

## CRITICAL EXERCISES IN RECOLLECTION

5/28/90

There is always a penumbra that envelops every act and object of our knowing and doing. This constraint, that marks the mortality of our engagement with the world, is so ingenuous that it requires the unreflected genius of a Cézanne, or else extraordinary feats of reflexive attention from the rest of us, to disclose this underived environ of our appearance in the world.

The dominant epistemological paradigm of our philosophic tradition fashions a reduction of the lively reality of our actual seeing to an abstraction wherein there can be clarity and distinctness for an inert eye gazing upon an immobile object in the stasis of a time that is an "eternity."

This abstraction immures us within a second-order account of our noetic relation to the world that persuades us that we can disembrace ourselves from the world's and our own viscid actuality.

What we know or do never stands lucently before us because all these transactions are haunted by the presence of our mindbodies as the systematically elusive provenance and ambient ground of *all* meaning and meaning discernment.

When you behold the developed photograph you took of the Grand Canyon's vastness, both you and it were enveloped within the penumbra cast by the elusive presence of your mindbody as ambient ground. The camera lens, at once begotten by and the begetter of this culture, is but a discarnate eye. Therefore objects stand

lucently before it. About the worlds that continually appear in our incessant coition with an indeterminate other the camera can only lie.

Cézanne, who said, "I wait until the landscape thinks itself in me," succeeded in some of his landscapes—including some that were entitled, "Portrait of Madame Cézanne"—in "painting" the penumbra.

Because printed words are inert, compared to those we speak and hear spoken; because if we are to read them at all, they will have to be fixed over against us in visual space within a relatively shallow focal plane; because in this static articulation (even our *motor* space is made subject to the stasis of viewing fixed objects in visual space) of the space between our eyes and the printed words our orientation to them is more efficient when it is linearly teleological, moving in a straight line toward the page; and because the ubiquitous de facto dialectical exchanges between our lively mindbodies and the world—which are often *vividly* sensed in the oral-aural reciprocity—is all but wholly obscured in our literate transactions: because of all this, the basal pretensive-retropective structure of our being is subordinated by this introjection of the values of literacy that are implicated with this framing of the world.

We do not begin to appreciate the extent of this forming of our sensorium, hence of our perception's, by the inheritance of literacy. For example, as a teacher, imbued with literacy values, I could not help feeling that even a handwritten term paper was not as clear—ah! yes—nor as cogent as that same paper typewritten.

The demand for coherence within the logos that at a given moment informs our living mindbody is so importunate that the paradigm of a good written-out argument surreptitiously takes on the values of a page of print—so subtle as to be discoverable only by an extraordinary feat

of attention: uniform rows of words, evenly ordered lines, separated by uniform spaces, moving paragraph by paragraph along a straight line toward an architectonic telos constrained by the black rectangular mass of print that recapitulates the rectangular shape of the page upon which it appears.

In the oral-aural reciprocity, by contrast, amidst the lively give and take of colloquy, we often do not speak in complete, nor even in strictly grammatical, sentences. There is almost never even the shadow of a paragraph.

The exchange of the constraints of print and their distinctive pressure upon our mindbodily imagining and thinking for the ampler constraints of lively civil discourse—for the openness, that is, the sense of contingency of the form of its evolving—is precisely what gives freedom and liveliness to oral discourse that is elicited from within the existential reality and depth of the persons who participate. Our colloquy meanders; conclusions, when they come, are seldom explicitly remarked. But most of all our oral colloquy is tolerant of, even takes delight in, novel, even eccentric usage and in idiosyncratic speech patterns. One meets one's actual worldly fellows in this way. The tokens that bear our viva voce argument do not appear in visual space but are informed from within, like a musical phrase from Bach, through the logos that lively binds asseverations and their rejoinders into the flow of colloquy.

None of these characteristics of the oral-aural setting are viewed as flaws except from the standpoint of printed discourse. That guardian of literate rectitude, the copy editor, makes the diction, grammar and syntax of the written-out argument uniform in order that a printed text may come forth that will have good standing *sub specie aeterni*, as this would be conceived by the culture of the book.

The texts of my books are, on the contrary, designed to defeat their appropriation in order that, paradoxically, the reader will be forced to dwell in, reappropriate and come to value the logos of his or her own quotidian mindbodily life.

5/30/90

The prereflective ground of all meaning, meaning discernment, coherence, and value protends itself within our convivial mindbodily life, issues in language, and is manifest in our every authentic act of speech. The constant pretensive-retrotensive relation to this ground of our acts of speech, the most concrete of all realities, reveals this ground itself to be concrete; elusive because it is closer to us than we are to ourselves.

Romanticism, reacting, first to the rationalism of the Enlightenment and then to the growing authority and putatively antihumanistic import of science and technology sought against the prose of science and even ordinary language, to devise a special form of discourse in which to embody and thereby recover the reality of imagination, mind—beyond mere technical reason—spirit, value, and unity.

The disanalogies between the language of Newton's *Principia* and the poetry of Blake were patent and were taken in themselves to be a vindication of a special discourse for the expression of human value in a world of putatively "value-free facts." These modes of discourse could never be mistaken for one another; and in a sense that was taken to be that.

This uneasy truce had the effect of aborting a more radical inquiry that would have begun by asking: What are the *analogies* between the language of poetry and the

language of science? What indeed are the analogies among *all* forms of discourse, ranging from the elliptical forms of our oral-aural reciprocity at one end to the universal languages of pure mathematics at the other—with everything in between included?

5/31/90

The dualism, in the making since the invention of alphabetic literacy, whereby the ontologically privileged written and therefore “eternal” word became the paradigm of logos as such and therefore of meaning and reality, was given its definitive modern articulation by Descartes. The ascendancy of the language of mathematics in which the book of (eternal) nature was taken to be written, opposed to the evanescence of the realm of secondary qualities, served further to endorse the view that the *real* is *eternal*, that even human being is best understood when reduced to measurable quanta of matter in motion, for it is here that it most fully participates in the eternal world of number and that therefore the language of narrative and myth, for example—language within which our quotidian, oral-aural life is lived—is problematic. It is not that we abandon these modes of discourse; we cannot. It is just that, as the prestige of science and technology becomes more omnipresently authoritative, our inescapable resort to this ordinary language of human life in time becomes the occasion of increasing self-consciousness. This deepening dissociation, while it did not bring an end to poetry and poetizing—the official theory, powerful as it was, could not weaken the human demand for the embodiment of genuine realities, *in no sense* lacking ontological authority, that only poetry could achieve—*did* defer, even to the present, the asking of the radical question concern-

ing the *analogies*—whatever their patent disanalogies—between the language of number and that of poesy.

The fact that reflection upon these matters was carried out in the “theater of solitude”<sup>a</sup> ensured that the attention could not be drawn to a reality that underlay the dualism that gave rise in the first place to the obsession with the priority of science over poetry.

All forms of our discourse—and I do not for present purposes exclude the language (and its syntax) of gesture, including the gross disposition of the body in its postures—however various are their many formal properties and however rich or poor their “semantic” resources, equally derive from and remain dependent upon the logos that is implicated in the primitive ordinations of our mindbodies, derive their authority as vectors of the real from them, and in their coherence there with one another, form the only world there is. As I have said elsewhere: “Language—our first formal system—has the sinews of our bodies, which had them first; . . . the grammar, the syntax, the ingenuous choreography of our rhetorical engagement with the world . . . are preformed in that of our prelingual mindbodily being in the world.”

If this be granted, then neither the language of science nor the language of poetry may be said to enjoy a *context-neutral* privilege as the vector of the nature of things or to participate less than fully in the formation and articulation of the *only* world in which we live and move and have our being—which is to say, outrageous though it sounds in the setting of 350 years of modern dualism, *the only world there is*. The scandal disappears when we recognize that this has been a long season of self-alienating madness, that a form of discourse—

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<sup>a</sup>See *A Philosophical Daybook*, pp. 59f, Appendix, pp. 195–203.

gesture, dance, ordinary language, song, stories, pure mathematics—that does not have its origin in and continually retrend the primordial ordinations of our lively convivial mindbodily sentience, motility, and orientation is *strictly unimaginable* and would be quite beyond our comprehension, and that none is less a vector of the real than any other.

6/1/90

When I reflect upon the logos that, throughout, informs the sentience, motility, and orientation of my lively mindbody it will appear in very different articulate forms according to whether the focus of my reflection is a gesture, a string quartet, a sonnet, a narrative, an oration, a computation, logical inference, or mathematical heuristics. I shall be struck by the *disanalogies* among these cases—so potently indeed that the sense of a common logos ordering them all will only barely force itself upon me.

But an *analogy* does indeed hold among them. The logic of all these forms (and all other appearances of meaning as well) derives from and never ceases to retrend the arché of the integral mindbody through which I am—we are—convivially worlded. Here the forms are indwelt, apprehended, and made into a coherent world that is at once dynamic and changeful, yet stable.

As romanticism sought to cultivate and sublime a form of discourse in which to disclose and preserve uniquely human realities—the reality of value, of spirit, of a world-transcending unification of the self in Being—it siezed upon the *disanalogies* among the ways in which logos asseverates itself in, say, the composition of a tragedy or a fugue or even in the formation of a genetic theory

and the discovery of the double helix, on one hand, and that which appears in our reversible hence explicable acts of formal, reversible ratiocination, on the other.

In doing this romanticism was able to claim "imagination" as a countervailing reality to the Enlightenment's regnant intellectualism, but in such a way as to fail to see that our so-called creative powers are continuous with our exercise of instrumental reason, since they have the same provenance and authority in the hierarchy of existential modalities of our convivial mindbodies in the world. Therefore myths, stories, histories, eschatologies, sense experience, neuroanatomy, astrophysics, and the theory of sets in which we dwell—sometimes alternately, sometimes simultaneously—all enter into the cohering world brought forth and endorsed by our convivial mindbodies; and hence none of these forms, nor others like them, can enjoy any *context-neutral* privilege as a vector of the real.

6/4/90

Poetry, were it to be seen in this light, would have a standing such as it has not had since Plato banished the poets from his ideal republic.

As the formation of human sensibility became more and more comprehensively to be the work of literacy; and therefore men and women came "naturally" to see and evaluate their own reality from the perspective of the new "objectivity"—from the standpoint, namely, of our sun, abstracted from our earthly home by Copernicanism, that is, "freed" for putatively unencumbered intellection from the moil of our concrete existence in time; from the point of view, as well, of the static, "eternal" printed or chirographic word as standard of meaning, val-



ue, and truth in the new universe of print—the life-world of oral-aural humankind, for whom the characteristically human-making acts of speaking and hearing speech amidst their quotidian doings are definitive, came to be displaced.

Let us put this in another way. As *logos* became affiliated with the chirographic word, bringing forth thereby a new conception of truth, value, and reality, since the latter, being static and “eternal,” was not, as a vector, subject to the chances and changes of oral-aural memory, *epos* (once the lexical twin of *logos*), namely, narrative speech, the rhapsodic telling of tales and the oral-aural reciprocities of everyday life (in which we find ourselves as actual speakers and hearers of words, convivially at the dynamic center of a world distended, as we are, in time) began its millennial recession to a secondary and then a tertiary role as bearer of meaning.

Poetry thus has in its context a legitimacy of *equal primacy with all other vectors of reality*; it is an instrument of research<sup>b</sup> and world formation when speech and the uptaking of speech—which even in these latter days we have not ceased to practice—are accorded the *de jure* authority that they could not fail *de facto* to exercise in our ordinary doings and sayings.

Thus, in banishing the poets, Plato—and indeed, philosophy in general, that creature par excellence of literacy—banished the reality of oral-aural man, even though this banishment was not fully achieved for some 2000 years.

Cartesianism is the fulfillment of the historical movement from orality to literacy, bringing with it the ultimate form of human self-estrangement: a universe

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<sup>b</sup>Elizabeth Sewell.

embodied in mathematical discourse in the formal elements of which there are no egocentric particulars for making explicit references to specific times and places in the actual world, no tenses for expressing the temporal distension and deployment in time of such a world, no demonstrative or personal pronouns.

At the very moment of this denouement, Pascal, the first and greatest of postmodern men asks: "What is a man in the infinite?"

6/5/90

In the 325 years or so since this question was first posed there has hardly been an answer that has not suffered from an inherent instability wrought by the contradictions between, on one hand, the epistemological, ontological, and rhetorical values introjected from our literacy and borne by our formal and casual, our explicit and tacit philosophical accounts of ourselves; and those, of orality, on the other hand, that, though in theory subordinate to the former, have of course persisted in the daily practice of our quotidian life of speaking and hearing speech.

This contradiction cuts deep and can be overcome only by going deeper, by producing a new Copernican revolution, making good on the aborted Kantian one, that is, by going all the way past the dualism of epistemological subject and noetic object to the roots and arché of *all* sense reading, all meaning and meaning discernment that is given in the unreflected intentionalities of our convivial mindbodily sentience, motility and orientation.

The context in which this outrageous claim can be seen to achieve some plausibility is in the extended

colloquy—it is no “argument” in any sense familiar to the philosophical tradition—that is to be found in *Polanyian Meditations: In Search of a Post-Critical Logic* and *A Philosophical Daybook: Post-Critical Investigations*, which are herewith incorporated by reference into these reflections.

6/7/90

What does T. S. Eliot mean when, in *Burnt Norton*, he says: “[Words] Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place / Will not stay still”?

This is not the judgment that a particular form of words is imprecise: “Well, that puts the case rather imprecisely; we need rather to say . . . Whatever it is that is finally taken “to be the case” is something at which you and I will have arrived by a series of what we agree are approximations to a degree of precision that we finally accept as “precise enough.” And that is a question that has no sense except in a particular context. But “Words decay with imprecision”: This seems to be a statement about every conceivable state of affairs and the bearing upon them of every conceivable set of forms of words. This is obviously language “on holiday.” Although it appears to be doing heavy work, it in fact has no traction: a steering wheel connected to no wheels on the road.

What does it mean to say, “Language always lies”? To begin with, this proposition must be “true” of the proposition “Language always lies,” in which case “Language always lies” is a lie; or if it is not “true” of it, not applicable, then sometimes language tells the truth . . . etc. It is as impossible for language always to lie as it is for every single person always to lie. Clearly, some more language on holiday.

What is the impulse behind the utterance of these sweeping, empty claims? Gnosticism: A pathos born of the sense that spirit has fallen into the prison-house of language, from which the only escape is its systematic dismantling by means of a doctrine of aporia, the radical undecidability of the meaning of words.

The cost of this reprieve is the nihilism that is often the flip side of gnosticism.

Undecidability as to the meaning of a word is resolved by a simple *decision*—namely, an assertion—with which our days are filled by the hundreds of thousands. Is the meaning of the words in which sponsors of the doctrine of undecidability speak undecidable?

It is just here that the triviality of most poststructuralist literary theory and criticism lies. One of its suppressed premises is that language is not only a unique, but the sole vehicle of meaning—in which role it notoriously fails because of aporia—that it is to be examined in inert texts, abstracted from its use in speaking and hearing speech, withdrawn from the lively, convivial, mindbodily exchanges of the oral-aural setting. Therefore it is blind to the resolution of undecidability by acts of assertion. It is truly Cartesianism in extremis.

6/14/90

The gravamen of de Man's critique of Heidegger's exegesis of Hölderlin is that, contrary to Heidegger's claim that the poet speaks Being, he cannot do so since the very language that he is required to use shatters all immediacy, in which Being must abide. Poetry cannot "establish the absolute presence of Being"; it can at most embody a longing for it.

This phrase is the fulcrum of the critique. It is also here that its irrelevance is manifest, for we must wonder whether the phrase is in any way applicable to what Heidegger means by *Sein* (“*Sein heisst Beständigkeit im Anwesenheit*”—Being is steadfastness in presence).

We must however bracket the philological debate in favor of doing a deconstruction upon de Man’s phrase in itself, since cognate phrases and animadversions upon the concept ‘presence’ are the materials out of which much deconstructionist polemic is fashioned.

What is the imaginative context out of which the phrase, “absolute presence of Being” emerges; with what suppressed models and analogies is the concept ‘immediacy’ being used?

The superordinate epistemological paradigms of our philosophical tradition are drawn from our second-order representations of sight, not the dynamic actuality of our visual explorations of the visible. We are even more likely in referring to this sense to use an abstract, therefore static, noun such as *sight* in preference to the gerund *seeing*, which would preserve something of the dynamic actuality of our experience.

Sight, this reflected derivative of our actual experience as seers, is made superordinate over our other senses, is depicted as “taking place” in a dead slice of visual space without temporal thickness—in “eternity,” in other words, is for this reason the “experiential” source of our contrast between eternity (simultaneity, *totum simul*) and time,<sup>c</sup> and a model (the deconstructionists say the dominant one) for “presence” and for “immediacy.” We have introjected the images and values of our literacy, our imaginations now subject to the sua-

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<sup>c</sup>See pp. 57ff., *Polanyian Meditations*.

sions of the static chirographic or printed word in preference to the dynamism of the spoken and heard word.

This sense of presence Derrida imputes, rightly, to the whole philosophic tradition and so energetically exposes in his assault upon the "transcendental unity of consciousness" of Husserl.

Having accomplished this exposé, Derrida (and de Man, not to speak of their lesser followers) mounts the whole deconstructionist assault upon meaning, believing that language has slipped its bonds and now hangs in midair, since *presence*, its erstwhile anchor, has given way—or has never existed.

This conception of presence is a highly parochial one, derived as it is from the superordination of sight as an epistemological paradigm, and does not even reckon with the manifold different senses of *presence* in ordinary language, which various uses are far from being without philosophical import.

The whole deconstructionist program is carried out subject to the afterimage of *presence*—understood in this way: a 180° turn on a fixed axis!

6/19/90

While it is true that de Man does not consistently invoke the phrase *establish the absolute presence of Being* to embody his mortified conception of the Being that everywhere eludes us, it is clear that at this crux in his dispute with Heidegger over Hölderlin's view of the powers of poetry, he has, in this phrase, come to rock bottom in his own imagination. Being would *have* to be, could *only* be that which can appear in all its total simultaneity in a dead slice of visual space—in other words, in "eternity," that is, *immediately*, subject in no wise to media-

tion, that is to say, to being cut in half (L. L. *mediare*), suffering no intervention, no interruption wrought by a medium that *comes* between the sundered halves, but also goes between them.

If Being, as de Man chooses to understand it, is immediacy and immediacy is a dead slice of visual space without temporal thickness, then, a fortiori, *no* medium—not language, not music, nothing *conceivable*—can “speak Being” since by definition it cannot suffer any such interruption, mediation. And this of course is exactly as de Man and Derrida would have it.

But this is self-evident! True a priori. Why then do de Man and Derrida, in their different ways, go to exhausting lengths to show that this is so?

Or again. De Man says . . . “sign and meaning can never coincide . . .” Taken in a perfectly obvious sense, the statement is plainly false. To say of anything that it is a *sign* is to say that it has a meaning; to say of anything that it has a *meaning*, is to say that it is a sign. *Sign* and *meaning* regularly and *necessarily* coincide since they are coimplicates of one another. De Man must have something else in mind.

What more then is being called for? I suggest that when de Man says this he is wishing for (what he knows he cannot have), such a coincidence as could appear in the immediacy of a dead slice of visual space without temporal thickness (that, as we have seen, derives from the superordination of images drawn from our accounts of seeing as epistemological models) where sign and meaning *perfectly* and *necessarily* coincide and are therefore indistinguishable.

Why does a critic of de Man’s acuity belabor the self-evident? I suggest it is because a hidden agendum is at work. He trades heavily upon the impossibility of medi-

ating immediacy, of speaking Being, of representing unity or the unification of our experience when immediacy, Being, and unity are envisaged in the way I have claimed he does. His certainty of *this* impossibility places him, so he tacitly imagines, beyond the aesthetic temptations of every conceivable mode of immediacy, Being, and unity (or, more accurately, conceiving of Being, immediacy and presence in *this* way prevents his conceiving of alternatives) that, as a "reformed" romantic, an inverted aesthete, he has reason to fear, not least because it led him as a young man into a form of aesthetic nationalism that for a time allowed him to embrace National Socialism.

From so austere a conception of the relation between signs and meaning, of Being, immediacy and the unification of experience it is a very short distance to the rejection of all conceivable alternative models of immediacy, Being, and unity and the avowal of the undecidability of the relation between all signs and all meanings. The whole program still lies in the shadow of presence, so conceived, even after presence, so conceived, has been discredited.

The supreme irony in all of this is of course that the ultimate triumph of aestheticism lies in the embrace of *all these models* of presence, Being, immediacy, and meaning—even as they are being explicitly rejected. The assertion of the absence of presence, *conceived in this way*, with the resulting doctrine of undecidability, places this inquiry as far as it could possibly be from the quotidian, mindbodily world of action and responsibility. In other words, it is aestheticism in the ultimate magnitude. Truly, this is, to use the de Manian idiom, "blindness."

That with which we are left, then, is presence, Be-



ing, immediacy, and meaning defined as the *negates* of these unattainable creatures of aestheticism. The critic who would expose all forms of (dangerous) aestheticism is the author of its most esoteric triumph: the absolute *absence* of Being.

6/21/90

The mindbody as imagination can thus be so arrested in its own thoroughly romantic-gnostic image of a pristine Being, importunately making itself present in its *absence*, that it will fail to remark the manifold ways that Being tacitly asseverates its presence as *present* through all the mindbody's convivial quotidian doings and sayings, incarnate in the world.

The late Latin *mediare* means to cut in half. From it come medium, to mediate, mediation.

A medium cuts asunder, interrupts, intervenes upon something that hitherto possesses some kind of wholeness, integrity, coherence. But, as medium, that which sunders, it is at the same time a mediator, referring the sundered parts to one another, doing the work of mediation, acting as a go-between.

A medium as go-between acquires the sense of a vector, a bearer of a relationship between the halves that it has put asunder: it expresses the connection of the one to the other; the meaning of the one for the other; the residual kinship that survives the rupture, as the language employed by a mediator as the medium of mediation between parties to a rupture attests to a common meaning that survives their breach and is in fact at once the *conditio sine que non* of their rift and its healing.

It is this sense of medium as vector of meaning that is at play when S. K. says that only the music of *Don Giovanni* can be the medium of demonic eroticism. This sense also is at work when we say that oil is the medium of Velasquez's *Las Maniñas* and marble the medium of Michelangelo's *David*.

The immediate, immediacy, then, refer to a whole, a coherence, a totality that *as such* suffers no interruption, sundering in half or intervention. One might suppose that that image of immediacy is most perfect that logically *could* not suffer any invasion of mediation, any disruption. This would of course be an instant without any temporal thickness in a point without extension. In such a case there is neither spatial nor temporal room for the intervention of even the thinnest medium.

As we saw in the entry for 6/14, it is in our depiction of sight as occurring in a dead slice (that is, one lacking temporal thickness) of visual space in which all the particulars of our visual field are simultaneously copresent, therefore offering no temporal room for the invasion of mediation, that we found a powerful image of immediacy—even if not so pristine as that “in” an instant without temporal thickness “in” a point without extension. It is clear that, in any case, this image that operates powerfully in de Man's imagination leads to his reflections upon the impossibility of mediating Being.

The question needing to be asked is: Are we inextricably bound by this depiction of Being and immediacy?

6/22/90

If Being is conceived in such fashion that it can “exist” only in immediacy, and if immediacy can, at most, be depicted as “existing” beyond time and only in a space

that is an abstract, static derivation from our reflected accounts of our actual experience of looking and seeing, it follows that Being cannot be mediated. This proposition is true by definition. Being, so conceived, cannot appear in the world. Can it appear in the world, can immediacy manifest itself in time, if they are rendered by other models?

I do not apprehend the whole formed by the constituent notes of J. S. Bach's First Prelude in C of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* in an instant, a "moment" without temporal thickness—even if an approximation of such an instantaneous apprehension is imaginable in the case of the simultaneous sounding of all the constituent notes. In the latter case, obviously, we are not talking any more of the First Prelude.

If however each note were not engraved upon my attentive and ductile mindbody as it pretended the next note and retrotended its predecessor, there to be husbanded in the tonus of my lively mindbody, deeply implicated in the web of its intentionalities as it exists in its own worldly temporal setting, then it could never be the case that I should "hear" the First Prelude. Its first note and its last note have to be copresent with one another within a temporal coherence that is given in the mindbody upon which they have been engraved. Were this not the case I should not apprehend the totality of the prelude when it is done. *Since* this is so, the coherence, the immediacy—the absence of all interventions upon it—that the First Prelude is perceived to have, the resolution of all the tensions that are embodied in its constituent notes unfolding in time, that the completed piece of music achieves, is but one side of a reality the other side of which is the resolution, coherence, and immediacy that I experience at that moment in my mindbodily life. Imme-

diacy has been mediated in time by the medium of the notes resounding in the tonus of my mindbody. And Being, insofar as it is affiliated with immediacy, has, as well, been mediated in the world.

Unless I am mistaken, this is at a great remove from Heidegger's sense of *Sein*. Nevertheless there is a strong sense in which Being, so conceived, merits the characterization of *Beständigkeit im Anwesenheit*; and if we dismiss it out of hand, it is for no other reason than the fact that we are immured in our disappointment at the loss of a logically *impossible* conception of Being and immediacy for which no merely *possible* one can be a substitute, since it is only from the standpoint of the presence as absent of this impossible immediate Being that the putative deficiencies of Being that actually appears in the world are asserted or assumed.

*Being, absolute presence, immediacy* are defined as without temporal thickness or spatial extension, statically beyond the conditions of existence in the world; therefore, by definition, beyond the possibility of mediation. Yet do we not need to wonder what the preceding language is accomplishing; whether through it we are being given access to "absolute presence" in declaring of it what we presumably "know" as we speak of its unknowability. Is it not being "mediated" precisely in our declarations of its unmediability? Does it not by these means truly make an appearance in the world? If this is the case, then de Man's and Derrida's critiques of all claims of access to presence in the Western philosophic tradition in this sense are in fact *often a mediation of this presence* that they are at pains to declare cannot be done! Indeed, both declarations of the accessibility of absolute Being and declarations of its inaccessibility have precisely the same ground: our mindbodies in their sen-