sing, muse. . . ."

The maxim is: "No mortal man speaks immortal words." In this way poetry repeats its function as its subject matter. (This is what is meant when poetry is said to "be about poetry.")

The abandonment of the autonomy of the will of the speaking person as a speaker constitutes a form of knowledge—poetic knowledge. The knowledge that not "I" speaks but "language speaks" (Heidegger). The function of this knowledge is to rescue the natural will at the point of its death, that is to say, at the point where death arrests its intention.

Poetry is produced by the mortality of body and soul, the immiscibility of minds, and the postponement of the end of the world.

1.2 The kind of success which poetry facilitates is called "immortality."

Scholium on immortality. Poetry functions as a machine for producing immortality in the form of the convergence of meaning and being in presence. (For modern immortality theory, see Becker, Lifton, Rank, Arendt, and Cullmann.) Note, for example, Plato, *Symposium*, 208, 209:

> Do you think, she went on, that Alcestis would have laid down her life to save Admetus, or that Achilles would have died for the love he bore Patroclus, or that Codrus, the Athenian king, would have sacrificed himself for the seed of his royal consort, if they had not hoped to win "the deathless name for valor," which, in fact, posterity has granted them? No, Socrates, no. Every one of us, no matter what he does, is longing for the endless fame, the incomparable glory that is theirs, and the nobler he is, the greater his ambition, because he is in love with the eternal.
>
> Well then, she went on, those whose procreancy is of the body turn to woman as the object of their love, and raise a family, in the blessed hope that by doing so they will keep their memory green, "through time and through eternity." But those whose procreancy is of the spirit rather than of the flesh—and they are not unknown, Socrates—conceive and bear the things of the spirit. And what are they? you ask. Wisdom and all her sister virtues; it is the office of every poet to beget them, and of every artist whom we may call creative.

Immortality may be thought of in any number of ways:

> Civilization originates in delayed infancy and its function is security. It is a huge network of more or less successful attempts to protect mankind against the danger of object-loss, the colossal efforts made by a baby who is afraid of being left alone in the dark. The famous poem of Horace may be regarded as a symbol of this effort:
>
> Exegi monumentum, aere perennius
> Regalique situ pyramidum altius.
> (Géza Róheim, *The Origin and Function of Culture*)

1.3 The structural definition of lyric is "that poetic situation in which there is one speaking person, who is nameless or to whom we assign the name of the author." (6.4)

Scholium on lyric. Lyric is the most continuously practiced of all poetic kinds in the history of Western representation; and also the most endemic to the present Postmodern situation. Lyric is the genre of the "other mind" as it has come to manifestation through the abandonment of autonomy and the displacement toward fiction. (For the specific *differentia* of the lyric form considered as the imitation or "fiction" of speech, see Barbara H. Smith, *Poetic Closure*, p. 122. For a beginning with genre and the lyric genre in particular, see Claudio Guillén, *Literature as System*, pp. 398–400.)

Note the following (Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, p. 366):

> Lyric: A literary genre characterized by the assumed concealment of the audience from the poet and by the pre-

dominance of an associational rhythm distinguishable both from recurrent metre and from semantic or prose rhythm.

Frye's "concealment of the audience from the poet" is an abbreviation of Mill on overhearing (cited at 16.7). The idea of "associational rhythm" is a reference to the fact of lyric as the imitation of man alone, either as he is alone in himself, or as he might be alone before or after society. As the kind which imitates man alone, lyric is the first and the last poetic sort.

Insofar as the lyric is associated with music, the music stands for those solitudes. (For the history of poetry and music, see John Hollander, "The Poem in the Ear," in *Vision and Resonance.*) The assignment of the name of the author to the nameless speaker in lyric reenacts (repeats) the normal social process of the naming of the person with stress on the problematical nature of the naming of persons at all. In addition, the question of singular and plural attends the self-reference of the lyric speaker. For a beginning with this problem, see citation from Fox at 3 and Emile Benveniste, "Relationships of Person in the Verb," in *Problems in General Linguistics* (especially p. 203).

1.4 A poem facilitates immortality by the conservation of names.

Scholium on the conservation of names. The traditional function of poetry is the conservation of names (Note 23.1 and Scholium, and 38.8). The strangeness and point of lyric can be seen when we note that the speaker in lyric by contrast to the speakers in drama (all of whom are named) and the speakers in epic narrative (all of whom are named except the narrator) is only equivocally named, has in effect a sponsor (the author) but no name, is prior to or posterior to name, is an orphan voice. The name of the speaker in lyric is inferential (see 40) or intuitive. The speaker in lyric communicates with the past lives of the reader (Scholium at 28.1).

1.5 The features of the poem which are instrumental toward its immortalizing function are those which distinguish it from other forms of words, its prosody (for example, meter and line).

Scholium on poetry and other kinds of utterance. The opposite of poetry is not strictly speaking prose but rather the "not fictional." But this would hold for the novel as well (see Barbara H. Smith, *Poetic Closure*, p. 15 and note 10). The question arises as to what stage of the distancing of utterance from its natural situation constitutes a difference, a desituation sufficient to constitute a new or "fictional" status. For another current treatment of this issue see Frank Kermode in *The Sense of an Ending*, where the difference lies between the fictional and the mythic (see 38), and see also the distinction between the radical or participatory and the aesthetic (32).

1.6 Immortality is the simultaneity of meaning and being. Immortality can be discussed only in relation to persons.

1.7 Neither immortality nor persons are conceivable outside of communities. Consequently, reading engages the reader with the community in the interest of the immortality of all persons.

Reading I (22) (37)

2. The poem is the destiny of the reader. (9)

2.1 The reader is the destiny of the poem. (9)

Scholium on the circle of immortality. Immortality as the continuity of human presence through acknowledgment is a "virtuous circle" (Goodman) on which all persons stand (writer and reader being two) in mutual dependence. Hence, immortality as presence is a collective human artifact in which the self-interest of persons converges. "Creation" is creation not of poems but of presence, or immortality, and is not an act (in the sense in which an act has a terminal moment) but a process in the sense that it is always ongoing and

only ongoing. The process of creation of human presence through acknowledgment moves through persons across time and is completed neither in the writer nor in the reader but in the mutually honorable reciprocity of both. At any moment of reading the reader is the author of the poem, and the poem is the author of the reader. The honor of creation is not with one or the other, but among them. Above all, they are intended (destined) for one another in that the poem looks ahead to the reader, and the reader (as reader) to the poem. In a culture in which honor is conferred asymmetrically on the author rather than the reader, the dominance of the image of the author and the subordination or feudalization of the image of the reader derogates from the good of reading by setting the self-interest of writer and reader in conflict and breaking the circle. Such a situation gives rise to theory.

2.2 We should not let anything enter our discussion of a poem but what we see for ourselves.

2.3 While I am doing this, you are doing something else.

Scholia on the difference of tasks.

A. *What difference does it make what other people say?* What difference does it make what other people say? The answer is: What other people say is what *they* say, each of them as it were all the time. The difference is *the saying of what is said.* In other words, what is said is first of all the portrait of the other person present because of his or her speaking. The difference that the speech of another makes is the difference of other being in its being as other. Scripture, written down speech, does not make the difference. The good book stands in the difference of the other person. Therefore, the good book pitches you away, makes a difference. Here I am trying to make a difference, working with the problem of a good book.

Whatever I do (whatever you do) has the same weight as being, has the weight of being in it. A sentence is of the same order as being; it is something a *person* does—eidetic. You can say "Yes" to the *eidos*, or you can say "Not Yet," or you can say "Not Mine," but you cannot say "No." Even if you say "No" it will not disappear.

B. *Prudence in doing an eidetic science.* The effort in doing poetics (eidetic science) is not to tell anyone anything, and not to stop speaking. The clearest (simplest, most admirable) form of an essay in criticism of (any kind of talking about) the poem must precipitate no conclusion that might be known ahead of time by either of us, must acknowledge the inutility of anything that can be taught in this matter and the splendor of anything that can be learned.

> Who is so stupidly curious as to send his son to school in order that he may learn what the teacher thinks? All those sciences which they profess to teach, and the science of virtue itself and wisdom, teachers explain through words. Then those who are pupils consider within themselves whether what has been explained has been said truly; looking of course to that interior truth, according to the measure of which each is able. Thus they learn, and when the interior truth makes known to them that true things have been said, they applaud, but without knowing that instead of applauding teachers they are applauding learners, if indeed their teachers know what they are saying (Augustine, *De Magistro*, XIV).

In the matter of poetry, everybody is *trying* to say the same thing. Your business and my business is with the commonplaces, helping one another to the world. Whether I understand what I am saying is not the important thing. The important thing is to be faithful to the event.

2.4 Reading presupposes a meditative sorting of the true situation of the self from false versions (37.5). Reading also results in a sorting of the true situation of the self from false versions.

2.5 The question "Why read?" depends for its answer on a true conception of self-interest.

Scholium on teaching and learning. Teaching and learning is the facilitation of understanding of self-interest by one person in the presence of another. Reading is an instance of teaching and learning. It is something you do for yourself in the presence of another person (whether at hand or absent) who is the living boundary of the interest which you serve.

2.6 The poem is first prior to the self (ahead) and then posterior to the self (behind).

2.7 Reading recurs. Writing does not recur.

2.8 The poem is the reader's thing (Scholium at 40.2).

Scholium on "appropriation."

> By appropriation I mean several things. I mean first that the interpretation of a text ends up in the self-interpretation of a subject who henceforth understands himself better. This completion of text understanding in self-understanding characterizes the sort of reflective philosophy which I call concrete reflection. Hermeneutics and reflective philosophy are here correlative and reciprocal: on the one hand, self-understanding provides a roundabout way of understanding the cultural signs in which the self contemplates himself and forms himself; on the other hand, the understanding of a text is not an end in itself and for itself; it mediates the relation to himself of a subject who, in the short circuit of immediate reflection, would not find the meaning of his own life. Thus it is necessary to say just as strongly that reflection is nothing without mediation by means of signs and cultural works and that explanation is nothing if it is not incorporated, as an intermediary stage, in the process of self-understanding. In short, in hermeneutical reflection—or in reflective hermeneutics—the constitution of *self* and that of meaning are contemporaneous (Paul Ricoeur, "What Is a Text? Explanation and Interpretation").

Poetic Language

4. All poems employ an artificial, that is to say, a "poetic language."

> It is characteristic of artificial languages that historical mutability is precluded by their very nature. Artificial languages are devised to exclude or control mutability (Edward Sapir).

Scholium on the arbitrariness of regarding language in poetry as "language" at all. Insofar as the poem is an artifact, its words have ceased to be language and become objects, or merely have gotten lost in the totalization which arises when the parts of a thing are superseded by the whole which they have become (Scholium at 35). The embarrassment of treating words in poetry as language can be seen in the effort to identify sentences in poetry as statements. (Cf. I. A. Richards.) If sentences in poetry are statements, then they are subject to the rules of verification and sense (such as the Aristotelian Law of Contradiction). But it is clear that these rules disable too many of the sentences of poetry (for example, those which employ metaphor). Further, statements are analyzed without reference to possible differences between speaker's meaning and hearer's meaning; but language in poetry is always language which has become the *speech of a person,* and is therefore no longer statement, or not yet statement, in any case. But as speech, as will be seen, the words in poems are also in many ways disqualified. Hence, the choice, which is always possible, of regarding the words in poems as pieces of language in any normal sense tends to be counterindicated. Language in poetry is an example of a natural thing which by being framed or contextualized in a powerful and singular way has changed its nature (35).

4.1 All poetic languages are versions of social language, that is to say, versions of socially identifiable dialects. When I speak of them as "versions" I mean that we encounter them as disguises (8.4, Scholium at 38.6).

4.2 Poetic languages are strategies to prevent the meaningless use of the human speaker—the engagement of the labor of the speaker toward any stake but his or her own.

4.3 The feature which distinguishes poetic versions of social language from natural versions of social language is *archaism* (Owen Barfield). Speech which manifests itself as poetic language has the authority of *prior* life (9.4).

Scholium on priority, interiority, and power. The idea of "archaism" associates poetry with the power of prior life. It should be noted in assessing the claims for poetry that priority, power, and divinity are mutually explanatory concepts in Western culture. "Archaism" associates poetry with the power of origination through which reality is established prior to conscious life, and toward which consciousness directs its eyes backward—as it were in retrospect, and subject to the irony of a mind known by a mind which (like the poem) cannot by its nature be known in the same sense. Inside each moment of poetic language there is the taunt (Job 38) "Where were you when I made you?"

Archaism also involves poetic language in the paradox of earliness and lateness; the prior thing is at once the firstborn and the infant and also the thing longest in the world and oldest. The poetic speaker is the archetypal *senex puer* (on this *topos,* see Ernst Robert Curtius). The middle ground of strong life does not belong to the iconology of the poem. "The novel is the art-form of virile maturity . . ." (Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel,* p. 71).

The association of poetry and historical priority is legitimated as history by Vico as follows (*The New Science of Giambattista Vico,* in "Idea of the Work," p. 34):

> We find that the principle of these origins both of languages and of letters lies in the fact that the first gentile peoples, by a demonstrated necessity of nature, were poets who spoke in poetic characters. This discovery, which is the master key of this Science, has cost us the persistent research of almost all our literary life, because with our civilized natures we [moderns] cannot at all imagine and can understand only by great toil the poetic nature of these first men.

After romanticism, priority and power are modally subsumed by the category of interiority so that the archaic and the interior become identified. For the refusal of this position in

modern structuralism and the return to the Semitic world construction which places the archaic and the prior in the exterior, see Jean Starobinski, "The Inside and the Outside":

> Making the most remote past coefficient to our most intimate depth is a way of refusing loss and separation, of preserving, in the crammed plenum we imagine history to be, every moment spent along the way. . . . There is no reason, however, why our interest in the cultural past should diminish if, instead of representing a part of ourselves, this past consisted in things other men have accomplished within a conceptual framework which is not and will never be ours, using a language in which we recognize nothing of ourselves. Leaving aside cultures which have not contributed to making us what we are, it is moot whether other cultures which have indeed influenced us form a history of assimilation rather than the contrary—a history of evictions.

This exilic conception constitutes a refusal of typology and entails a hermeneutic rather than a participatory civilization. Compare Blake's "ancient time" (Scholium at 41.4).

4.4 The route taken by the speaker in the poem through the poem's problem of utterance is (by the definition of speech in a *poem*) a unique route. Hence there is always only one poem. (All versions of a poem are poems.) The extent to which an utterance insists on its specificity as a unique event is the extent to which that utterance participates in the poetic quality. The source of the poetic quality is the risk of commitment of all being to an unalterably singular manifestation (19.1, Scholia at 22.6, 31.15, 42.3).

> *Scholium on manifestation in the one world.* The association of poetry and immortality can be constructed by observing the eidetic utility inherent in the exact repeatability of sentences. Note the following from William M. Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication*, p. 162:

> The conventional exact repeatability of the verbal class symbols gave words a position in the thought of the past that they no longer hold. The only important things the ancients could exactly repeat were verbal formulae. Exact repeatability and permanence are so closely alike that the exactly repeatable things easily become thought of as the permanent or real things, and all the rest are apt to be thought of as transient and thus as mere reflections of the seemingly permanent things. This may seem a matter of minor moment, but I have little doubt that it had much to do with the origin and development of the Platonic doctrine of Ideas and the various modifications of it that have tangled thought until the present day. The analytical syntax of sentences composed of words certainly had much to do with the origin of the notions of substance and attributable qualities, which has not only played a formative role in the history of philosophy but for long presented one of the most formidable hurdles in the path of developing scientific knowledge. At any rate, until comparatively recent times nominalism, with its emphasis on facts, its distrust of words, and its interest in how things act rather than in what they essentially are, has had little chance, and its great development has coincided remarkably with the ever-broadening development of modern pictorial methods of record and communication.

But it should be noted that all manifestation involves the risk of reduction undertaken (with more or less confidence as the state of the community in history allows) in view of the great reward of perpetualization. All manifestation, whether verbal or visual, is determinate. As Gombrich points out, we do not *see* ambiguities; we see one state of a thing and then another. (The idea of ambiguity as also of metaphor is meaningless without the fact of the constraint of presence in manifestation to univocality.) Hence in manifestation possibility is broken down. At the point where manifestation really occurs (on the outer skin as it were of representation) presence

is postcatastrophic. (On poetry and the brokenness of worlds, see 31.15.) Hence the ideology of the unique language event (style) is a repetition of the nature of manifestation elevated to a moral allegory. Poetry incorporates as a *rule*, as the *differentia specifica* of its kind, the sacrificial history of presence.

Poetry thus offers a symbol of the one world which appears, as it is founded on the infinite plurality of worlds which cannot also appear. Poetry repeats in each of its instances the story about the scarcity of existence, the cosmogonic story which tells of the destruction of an infinity of worlds before the creation of this one (Leibnitz, *Monadology*, #55 ff.).

The matter is worth dwelling on. We may say that poetry, like ethical life, does not take place in the philosophical plurality of possible worlds, but in the relentless and inescapable unity of the one world as recovered perceptually.

Contrary to the Aristotelian implication that poetry is "more philosophical" than history, poetry is part of history. Poetry is one thing (an instance of that sort of thing) which actually has happened. Among all the possible things that could happen—the myths (38)—it is the one actual thing (one of the actual things) that did happen in the situation at hand. The poem as such is not the child of the experiential *esprit d'escalier*, nor does it consist of experimental counterfactuals with respect to a given state of affairs; it is the one thing that could be done by the speaker then. (It *is* that thing that was *done*.) Consequently, poetry is a hostage in the one world where finally and unexchangeably the one thing that happens (the very thing) really comes to reside.

The poem as manifestation is mounted upon the ruins of excluded possibility; and as manifestation it competes, within the horizon of human attention, for its spatiotemporal moment. In this it is like the human body. The soul is a creature of the plurality of metaphysically possible worlds; but the body, a case of representation, is bound to

the one world. The body is psychophanic, the picture of the soul, competing for space in the museum of the human world. Therefore, the poem like the body is subject to the law of the one world, as it comes to mind through the eye; and the name of that law is scarcity. (Note the debate about synonymity by E. D. Hirsch and Nelson Goodman in *Critical Inquiry* 1, nos. 3, 4.)

4.5 The frame of the poem (its prosody or closure) is coterminous with the whole poem, and must be conceived as bounding the poem both circumferentially (the outer juncture with *all* being) and internally (the inner juncture, produced syllable by syllable, with its *own* being). The minimal function of closure is to fence the poem from all other statements, and most strenuously from alternative statements of the same kind. The closural frame may be more or less permeable. In Wordsworth it is more permeable (where the space outside is filled with almost audible, slightly disjunct versions of the space inside); in Ben Jonson it is less permeable (where the space outside is outer space, enemy and keeper). The quality of singularity manifested in each instant of utterance is in each case of manifestation, syllable by syllable, the frame of the poem (that is, its closure).

Scholium on frame as theater, the repetition of the sufficient conditions of perceptibility. Note the following from Barbara H. Smith, *Poetic Closure*, pp. 24, 25:

> Meter serves, in other words, as a frame for the poem, separating it from a "ground" of less highly structured speech and sound. . . . Meter is the stage of the theater in which the poem, the representation of an act of speech, is performed. It is the arena of art, the curtain that rises and falls as well as the music that accompanies the entire performance.

The poem represents the act of speech in the metrical theater which is in turn a representation of the space of appearance, the sufficient conditions or *meta-topos* of the perceptibility of persons. The theater as structure is the imitation of

the space in which meeting takes place, and all its enabling preconditions.

Meter (as frame or closure) as a repetition or imitation of the psycho-social world construction which enables the preconditions of personal actualization is alluded to in Heidegger ("The Origin of the Work of Art," in Hofstadter, ed., *Poetry, Language and Thought*, p. 45):

> A work, by being a work, makes space for that spaciousness. "To make space for" means here especially to liberate the Open and to establish it in its structure. This installing occurs through the erecting mentioned earlier. The work as work sets up a world. The world holds open the Open of the world. But the setting up of a world is only the first essential feature in the work-being of a work.

The metaphor of "frame" propagates itself throughout the theory of perception. As the enabling preformation of meaning, for example, it is the familiar paradigm of Gombrich, Kuhn, and others. Note also Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis*. What should be emphasized is that *frame* is established through reduction by differentiation and is thus postcatastrophic, the "formal feeling" which succeeds upon "great pain." And framing in representation (including art) is the repetition as a subject of consciousness of the unconscious world-construction which is an automatic component of every moment of experience.

We cross the frame into the poem. But the edge may be anywhere like the border of the sacred grove. Often we note only a slight shudder of difference.

4.6 All poetic speech implies both a speaker and also a class of speakers.

4.7 There is always a sense in which the *object* in the poem (the speaker's *world*, the Beloved) is definable in terms other than social terms. That is to say, the distance which modulates the relationship of subject (always social, as in 3.5) and object in

the poem is filled with ontological questions (theory), questions about the being of the object. All the Beloveds are alive in the philosophical ambience both of being and of being *that*. Such is *poetic* life.

> *Scholium on consciousness and the philosophical estate of the Beloved.* When I say that the Beloved is always in some sense philosophical I place her in the classical estate of the object of consciousness. As, for example, Roberto Unger, p. 200:
>
> > To be conscious is to have the experience of being cut off from that about which one reflects: it is to be a subject that stands over against its objects. A prerequisite of the distinction between subject and object is that the subject be capable of defining its relationship to the object as a question to which different answers might be given.
>
> On lyric as a culture of consciousness, see 16 and Scholium at 24. It is also the case that the Beloved in lyric is an image of the perceiver as perceived. What we celebrate in the Beloved is the self as known—the principle of whose life is the paradox of storytelling.

4.8 Obscurity occurs when the measure of the distance between subject and object becomes indefinite. This phenomenon takes place (simultaneously and from the same causes) (1) within the poem and (2) between the poem as object and its subject (the reader).

Value (18)

5. A poem is always a thing of value of a given sort.

> *Scholium on the Compositional Principle.* It seems worthwhile noting that there is a common principle or constitutive rule of all compositions by reason of which they are compositions. This "Compositional Principle" manifests itself as a minimal relationship between fact and value. When we speak of "fact" in this context we are speaking of fact in rep-

resentation, or the *appearance* of fact as distinct from natural fact or fact in experience. But when we speak of value in this context we are speaking of the *same* value which we ascribe to natural situations.

The Compositional Principle may arise from the ascription of compositional status to an object from the outside. That is to say, the *mere* declaration that an object is a composition. (Prosodically this might take the form of *mere* centering on a page, or more generally *mere* framing or labeling.) Whenever "the compositional status" is assigned to an object the inherent complexity of all objects in experience makes possible the perception of relationships among parts and whole in the object. Fact and value tend to adhere to one another as soon as part-whole relationships are perceived (3.4) because the perception of wholeness in experience is a constitutive element in valorization, which like sanctification functions to facilitate orientation and perceptibility. In this sense "compositionality" is a *topos* which is always potential in objects, which comes to exist when it is *assigned* as a status to the object (not as a new feature), and which carries value with it because perceptibility, which is a contingency of topical perception, is inherently valuable.

On the other hand, the Compositional Principle may assert itself as it were from the store or fullness of the object itself, as in the case let us say of objects in Dante. The object (as symbol, then) may offer relationships (part-whole couplings) to the mind of the viewer as new applications to experience of the relationship of fact and value (in effect the coherence as wholes of facts). In this case, the object wills, as it were, its own perceptibility; in effect it glows.

Between these two possibilities lie most of the objects encountered in experience.

The idea of a minimal state of affairs of all objects that are brought to manifestation or arise and offer themselves to the eye is comparable to the "minimal teleological elements still alive in ordinary thought about human action" which H. L. A. Hart allows (see *The Concept of Law*, p. 187). Since discourse about art is displaced discourse about persons, and the value which arises in art is the same as that which is constitutive of justice, we observe that the minimal grounds of the association of persons in society for the purpose of survival is the same as the minimal association of elements in perception, which can be said to compose a whole.

5.1 What the poem is *about* (its "subject matter") points to a value of a different sort from the sort of value implied by the existence of the poem (38.8 and Scholium).

5.2 When we talk about poems there tends to arise a convergence (never complete) of these two kinds of value. For example, I am always *about to say* that the poem is about poetry. (But note 25!)

5.3 Poetry can never take its medium as its whole subject. Language always means something else.

5.4 There is no useful theory of a poem the value of which is not known.

5.5 The question of value is not a question.

Labor

11. Labor mediates between the person in history and the poem.

11.1 "The work" is not reducible to the labor which accompanied its coming to be.

11.2 Labor in the realm of necessity (nature, scarcity) can be abolished. Labor in the realm of freedom (fiction) cannot be abolished.

11.3 Conceived as labor, working at art ("Creation") is totally alienating, because the work of art is being-for-another-altogether.

11.4 Conceived as knowledge, working at art facilitates the reconquest of the origin of the self—poetic knowledge.

11.5 Conceived as redemption, working at art is the sacrifice of first fruits.

11.6 Conceived as charity, working at art is the kiss of peace.

11.7 Labor was the curse upon Adam. The work of art can only be understood as the reconstitution *per impossibile* of states of being irrevocably excluded by the definitions of consciousness.

11.8 The silence with which the poem begins is the curse of God—the speechlessness of toil. (Scholium at 25.2.)

Scripture

15. One life. One poem.

15.1 There is one poem written by God.

Scholium on Scripture. Scripture is privileged text. The nature of the textual privilege of Scripture derives from the fact that the source of its language is identical with the source of reality. Scripture is the text which is the perfect whole from which experiential reality has departed and to which it will (in the "Apocalypse") return. As fixed text it is the *essence* of unfixed experiential reality. In relation to other texts, it is primary in the sense in which we think of the real world as primary or as the cause rather than the consequence of experience. Scripture and poem are antithetical and contradictory terms.

From a psychological point of view, "Scripture" responds to the latent sense in which the statement "There are multiple truths" is always false. Insofar as each poem is unconscious of any other poem, each poem partakes of this feature of Scripture. Scripture is the paradigm of perceptual boundedness, insofar as the bounded generates the universal, as it is also of every moment of meaning-intention insofar as there is inside every act of intentionality the will toward all meaning. But note also that the presence of Scripture announces the loss of the god (Scriptural religion is antitheophanic). In the same way, the poem is the sign of loss of unmediated relationship between the person and experience (and between one person and another).

Scripture is the model of the fixed (*literatim*) text which it is the first business of the community of the living to conserve on behalf of the dead and the unborn. The members of a community conserve its Scripture, first, as the final map of all reality and, then, as the possibility of any mapping of

reality which time and the accidents of historicity—the general rage against meaning—continuously threaten to snatch from the hand. Scripture as the one book equivalent to all being is the type of the sense in which every life includes all life. This sense of "Scripture" is the sense in which the lyric text becomes Scripture. Correlatively, Scripture answers to the desire of the mind for a discriminable meditative object which nonetheless (despite its discriminability, its finitude) includes all objects. Hence, Scripture is not read, any more than lyric.

> (Note the following: "In the sphere of religion, it is significant that the religions of conversion, the excluding religions, are all religions of the book. In the non-literate societies of Africa, at any rate, magico-religious activity is singularly eclectic in that shrines and cults move easily from place to place. The literate religions, with their fixed points of reference, their special modes of supernatural communication, are less tolerant of change. When this occurs, it tends to do so in sudden shifts, through the rise of heresies or ('movements of reform') that often take the shape of a return to the book—or to its 'true' interpretation" [Jack Goody, ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, p. 2]).

15.2 At the summit of the tower the eye turned outward gazes on darkness, turned inward recognizes a multitude of kindred.

Eve

16. The lyric is entranced in the first astonishment that it is at all, the awakening of Eve (36.2).

16.1 The apex of the shell is not in space, until the spire on its journey upward inscribes a precinct (28.3).

16.2 A poem is a fiction of a self seen from within.

16.3 Poems are fictions of the privacy of other minds. Wherever the philosopher says *per impossibile* the poet shows the way.

> *Scholium on poetry and knots in philosophy.* Consider whether the occasions of representation, and hence of poems, are not those junctures in ordinary experience across which philosophy cannot bear us. Note, once again, (1) above. Among the knots in philosophy at the present time is the problem of *other minds*. Between J. S. Mill and Wittgenstein there arose a fundamental doubt about the central argument for the existence of other minds (the argument was from analogy). But it is clear that from Homer and Plato through Descartes the knowability of other minds depended upon the hypothesis of an intelligible essence for man, a soul, on the one hand, or a common nature on the other (such that all minds were knowable by each mind intuitively). With the withering of confidence in these hypotheses (see the final critique by Roberto Unger, *Knowledge and Politics*), the entailed knowability of other minds also disappeared. Hence, poetry became lyric overwhelmingly, because lyric was the social form of the unknowable singularity of the liberal individual. But in poetry it is the formal aspect that effects the transmissibility of the world represented. As formality (prosody, line, and counted stress) ceased to be preferred (or possible) as constituents of poetry, the sentiment of interior being became less and less transmissible, and representation as lyric becomes caught on the same knot as the rational will.
>
> We have observed that the "occasion generative of speech" in poems is trouble. In the silence prior to speaking, there is a barrier to the rational will which must be defined, for in it lies the "meaning" of the poem. Representation completes the world (as best it can), which philosophy (or theology) cannot complete (31.14).

16.4 By these fictions of the privacy of other minds it becomes possible to conceive of ourselves as possessing knowable inner being.

> It is a necessary condition of one's ascribing states of consciousness, experiences, to oneself, in the way one does, that one should also ascribe them to others who are not oneself (Strawson).

16.5 The "I" in the poem is not in time, until the voice on its journey upward inscribes a precinct.

16.6 Lyric is a mode of the soul's "rejoicing in communicability" (Jaspers).

16.7 In what sense of the word "overheard" is the voice of the speaking person in lyric (not heard but) overheard? The answer must be either as the devil (and all social beings) knows the self, by outward indications, *or* as God knows the self, through participation of personal being (Aquinas).

> Poetry and eloquence are both alike the expression or utterance of feeling: but, if we may be excused the antithesis, we should say that eloquence is *heard;* poetry is *overheard.* Eloquence supposes an audience. The peculiarity of poetry appears to us to lie in the poet's utter unconsciousness of a listener. Poetry is feeling confessing itself in moments of solitude, and embodying itself in symbols which are the nearest possible representations of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind. Eloquence is feeling pouring itself out to other minds, courting their sympathy, or endeavoring to influence their belief, or move them to passion or to action.
>
> All poetry is of the nature of soliloquy (J. S. Mill).

Metaphor

17. What is *like* cannot be unique (31.13).

17.1 Metaphor is a device for reducing the unknowability of the fact by eroding its uniqueness.

17.2 In a similar way the poem by a fiction reduces the uniqueness (inconceivability) of personal (own) experience.

> It seems as if the elementary psychic fact were not *thought* or *this thought,* but *my thought,* every thought being *owned.* Neither contemporaneity, nor proximity in space, nor similarity of quality or content are able to fuse thoughts together which are sundered by this barrier of belonging to personal minds. The breaches between such thoughts are the most absolute breaches in nature (William James, *The Principles of Psychology,* 1, p. 226).

17.3 What is *like* cannot be identical.

17.4 The function of the particle *like* in metaphor (all metaphors being reducible to some form of the sentence "A is like B") is to enable the perception of a relationship by *distinguishing* its terms.

17.5 The fundamental metaphor substantiating human presence (the *eidos*) in Western civilization is "Man is like God"—enabling the perception of a relationship by distinguishing its terms.

> *Scholium on God.* The first constitutive rule of image construction (eidetic substantiation) is the distinction of realms. The most fundamental distinction presented by Western culture is the distinction between "man" and God. God creates the mortal person at every moment of interhuman perception by participating as *difference* in relationship. The imitation of this difference, inherent in the grammar of metaphor, accounts for the sense we have of the centrality of metaphor in eidetic (human-presence) discourse. The sacred is functionally a principle of orientation. This function is enabled by the nature of divinity as generative of boundaries. Metaphor implies the experience of sanctity by repeating the constraints which boundedness imposes on experience. The particle "like" functions as divinity by keeping realms in being, in the same way that "space" enables perception by interpos-

ing a middle term between subject and object. The decline or foundering of metaphor indicates the decay of difference, and portends the loss of the poetic resource. Where surrogates are placed in the God-position (as in sentences such as "Imagination is God," or "Community is God"), the distinctness of the human image is eroded just insofar as the difference which the surrogational term makes is less than the difference which God makes. When difference is repudiated ("Man is God"), the *eidos* and the world with it disappears.

17.6 The prosodic feature of the poetic medium is a version of the time-experience. "Like" represents an insurmountable barrier in experience which both enables possibility and destroys possibility *until the end of time.*

17.7 The relationship of percept and experience-in-consciousness is always of the "is like" character. In other words, the metaphor of metaphor is the fundamental situation of being conscious of something in the world.

Reading II (2) (37)

22. When *I* say, "Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more. . . ," what do I do?

22.1 I serve.

Scholium on reading as service. Service is one light in which poetic reading is viewed. *Service to* is the contradictory of *use of*. The non-utility of the speaking person in the poem produces the attitude of service, and service is the reciprocation demanded by majesty which can have no use for its servants. In lectorial (reading) service there can be no color of humiliation, for service and servitude are contradictories. The humiliated servant is the disgrace of the master. Poetic service is the labor at existence under the conditions which scarcity defines for the production of existence. The service of the poem must be the chosen labor of those who will not serve their tools. The poem has an interest which is only actual in the presence of another and contradictory interest. Only a person or the representation of a person can have an interest.

22.2 As soon as I begin to read a poem, I stop talking. As soon as the hearers of a poem begin to hear, they stop listening.

22.3 Certainly it is grand to be the other for whom the poet's self became desolate.

22.4 The poem in my voice is a set of constraints toward acts of speech more specific than I can answer for. The poem explores the humanity of the speaker.

22.5 When I take the poem in voice, I enter the freedom of the rememberer by way of the service of the kindred.

22.6 "Print reminds." The voice serves, but never gives a complete version. Yet if the text is lost, the poem is lost. If the voices falter, the poem has no occasion. The poem is like a person. It has a mind-body problem. (36)

Scholium on the fixed text. All poems have a fixed text, for the poem is a manifestation and manifestation cannot be this way *or* that. There is no *aporia* in manifestation. All alternate versions of poems (drafts, revisions, alternative singings, miscopyings) are alternative poems. The poem has a body by which its identity is established, as a human being has a body. The fixed text of the poem is the feature of the poem which prevents the perfect service of the poem, for the constraints of the poem which arise as a consequence of the specificity of its nature prevent its perfect actualization in voice. The voice has an irreducible interest which is contradictory to the irreducible interest of the poem (represented by the fixity of the text). In order to read the poem, it is necessary for the voice of the reader to become conscious of its interestedness, and it is the reader's confidence in his or her own interestedness (his or her own stake in the world) that is tested by the constraints toward (but never identical with) a reading which marks the poem. The poem requires that the reader assert confidence in his or her own interest in the world. That is an instance of Hermeneutic Friendship, and the method of meaning.

The reader therefore becomes the soul of the poem, and the poem the body (the principle of manifestation) of the reader when the reader reads the words. In the structure of classical poetry the word-specific character of poetry (of which syllable count is one guardian and lineation another) is a fea-

ture of its bodilessness unalterable in reading. Stress is the soul element, the point of entrance of the interest of the reader, the point of openness of the open texture of all texts.

22.7 The poem summons the voice of the speaker of the poem to enact the business of the speaking person. In the service of the poem the voice of a man or woman reaches to the *value* of a person.

22.8 When the speaker of the poem enters the voice of the speaking person he or she becomes free by way of another version of necessity which says: "You are a being that speaks. There is nothing else to be."

22.9 In speaking the poem the speaker of the poem reacquires selfhood by serious reciprocity with another self. He or she reenters the situation of humanity, becoming conscious of it once again as if for the first time and without dismay.

Scholium on dismay. Where there is dismay there is no poem (5). The speaker meets the poem at the limits of the autonomy of the will. (See, for example, Dante, *Inferno*, canto 1, line 60.) But the rules for that meeting are the same as the rules of grace in the high church (the voluntary rather than the involuntary tradition). The service of the poem requires cooperation, and cooperation requires conviction of a stake in being, confidence in the interest of the self.

On the side of the poem, dismay is the manifestation of the "bad" poem, the thing that is not yet made. The natural person may be dismayed, but the compositional principle does not admit of dismay as a meaning, for dismay is the defeat of meaning, the abdication of majesty. Dismay solicits consideration and the poem can never solicit consideration.

The culture of manifestation is vulnerable to the estate of the self in history.

22.10 The speaker of a poem is in the presence of the fathers.

22.11 Perhaps, they do not know him.

The Poet in History and the Speaker in the Poem

23. Of the poet in history, we ask: "What is the motive to art?" Of the speaker in the poem, we ask: "What is the motive to utterance?"

23.1 The motive to utterance as speech (the motive of the speaker in the poem) must be distinguished from the motive to utterance as art (the motive of the poet in history). The experience recorded by the poem as sensed from within is not an aesthetic experience.

Scholium on the speaker in the poem. The speaker in the poem is rarely a poet, and never *the* poet in the sense that the author is *the* poet. The speaker in the poem is a man or woman laboring at manifestation, but the manifestation at which the speaker in the poem labors is not the poem. This is most striking in the religious cultures. The speaker in George Herbert's poem (see "Love III" at 30.9 S) is a Christian soul laboring at manifestation before God. The motive to utterance of the speaker in the poem is not, therefore, the motive to utterance as art. The speaker in the poem (like George Herbert) is serious in a way different from the way in which the artist in history is serious.

The speaker in the poem cannot go away, which is to say he cannot die.

In like manner, the name of the speaker in the poem is not the same as the name of the artist in history. For the speaker in the lyric has no name. Or we can say the name is intuitive. The name of the artist *in history* is by contrast documentary. If we assimilate the speaker in the poem to the poet in history we abolish the enterprise of poetry. Poetry of the sort of "the poem in question" is not what the speaker in the poem is about.

23.2 The speaking person *in* the poem is a contingency of the existence of the poem.

23.3 The life across time (such as it is) of the poet in history is a contingency of the existence of the poem.

Scholium on biography. Poems create poets. (See Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art.") One of the *consequences* of the existence of poetry is the existence of "the poet." It is effectively the case that the existence of bodies of fictional writing (poems, novels, etc.) authorize the kind of cultural staring that takes the forms of biographies, life-documentation, etc. The poet is not the strongest or the most beautiful or the most tested man or woman of the time. He or she is the person who has enacted the deed of presence and therefore passed into manifestation. The poem sets its "author" in the center of onlooking. The rule is that the maker of images is thereby privileged to become an image. The poem is therefore the cause of the poet insofar as the poet is a person who is an object of attention. What distinguishes the poet from other persons is his or her knowledge of the rules of manifestation. The poem is a thing made which makes its maker. Since, however, the life of the poet is a life constrained by the labor at art, it should be clear that the lives which come to manifestation are lives selected by conformity to a special set of circumstances. This is true also of all other lives which come to consciousness across space and time. (As, in an extreme case, it is the criminal or his victim who is selected from the whole population of a city for display in the newspaper.) What is displayed by history is that figuration of life which has accommodated itself to the rules of manifestation. Consequently, the manifest is a very circumscribed "set" of the true.

23.4 The poem summons its poets and is the principle of their life.

23.5 The assignment of the poem to a historical speaker is an instance of anxiety about cause (habitual consent to which limits response to the fact).

23.6 The tendency to assimilate the speaker in the poem to the poet in history in ordinary discourse about poetry attests to the embarrassment of the reader in time before the other destiny of the person—not the fear of greatness but the fear of death.

23.7 The image of the maker flows from the artifice toward the worker at artifice, as in theology.

23.8 Person as hero is the voice in the poem which speaks across time. His being is speaking. If he does not speak, he is not (6.3). If he does speak, he leaves all else behind. "Poet" is just that sort of man. The person in the poem has staked his life on the destiny of utterance.

23.9 What is the nature of the freedom to which the speaker in the poem is subject? The speaker in the poem is subject to nontemporal constraints (the rules of manifestation rather than the rules of history) tending toward a consequence which is either perpetualization or oblivion.

23.10 It is the self dwelling in mutuality that is here shown forth.

23.11 What of the reader? The eye that does not care about the world has him in mind.

"I" in Lyric

24. The lyric moves from least differentiation of the self (the opening) toward most differentiation of the self (at the close), from the dark embrace before the lark to the full day of cognitive self-recognition.

Scholium on aubade as a model for lyric structure. (Cf. 16.) For an example of the poem of waking as an analogy of the *structure* of lyric procedure (the direction of flow from beginning to end), see Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet,* act III, scene v, 1–36. The passage ends, "*Rom.* More light and light—more dark and dark our woes!" The lyric begins by awakening from the dark night of participation, the night of *having,* in which there is no speech. As light grows, differentiation increases, the lark and nightingale are distin-

guished, persons become identified and more separate. As light grows sorrow increases, as does knowledge. In this sense the direction of lyric is from participation to acknowledgment, from intimacy to strangeness, from the hour before dawn to the hour after dark. The short lyric is a dawn phenomenon in its traditional form. But the structure may be run backward (Roethke tried to make it do so) so that the conclusion is in the collective and the opening is in the nonparticipational singular. In general, however, the lyric opens with a breaking of participatory silence and closes with some strategy of reconciliation to individuation short of return to the night in which the poem first began. For the direction of lyric is irreversible. It flows from Eden toward history. Hence, the study of poetic ending is the study of the several strategies for the management of fundamental loss.

24.1 The "I" in the poem (Janus-like) looks back toward an undifferentiated selfhood which it prevents and has not wholly forgotten, and forward toward a differentiated selfhood which it enables and has not wholly acknowledged.

Scholium on "I." For the study of "I" see Emile Benveniste, "Subjectivity in Language," in *Problems in General Linguistics*, esp. pp. 224–26. His maxim is "Language is so organized that it permits each speaker to *appropriate to himself* an entire language by designating himself as *I*" (p. 227). The personal pronouns are universal; they exist in all known languages, though in certain rhetorical situations they may be suppressed. Lyric begins with an establishment or founding of the linguistic man, that is to say, lyric begins with "I" and is the artistic form generated by the conditions and consequences of I-saying. Since "It is in and through language that man constitutes himself as a *subject*, because language alone establishes the concept of 'ego' in reality, in *its* reality which is that of being," it therefore follows that lyric, which always includes a history of the founding of the "I," is also always a history of the birth of the linguistic and subjective person. In this sense lyric is prior to all other forms of utterance and

assumed by them as prior. As an account of how the "other" is both present and absent, both indispensable and transcended with respect to the occupant of the lyric cell, consider the following (*ibid.*, pp. 224, 225):

> Consciousness of self is only possible if experienced by contrast. I use *I* only when I am speaking to someone who will be a *you* in my address. It is this condition of dialogue that is constitutive of *person*, for it implies that reciprocally *I* becomes *you* in the address of the one who in his turn designates himself as *I*. Here we see a principle whose consequences are to spread out in all directions. Language is possible only because each speaker sets himself up as a *subject* by referring to himself as *I* in his discourse. Because of this, *I* posits another person, the one who, being, as he is, completely exterior to "me," becomes my echo to whom I say *you* and who says *you* to me. This polarity of persons is the fundamental condition in language, of which the process of communication, in which we share, is only a mere pragmatic consequence. It is a polarity, moreover, very peculiar in itself, as it offers a type of opposition whose equivalent is encountered nowhere else outside of language. This polarity does not mean either equality or symmetry: "ego" always has a position of transcendence with regard to *you*. Nevertheless, neither of the terms can be conceived of without the other; they are complementary, although according to an "interior/exterior" opposition, and, at the same time, they are reversible. If we seek a parallel to this, we will not find it. The condition of man in language is unique.
>
> And so the old antinomies of "I" and "the other," of the individual and society, fall. It is a duality which it is illegitimate and erroneous to reduce to a single primordial term, whether this unique term be the "I" which must be established in the individual's own consciousness in order to become accessible to that of the fellow human being, or whether it be, on the contrary, society, which as a to-

tality would preexist the individual and from which the individual could only be disengaged gradually, in proportion to this acquisition of self-consciousness. It is in a dialectic reality that will incorporate the two terms and define them by mutual relationship that the linguistic basis of subjectivity is discovered.

24.2 As the narrative structure of the poem advances toward the specialization of the self in understanding, the symbolic structure of the poem gathers the redemption of the self from the archaic source of unity.

Scholium. The characteristic strategy by which the lyric manages the fundamental loss attendant upon the individuation which is the last event of the poem is the presentation of a transcendental substantiation of the separated ego which has been prepared by the prior symbolic content of the poem-stream. While the poem has tracked its irreversible course from participation toward individuation it has gathered reference to unity of another sort, which is finally announced at the close of the poem. The announcement or disclosure of transcendental unity is remarked by the reader in the awareness that the thing has become whole. This "making whole" which constitutes a management of the separated self and its losses is generally obtained through the repetition and consequent fulfillment or completion of the symbolic content of the poem-stream. The poem thus moves from a wholeness which is, as it were, internal to the person to a wholeness which serves the person by being transcendent to him. The losses entailed by speech (awakening) are thus compensated by the resources internal to speech which rescue the desolate self-in-acknowledgment by a process similar to the theological mechanism of grace.

24.3 When we say "I" we deny that we are all and affirm that we are not wholly other.

24.4 The speaking person in the poem is privileged to ascend and descend simultaneously, because he has staked his life. When

the Janus gazes at us through all his eyes at once, that is *anagnorisis*.

24.5 Looking at the poem, we cannot take it all in.

24.6 A strangeness in the poem (and one fence against meaningless uses of the person) is the peculiar access of the speaking person in poems to the oblivion of prior states of the self. Luminosity flows from hiddenness.

Scholium on the recollection of past lives. Speaking in general is a case of the recollection of past lives. In lyric the speaking person obtains his or her nature by reference to the verbal conduct of all other speakers who have inhabited the lyric cell. There is a haunted compulsion which attends the speaking of all persons who speak in poems. They are not quite themselves, and not quite sighted with respect to a present. Their "kind," which is not nature but the class of artifice to which they belong, speaks through them; but it is ignorant of all but the general case of their state of affairs. The recollection of past lives is the master privilege of the enlightened in all cultures; it portends immortality by totalizing the otherwise individual life. But it takes away something of the alertness of the waking self, the quick-eyed person who greets the comer in the middle distance. There is in this sense an ignorance about the person in poems which must be attended to. From this ignorance flows a sort of light.

24.7 Remembering and forgetting participate at the festival where Lordship and Bondage cease to be.

Privilege

26. Poetic art begins as the representation of privileged consciousness, the speech of kings.

26.1 The susceptibility to representation of the privileged human actor first summoned the powers of the poet.

26.2 Pitched into the world, the poet then obligated himself or herself to the honor of the inhuman actor, the poet's maker. The residual authority of the *praxis* of the divine agent (God) perpetually authorizes as a possibility the representation of the world.

Scholium on poetry as the honor of the world. The first and paradigmatic privileged actor is the god. His act is the world (in Bible) or its qualities (Hellenic polytheism). Insofar as the poem is a version of the world accommodated to the horizon of a person (the horizon is a piece of the world ar-

rayed in such a way as to imply a viewer) the honor of the god is mingled in every acknowledgment of presence, for the world is the god's deed of honor and presence. All subsequent actors become subject to representation by reference to the divine actor and every narratable *praxis* is a repetition of the act of creation. The religious history of the world (as in Bible or Hesiod) is therefore the story of the establishment of the sufficient conditions of the narratability of the world, and the rules of morality are the rules of the continuing narratability of new creation as it arises. It follows, therefore, that what was not narratable at the beginning cannot subsequently become so. When the primordially outcast, the Canaanite, become claimants upon the representational privilege a new foundation, as of the world at first, is required.

26.3 Refluent on the maker of images, the susceptibility to representation of the human and divine act makes of the imagemaker an image.

26.4 Not the actor but the act generates the image.

26.5 The lyric speaker, summoned into visibility (eidetic privilege), depends for being on the poetic act. The authenticity of the poetic act is a contingency of the acts of the mighty others. Thus summoned, the poet explores his or her nature, incapable in itself of any act except the artistic act, which elaborates itself in another sense.

26.6 The unacknowledged legislators of the world are the forces of sentiment.

26.7 Like the choral person in ancient tragedy, the lyric speaker has no action (*praxis*). As a model of self-representation, therefore, lyric utterance individuates outside the circle of tragic definitions, and accommodates itself to the conservation of image of an otherwise socially anonymous (nonpractic) class.

Scholium on sentiment as praxis. In lyric, sentiment is taken as a deed of presence, sentiment becomes *praxis*. In this sense, lyric is potentially the medium of visibility of the class

which, in the evolution of the older estates system, is called the third estate. This is the modern "possessing" or "middle" class, for whom the final transformation of *proprium* is the inner life, subjectivity. In the Marxian allegory of surplus value, the self which is appropriated by the capitalist from the worker is just the inner self, the growth of which the wage system, that permits only physical life, is adjusted to prevent. Capital is subjectivity.

The transformation of sentiment into *praxis* resulted from the assimilation of the many into one in the context of Christian story. Lyric derives historically from the ancient choral poems and from the chorus of Greek tragedy. The namelessness of the speaker in lyric is a residue of the namelessness of the collective. Jesus is the great Western hero in whose person a passion becomes an action. In him manyness becomes oneness as passion becomes action. He establishes the human individual as totality, intuitive humanity, and drives out the demon whose name is Legion. Jesus individuates without separation.

But the secularization of interiority in art returned subjectivity to the realm of the economic, and the immortalization of affect was mounted upon the dominance of a ruling class. The visibility of affect was sustained at the cost of the invisibility of labor, and the immortalization of the middle class predicted the obliviation of the working class. Internal to the mind which possessed it, the immortality of affect also rendered equivocal the meaning of its own physical processes which in the traditional estates metaphor are, as it were, the productive class of the body. Hence, lyric became specialized, as in Romanticism, toward idealist world-pictures.

26.8 The liberation, or authentication, of all voices in society leads to madness. Toward this the lyric tends.

Scholium on the propagation of liberation. Lyric is founded on the liberation of an order of being, the inner world, and a class of persons, the third estate, upon whom the inner world

devolved as a *proprium*. The dialectic of liberation of one class implies the liberation of all classes. But the conditions of the enjoyment of freedom by one class require the subordination of another class. Hence, the dialectic of freedom is at odds with the enjoyment of it. This is true so long as individuation implies separation, and until the achievement of an "organic" community in which representation can be effected in the absence of hierarchy. Such a community is not yet known. Hence, while the dialectic of liberation inherent in liberal and lyric culture continues to work, the possessors of freedom are at war with the new claimants, and the liberation of all persons is anticipated as an unintelligible Babel (the collapse of all "tradition") or madness (the final isolation of the self as a consequence of the decay of individuality toward unacknowledgeable uniqueness). This is the paradox of letters in the context of liberal education.

26.9 Once again, lyric poetry is the instrument of the self-transcendence of those selves and aspects of selves which exist only as *pathos*, or sentiment. In this sense the lyric self is a unique instrument in civilization for the representation of the unrepresented aspects of the self, the nonsocial sector of human self-recognition, and the traditionally nonpractic classes in the polity (in particular the third estate). In the imperial epic, Carthage is destroyed. The novel is the "epic" of Carthage, as it is the Bible of Canaan, and the lyric is its song.

26.10 The dominance of the lyric is correlative to the liberalization of the polity.

Scholium on the nonparity of economic and eidetic by contrast to political privilege. The rise of the middle classes and the rise of the lyric are obviously parallel in modern European history. But the continuing political enfranchisement of peoples has not been accompanied by the growth of new media of eidetic enfranchisement. The noncongruence of eidetic or image privilege and political privilege resembles (indeed, may be exactly parallel to) the noncongruence of economic and political privilege in liberal society. The politically "equal" are not humanly equal as long as they are economically oppressed. The parallel of image life and economic life calls attention to the intimacy of eidetic value and scarcity and to the high degree of likelihood that material wealth and eidetic privilege are versions of the same substantial value.

26.11 Eidetic privilege is a historically contingent imaginal identification embedded in actual past cultural statements and administered but not created by poets.

26.12 The status of poetry as the collective representation of private (nonparticipant) experience is reflected in the "hardness" of poetry in the modern world. What is collective cannot die insofar as it holds its being for another. Inevitably it dies to itself (14.4). The hardness of being for another at precisely that place where the self is most accessible for the self, in the *topos* of the affections, is the internal version of the liberational paradoxes of lyric. As labor, lyric construction becomes in the modern world the alienation of the centrally "own." This "transmemberment of song" is mapped upon language as "difficulty." As long as the motive to individuation and the motivation to transcendence in the collective are in conflict, lyric construction will be filled either with pain or with savage, unaccountable forms of emotional scepticism.

26.13 Since the self-representation of the poet in history is authenticated as a residue of the privileged speech acts of kings, the mimetic enfranchisement of the nonpractic consciousness will never be complete. The chorus is still a slave collectivity even when the king and queen are wholly and nothing but their dream. There is no poetry but of the creative acts of kings and gods and of the servile dreamers whom they hallucinate.

Scholium on the one eidetic language. The culture in which we live has produced only one language of immortal being,

only one account of the visible person. When persons of the third estate put on immortality or assign it to states of the world which reciprocate their claims they do so as a cosmetic application. The felicity of visibility is still (insofar as visibility is inseparable from individuation) a function of the language which describes kings and queens or their theological sublimations, the crowned saints. There is only one eidetic language. Christ was enthroned in the iconography of the Roman emperor. The great labor of the Postmodern world is to find a second eidetic language—a labor which the atavistic modern writers postponed in the interest of their monumental *artistic* intentions.

26.14 The history of the English lyric from the Renaissance is characterized by the struggle of the lyric person toward self-representation as a man of the third estate. The antagonist is helmeted and plumed.

Scholium on the history of representation as the struggle for a new eidetic language. Both Auerbach and Gombrich call attention to the history of art as a struggle toward realism. Art has a history because of the collective human impulse to correct preexistent paradigms or models against experience (Gombrich) in the interest of the stabilization of fact (experience) in relation to value (representation), a precondition of meaning without which there is no human world. The most intransigent (because most precious) paradigm is the *eidos*, the paradigm which enables interhuman perception. In proportion as it is precious, it is guarded, by its inner structures, against change. The *eidos*, or countenance, first *appeared* as the regal *visage*. The process of correcting that image against the decay of estates and the rise of classes and roles is the central history of art, and also of poetic art. The fact that the *topos* of the person tends to resist the approach of humankind is the most important problem raised by the study of poetics.

Interpretation

30. A poem is an occasion for loving exchange of perceptions among the company summoned.

    A. *Scholium on poetry as hospitium.* Poems pitch persons toward one another full of news about being, about personal life. The poem is an occasion, across vast reaches of space and time, for the performance of the ceremony of hospitality in which the stranger is greeted and the contracts of sociability are recovenanted. This is because the poem as a common place is like a festive table where persons renew their relation to the substance of being in colloquy. The poem has no other life than the relationships it facilitates, and these relationships reproduce the profoundest human covenant, which is the covenant of language through which they give and obtain the world simultaneously, and only obtain the world when they give.

30.1 The uninterpreted text is a token of unextinguished relationships.

30.2 The interpreted text is a crisis in the community.

30.3 Interpretation is a banishing ritual. The specialization of the self toward cognitive apprehension precipitates a situation in which the self seems no longer to need to ask questions about the other.

30.4 Thereafter, the reconstitution of the community depends upon an array of loving gestures which solicit the other to ask questions about the self.

    Scholium on healing the bad diversity of meanings. One of the functions of a text is to enable one person to ask another, "But what do you mean?" Interpretation is a crisis in the community because it makes apparent the diversity of economically divergent interests in the community, a diversity which is concealed when the canonical text is merely sung. As soon as interpretation is permitted, the community becomes aware of the monadic character of its constituent elements, its persons. But the community can be healed when the members turn away from the text and toward one another. The bad diversity of meanings is a diversity unmediated by sociability. This occurs when the text is regarded as the only sanctioned answerer, when the text is ontologized in such a way that its legitimacy is regarded as prior to the legitimacy of the person. When readers turn away from the text and toward one another, when the text therefore recedes and can scarcely be seen, then there arises a new sentiment of textuality, which draws in the souls which have been scattered. This is the beginning of *hermeneutic friendship* in which the dialogic structure of the text, the structure characterized by communicable diversity, binds the community back together not through the repetition of meaning (the hermeneutic of repetition, which is the continuation into the community of the monologic conception of the text, and betrays the inherent diversity of interest on which the culture of persons is established) but through the dialectic interplay of meaning which comes to be seen as the progressive disclosure of being of which the text that was the starting point is then seen as a preliminary indication.

30.5 One version of "an array of loving gestures" is teaching.

30.6 Participation in the poem as a medium and occasion of the communicability of the self (reading) pitches the participant toward the others and those others toward the poem in an unending sunny round.

Scholium on the pragmatic assessment of poetic function. We are close to the "meaning" of the poem when we note what the poem has brought us to. For example, if we are reading together then a function of the poem has been to place us in *this* relationship. If we are reading together and not looking at one another, or not touching one another, then the outcome of the poem's being-among-us has been a diversion of the eyes. Discourse about this poem places us in concrete relationship to one another of a certain sort and administers our powers in concrete ways, and this is what the poem does. We know this because this is *what the poem is doing.* The function and meaning of the poem is what I am doing now with the poem in mind. Not to recognize this as a *meaning* of the poem's existence is not to care what I am doing now. When we discourse about the poem or discourse about discourse about the poem then the poem has brought me to you and you to me about this.

As a consequence, we must inquire whether the relationship among us devised by the poem (our relationship created by the poem) is singular, or like other relationships, or both. The relationship among us devised by the poem is a *topical* relationship, that is to say, it is a relationship of the kind that takes place in *topical or common space.* Its model is triadic, or rather it models the *triadic relationship.* We have narrowed the ground of the concern of each of us in order to approach one another across the abyss of the immiscibility of minds. As the ground of our concern narrows we become increasingly *of use* to one another; we enter, as we enter topical space, the possibility of hermeneutic friendship (Scholium at 44), but we cannot do this if we look beyond, in our preemptive restlessness, the immediate outcome of there being a poem among us.

30.7 The speaking person in the poem is one version of the self about whom questions are asked. The teaching person, of whom the speaking person in the poem is the author, is another.

30.8 There is an irreducible profundity about the self of whom questions are asked.

Scholium.

The Lecture

Place a man in the center, and he becomes
The man who has prepared for a lifetime
To answer, and now is ready.

Sometimes,
There are trees at the edge of the clearing,
More often a sea. He talks on and on,
And his voice is carried up by the thermals
At the sea's edge, or down among the dark
Anfractuous trees, and the textile moss.
The lesson is staggering, and the examples
Come to hand like sheaves in a great harvest.

But, in fact, there are no trees, there is no sea,
And the center is some eccentric region
Of a bed or a room, and the question
Is the half-demented glance of a child,
Or a blurred silence on the telephone,
For which the man who has prepared a lifetime
Is ready.

But the harvest is a great harvest.

After a long time, the voice of the man
Stops. It was good to talk on and on.

He rises. And the sea or forest becomes
A level way reaching to night and the thunder.

But, in fact, there is no night, there is
No thunder.

30.9 That self is the triumph and the beneficiary of civility (36).

B. *Scholium on hospitium.* In classical and secular civilization the poem or text is a type of the privileged and defiled stranger about whom questions are asked. The privilege of centrality (the poem is centered) conferred on the self by the other when the other or host asks questions about the self, and the splendid remission, the reply of the self, which ensues, is the inner scenario of the poetics of civilization. As Odysseus wanders, fenced around by the privilege and defilement of the stranger, civility unfolds in the conventions of *hospitium.* To the host who asks, the wanderer tells his tale. In the tale there is something of the true nature of things in the eidetic sense, the nature of things constructed as the history of a self. To the immortal host who asks, the half-divine stranger, the poem, discloses the secret names of man.

The staging of the acts which constitute the drama of civility is important (the drama of civility is *hospitium,* and the drama of *hospitium* is a version of the hermeneutic drama, the drama of interpretation): first the stranger (the poem, language) must be known as strange. Known to be unknown (disclosed now as undisclosed). He is the beneficiary of restorative care. He is the bridegroom of the virgin's dream, the husband, the father, the heir, the assassin. Unknown, he is infinitely knowable. The crisis of the ceremony (the *anagnorisis*) is the asking of the name. Then dreaming comes to an end. The poem is the heroic and defiled wanderer through time, whose strangeness is his mark, the *magister* whose privilege is the question toward which his being is prepared.

In Judaeo-Christian civilization, the text is host and the direction of the hermeneutic process is reversed. Humanity

comes to the text which is divine and centered, the divine but incarnate word which greets the mortal journeyer and provides a model for his understanding of his true nature. The canonical text interprets the mortal person by showing that person his or her name as part of the description of the central nature of things. In pagan culture, the text is the stranger. In Judaeo-Christian civilization, the stranger is the reader. In pagan culture, humanity chooses to acknowledge the text. In Judaeo-Christian religious culture, the text chooses to acknowledge humanity, setting persons the problem of self-acknowledgment. Herbert's "Love III" is an example of the ceremony of *hospitium* in the form of the greeting of the reader by the text, and the slow consequent discovery by the reader that he is a part of the intelligible order of things.

Love III

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
Guiltie of dust and sinne.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lack'd any thing.

A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:
Love said, You shall be he.
I the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my deare,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
My deare, then I will serve.
You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat.

Radical, Aesthetic, and Religious Humanism

32. A radical humanism would have two components:
1. The sentiment of participation (radical imagination).
2. The will to intervention (radical reason).

32.1 A radical humanism is the antithesis of aesthetic humanism.

32.2 In a radical humanism a tragedy becomes an event from which no one goes home.

Scholium on Hellenic and Judaic. Aesthetic culture is founded on the distinction between actor and audience established as theory when Aristotle supposes a different fate for the character (who dies) and the audience (who is purged of pity and terror). The distance implied by the difference in destiny between actor and audience is the "aesthetic distance." This withholding from the spectacle, or suspension of participation, defines also the relationship to experience when experience is taken as fiction. The basis of aesthetic humanism is Hellenic. The Bible, by contrast, has no theory of truth or participation other than the historical processes which it thematizes. The structure of Bible specifies a discipline from which the reader can only exempt himself by making the one interpretive error which repudiates the whole text. The basis of radical humanism in Western civilization is Judaic.

32.3 Aesthetic humanism is based on a hierarchical communalism in which the symbolic order is participated across the barrier of the fictional premise. Value is remitted through a feudal mutuality of obligation, the terms of which require a higher and lower order, the former (the higher) serving as the substantiating image by which the latter knows itself to be in existence.

32.4 Radical humanism desiderates an immanent communalism in which eidetic privilege is universally and equally possessed, being received and remitted in the horizontal plane. The whole must derive its nature from the individual at the same time that it remits to the individual a self-identity undiminished in specificity. But where there are no invisible persons, are there any visible persons?

Scholium on image-life and egalitarianism. At present, it is impossible to conceive, or even to construct as theory, a community in which the whole is the archetype and model of each of the parts, and at the same time its central nature. The persuasion about the self in liberal culture which requires that the person be perceived as a particular, and valued as a general nature, involves paradoxes which are surmounted neither in theory nor in practice. At present, inclusion is obtained by exclusion, the seen thing by reference to the unseen thing, the acknowledged soul by reason of the unacknowledged. The central obstacle to egalitarianism is the fact of the foundation of the culture of visibility and acknowledgment upon the metaphysics, politics, and economics of difference (that is to say, differentiation through hierarchy). Nonhierarchical differentiation is inimical to the nature of personhood itself, since inside the person there is the history of eidetic construction which is itself a process of hierarchical differentiation, a product of displacement from a transcendental reference.

Inside the dialectics of poetic structure there arises at all times a clear recognition of the paradox of human value and the conditions of acknowledgment. This recognition is manifested in poetic practice by experimentation with the relationship of the figure and the ground. As the figure-ground ratio becomes smaller, the terms of general and particular life

converge (as in Whitman). But as the ground rises up inside the figure, the lineaments of the human countenance and the gestures of human love (the greeting by the particular name) fade. In poetry it is possible to register and explore the limiting conditions of the pacification of social life (the paradoxes of sociability [28]) but not to surmount them. As a consequence, all the poetries which we now know seem to lie under the shadow of the general problem, and the envalorization of visibility and particularity in liberal and lyric culture seem to be retrograde to the peace of the world.

32.5 In aesthetic humanism unreality is the repository of the first fruits of instinctual life—gigantic, startling, perhaps insane. From that thesaurus of real human desires men and women have derived, age after age, a life in human scale by a ceremony of sacrifice and remission. The binding of Isaac is the type of this cultural process.

Scholium. In aesthetic humanism the mind of the human community, and the world in which it lives, are experienced as out of human scale and therefore inimical to the construction of a well-formed human image. Mankind's first gesture in aesthetic humanism is the disavowal of its central creativity in the act of surrendering through sacrifice (or feudal subordination) the first fruits of the libido. Having sacrificed its autonomous will and its immanent powers of immortality, mankind receives back its wage from the god and lord—the human image in human scale, the picture of the person consistent with the god's ideology of mortality. All scenarios of poetic construction imply the sacrifice of the present person to the past and future image. This is as clearly true in Jeremiah as it is in the Freudian scenario of sublimation. The impossibility of being whole is similar to the impossibility of being together. The totalization of the human self and the totalization of the human community are equally inconceivable in the poetic model. Aesthetic humanism is a name for the culture of images as it really is. Radical humanism is its contradiction. In aesthetic humanism structure dominates

value to produce art, in the same manner in which structure dominates value in history to produce such social order as we have. There are no instances either of social order or of art in the radical culture in which value dominates structure and the means of human enterprise are reconciled with its ends.

32.6 Religious humanism derives the irreducible value of personhood from the prior perception of the inhuman other. Poetry, being nothing in itself, is the bride and chattel of religious humanism in the aesthetic tradition. In religious humanism the knowability of the human other is authorized and enabled by God, the substantiating image by which the mortal person "knows itself to be in existence."

Scholium. Religious humanism is the point at which radical and aesthetic humanisms converge. In the idea of God, the master becomes a part of the self, and the inhuman other is incorporated into the human genealogy by the symbolic of source, while at the same time He is differentiated by the "edge" of transcendence and thus placed at that distance necessary for the establishment of the displaced particularity. But the idea of God contravenes the freedom of man's heuristic autonomy and thus proves vulnerable to the forces in history which seek salvation in the elaboration of agency. The realism which seeks the world in itself is the corrosive tendency that defeats the image of humanity, for the image of the person is unreal and the arguments for the existence of man are no better, and of the same order, as the arguments for the existence of God.

32.7 Aesthetic humanism and religious humanism converge in the notion of redemptive sacrifice. In the latter mode the dying God suffers on behalf of the (Christian) soul, whose redemptive labor is on its own behalf. In aesthetic humanism the poet in history, like the protagonist in Aristotle's definition of tragedy, is made desolate on behalf of the other. The Christian god is the type of the cost for another of any being in a world characterized by scarcity. The tragic hero and the damned poet (blind,

bereft, laborious) are also versions of this type. This type alludes to the social cost of art.

32.8 Radical humanism desiderates a version of mimetic identity in which the price and the prize are remitted to the same person.

32.9 The motive of radical imagination toward the practice of radical reason (32) is limited by the elite origin of the terms of mimetic identity (26).

> "But speaking more broadly, and coming back to Wells, whom I have not mislaid, Dr. Lal, the problem all along has been the inheritance of a minority civilization, an aristocratic culture, by the whole mass of mankind. This was how Wells himself saw it, and he was hopeful of creating orderly conditions for this transmission. Orderly British-style conditions. Decent, Victorian-Edwardian, nonoutcast, nonlunatic, *grateful* conditions. But this gentle British model could not succeed in such colossal turmoil." (Saul Bellow, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*).

32.10 Revolution becomes a question wherever the means of self-representation-to-the-other remitted by the feudal hierarchy fail to compensate the social creditor at whose expense the hierarchy (divine or human) is sustained. The questions raised by class-conscious scepticism about "universal" symbolic education (universal higher education) contain the limiting terms of the life of aesthetic humanism.

32.11 If the "human form divine" is the hostage or dependency of a defunctive aristocratic civilization, then the overthrow of that civilization, the breaking of the dead hand, is mandated. If the "human form divine" is a pure contingency of that same aristocratic civilization, then the aims and the means of revolution are mutually contradictory, knotted together as mutually exclusive terms of an insoluble historical paradox.

32.12 But there must be an aesthetics of participation, as there is now an aesthetics of distance.