

Language does more than merely communicate and "express". It arrives, it manifests, it is a relationship. We are all languages. Are language and culture really opposed, are speech and writing opposed, and what is the "dialogue" between langue and parole? What does this mean / matter to the poet? Does a text truly exist outside the world? How is "speech" inside the world? Do these questions come out of my western tradition -- a tradition narrow in scope and finally irritating? Could I write a large work that could exist like the Bible, the dictionary where the speech and the speech of myself to others could sound. I am personally interested in how my own writing and the writing of others sound in the world, how the writing initiates itself as sound first, how it resonates in my body, how it seems to move from heart to hara to mouth, how I perceive this reading others text on the page silently, and how the poets I pay attention to mouth "it". I am interested in how I personally manifest the psychological states that the "writing" activates and provokes, how I sound the different "voisces", that I seize from, access, respond to, take out of books. How the writing is a kind of go-between between states of mind-hidden (heart, body) and states of mind-realized / enacted, as well as what's overheard. I wish always to pursue this relationship and push the experience beyond the page. Yet honoring, too, the page. That the page is a catchall. Page which is shaly, literate, and which originates as a kind of cosmic void. What hope and fear exists facing the blank white page? Facing 200 blank pages or 500 for that was(is the plan. Does the computer change this stark joy? I am afraid of getting lost inside the machine, another kind of fear. I get up and dance when I can't sit still. I mouth the syllables. I play with the words. I play on the cosmic battlefield of the blank page and of the room's silence, for writing is a kind of war. And yet I take the words where I can get them and play out all the contradictions. I wanted a large text to play inside of that could be like a dictionary or phonebook.

In the Thai tradition, to interpret a text in a reading or performance is to "ti bot" - to strike the text, much the way you would sound or strike a musical gong. In my travels to Asia (particularly to various parts of India, Nepal and Bali) and in my own ongoing study and practice of Tibetan Buddhism, I've noticed that the sound of the words has an intrinsic power. The word exists to both vibrate "out of" and also to enter the psycho-physical system as well as the larger environment (it's all inter-connected). Seed syllables travel and carry certain efficacies. I heard two Vedic masters chanting for hours from the Rig Veda at a festival in Bhopal several years ago. They had been trained in this classical tradition since childhood. They were essentially priests of the texts, holders of the texts, and vessels for the wisdom and power of the texts. Yet each of them had a distinct, you could say almost a "personal" style, and they were both living the Veda. This the audience was receiving a direct "hit" or transmission of the text through both the refinement of tradition as well as the immediate call to have it come alive / be actualized in performance. This performance contrasted with the

appearance of the Bauls of Bengal, singers as well as dancers, during the same festival. The three Baul singers were performing work within a less refined yet more spontaneous street-tradition. The music has secular and sensual appeal. It's demonstrative, vibrant. They were dressed colorfully, with an androgynous aspect to their garb and geture, in marked contrast to the pristine white-robed Vedic masters. And yet at root, both performances shared the premise of hitting the text, striking the form to achieve a kind of holy synchronized ecstasy. Both traditions exhibit highly evolved and subtle manifestations of "siddhi" (sacred energy or knowledge). I started also in Bali looking into time cycles.

The literature known as old Javanese (9th Century A.D., Java) has many poems written in the tradition of Sanskrit literature drawing on both Sanskrit and Javanese vocabularies. Each poem begins with a manggala or invocation that establishes the poet's understanding between him/her self, the text, and the world. The word manggala literally means "auspicious". A text called the "Sumanasantaka" begins by invoking the god of beauty (Lango) who is concealed in the dust of the pencil sharpened by the poet. Lango is asked to descend into the letters of the poem as if they were his temple. The god is not an external deity or saviour in the theistic sense, but rather a refined consciousness or sensibility - not "of" the relative world of the senses. Through this deity, one breaks through dualistic illusion to meet reality, as it is, face to face, without veils. Lango literally means "enraptured". Lango joins man and nature together. So the deity is a kind of vehicle for realization of things as they are. This is a principle in the practices of Tibetan Buddhism as well. One invokes the yidams or deities as manifestations of more awakened states of mind (energy without ego is the idea here), invites them to descend, and unites with them. Similarly, traditional Haiku works with this heaven-earth-man principle. Man, the concrete image in the haiku, is what joins heaven and earth. Lango is similar to the Sanskrit "rasa". (Sanskrit poetry/poetics has its origins in the Vedic hymns circa 1,500 B.C.). Rasa literally meant liquid, sap, semen, but later became "the essence of a thing". According to Sanskrit poetics, the poets traditionally needed to possess "Vyutpatti" - vast knowledge of the world (culture), "Abyhasa" - a skill with language developed from constant practice and apprenticeship with a master, and "Sakti" - creative power. Sakti relates to the sounding of the text. Mantra, in the Buddhist sense, is explained as that which protects the cohesiveness of the "vajra mind". "Vajra" is the quality of clarity, indestructibility. The Vajra mind is diamond-like, "beyond arising and ceasing". Mantra is a means of transforming energy through sound, expressed by speech, breathing and movement. Mantras are Sanskrit words of syllables and express the quintessential of the various energies with or without conceptual meaning. The Buddhist practitioner recognizes all sound as mantra, or from this poet's "absolute" point of view, all sound as poetry.

In a recent trip to Bali I was aware again and again of the intrinsic of words and how they are included as necessary parts of ritual activity, especially in the long wayang kulit (shadow puppet) performance. I was intrigued by how the dalang (priest-puppeteer) moves the languages around (he combines Kawi, high and low Balinese, and Bahasa Indonesia, the lingua franca of Indonesia in one performance). All the

realms, actual and psychological are being invoked. He or she moths many different voices which are literal texts of The Ramayana and The Mahabharata as well as spontaneous improvised comic banter. Although the epics exist as text, the wayang transmission is essentially an oral one. When we studied gamelan we had no score or text. The teaching was purely on an visceral level. This wayang is a proscribed enactment, still the most popular form of ritual entertainment in Bali. It resonates with all ages and experience and may be heard on many levels: dream, history, battleground, personality, religion, pure sound and vision (the shadows are mere "illusions" on the screen). The idea of "ti bot" is highly evolved in this kind of performance. Language as such is more than a predictable medium of communication here, more than a mere system of sighns, for it plays ongoing role in the process of imagining and interpreting the world.

There's a patterning in my own nervous system which I enjoy and respect and manifest in my own writing and in the performance of my writing -- it resonates with other patterns in the world. The describer, the artist, is always a person. We need these present eyeballs and ears and bodies to register "our world" as it flies. Every syllable is conscious, on and off the page. I am not interested in distancing the "audience" (myself) from the text, from the enactment of text. Thought and language are metabolically linked and this psycho-physical system is also open to any pulses that arise. These typing fingers are transmitters. All the texts are throbbing with sound. I vocalize them to you. I type them to you.

I recently pout together BOOK I (24 sections) of the long collage poem, IOVIS (A Latin title, literally means "of Jove"), which is a "tribute / ritual enactment / hag's rage" on the theme of male energy. On another level it simply delights in many voices as the wayand kulit does, "high" and "low" voices, exxlesiastical and vernacular voiced, the mother's voice, the child's voice. They are all speaking. I am writing this poem, for it continues on. It survives. It performs itself in me as I read it aloud and it establishes the relationship to the constant challenge of masculine "siddhi" as a kind of syllabic balance. The Lango of the poem is the thematic semen. I wrote the Manggala after compiling BOOK I (300 pages). It came as a kind of prayer-psalmic and calls up the biblical messiah. A later section conjures the Qu'ran (The Kora), an old Cary Grant movie, a conversation with 10 year olds, a "take" from Clark Coolidge on the movis "Five Easy Pieces", and a Sanskrit invocation to "one-pointedness":

from IOVIS

Manggala (this to be chanted, 2 notes)

The messiah is a man of sorrows
comes in lowness
comes to me in lowness
& this humiliation becomes passion
lamb into lion
& I am in lowness

He is the great King
Time, O the time is a hand
& I am in lowness
& He is the great king
& I am in lowness
The dragon is Pharaoh
& I am in lowness
I eat the book in this oral philosophy
Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go
The tome is at hand
(& I am in lowness)
The time is at hand in my lowness
I will take his past into my future
& transmute the mundane into heavenly music
& eat the book
The scroll is my number
& do not destroy my temple
I sing within & without the temple (it's this book)
The male gods take over as electricity & dynamite
& let me preach these allegories for the last day
& we, goddesses, giddy on the last day
I will preach these allegories on the last day
I speak out of my lowness
but the messiah is a man of sorrows
& O he is the great King
& I am in my writing
& in my richness
I speak a new doctrine to an old space

from OVIS OMNIS PLENA, XIV

al-Tanzil

the Downscent speaks:

When the sun shall be darkened, when the stars shall be
thrown down, when the mountains shall be set moving, when
the pregnant camels shall be neglected, when the savage
beasts shall be mustered, when the sea shall be set boiling,
when the sound shall be coupled, when the buried infant shall
be asked for what sin she was slain, when the scrolls shall
be unrolled, when heaven shall be stripped off, when Hell shall
be set blazing, when Paradise shall be brought night, then shall
a soul know what it has produced

hayya ála al - falah (twice)

when time
is old
tell me
about
when
time
is
old

& forgot itself

- Fine time for things to go quiet on us
- Blast them Thuggies
- Why don't they come & give us a good fight?
How can we get a nice little war going?
- What if I was to sneak away & blow up the Taj Mahal
or one of them sacred Indian tombs
- What do you want to do, start the whole Indian
mutiny again?

long erring in a globe
stern break over the knee
under a ring: blink
Order that knee in place: blink blink
Deft
made of mud
that knee dab in the sweet milk
The term shatters us so
Wider so mich wider that light
a voice: why so long?
why grind the bricks?
Why stack them?
Why build
or age the tool
what weight
carry?
Working
to place a place in a god place a work man
could live here and talk
& swear, nothing much

glob of dirt under
the boot
broke a stick
upon a knee
claim check is deaf
& to all dependents
worrisome
long taste of coal
you ain't
calling
it healthy
but maybe you
could lift a
sanction
as sanction, not stand on the border blocking traffic
as suppliant not stand in the doorway blocking light
as suppliant my voice intact
as suppliant a pinch of salt to flavor the bowl
as suppliant I implore sanctuary
as suppliant rehearse the logics
"For a murderous blow let a murderous blow be struck."
as suppliant a peaceful load for the house of Atreus
as suppliant, may these lips be moved in song

they day

"so strong in hope a woman's heart, whose purpose
is a man's"

a gap in my life ...
I was a mutant, but ...
a gold tooth in my mouth proclaiming
a gap in my life, but ...
Yet silhouette of a High Priestess my own mind was too ...
Mosaic too, I was a reminder, but ...
The hair of a pearl in my heart
or memory of Keats' tomb in Rome
But, is texture true? But? Is it?
I had a memory toward the Editorial Board
whose life attitudes were not sound
& Yeats' burial place (ah dear dead poets)
I worshipped all of them, diamonds, opals, guns ...
Picture a distributor cap with pinions stuck out
Feels good in my hand
in the chaos in any laboratory of desire
& back in the hand, holding the reins of desire

I was a truant, but ...

- Dead guts & bones sticking out of the sand, that's war.
 - Blood & bullets flying through the air.
 - Michael J. Fox is in casualties.
 - Tom Cruise is born on the 4th of July.
 - Explosions ah dead, everybody gone now.
 - The world is nothing.
 - A Stealth blows up the enemy base.
 - M-16 machine guns down whatever in sight.
 - Iraq has as many tanks as both sides of World War II.
 - They fight over who's going to be the President of a dollar bill.
-
- So what is a thrill, boys?
 - Swearing at the Sega. I cuss at Wonder Boy, whatever he does.
 - You cuss at the game because it cheated & guy killed you or a bad snake or a mushroom or a snail or a fish killed you.
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- They waste yr butt on Mega Man II.
 - If you're Metal Man in Mega Man II you can blow their guts right out of their shells.
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- Winning is pretty fun.
 - Feels weird. "Hand-eye coordination", all that.
 - This is easy. Look, look. I'm trying to turn.
 - I got 11 an Aztec Adventure.
 - Winning Bubble Bobble at level '42.
- "God damn you Tommy La Sworda!"
(I take that back)

Telling the story

telling the story on the hour

How to become a writer out of the rib of a man

How to spit out the man's marrow to breathe free

How to stand on the ground & contend with mystical hormones

How not to get sick in the midnight hour

(Give me a break!)

Oh, an the last
movie character I recall identifying strongly with, and
it amazed me as I hadn't had this sort of experience in a long
while, was the Bobby Dupea character Jack Nicholson played
in Five Easy Pieces. Especially that scene where he's goaded
into playing that Chopin etude by the Susan Anspach character
and the camera goes around the walls of the room, you see his
whole life in those family pictures, then the piece ends
and she tells him it was lovely and she really felt somethin

and he says he just picked the easiest piece he could remember and felt nothing at all himself. Of course, I come from a similar musical background, but I think it was more the sexual tension mixed up with a misreading of art in that scene I felt I knew from the inside. From then on I felt I knew his thoughts, and this seldom happens to me with movies. More often I feel like I can read the director's thoughts.

kausalya-ekagrata-citta

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