

CULTURE AND THE ANIMAL SOUL

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I. An Invocation

Before we begin, before we utter a word about our human situation, its soul's dilemmas and prospects, we must recall that we raise these questions in a terrain of animals, the aboriginal inhabitants of this earth, this air, these waters— that we are their guests, even if continually their conquerors and executioners, sometimes their protectors. May our recollection of this fact that we are their uneasy guests, especially of their smallest members, the parasites, mites, ants, spiders, and beetles, offer a tribute to their never-failing presence. May they not be offended by anything we say here.

An invocation is not only a literal appeal to invisible spirits, not only a remembrance, an offering, a propitiation; as well, it displaces the human subject from center stage to the wings (*flanco*), an appropriate un-modernist gesture that neglects the ego, the hero, the intentions and biography of the person, of all persons, instead drawing attention sideways, the sideways look, not back to a primitive terror or forward to a future of solutions, but sideways to the soul's habitation extended in the world, elsewhere, and unbounded by the human skin, human concerns and human predictions.

Further, the invocation to the beast drops the question of geography from the stale thematics of conflicting continents, of conflicting languages, of conflicting Christianisms— those tiresome dilemmas of North and South, of English and Spanish, of Catholic and Protestant, of tribal and urban, drops our geographical reflection to the non-historical, cyclical, organic geography of the animal soul where patriotism has no place and money makes no sense at all. *Fixate!* To escape from economics!

II. A Disclaimer

After the invocation comes the disclaimer—that you, my hosts, for all your generosity in invitation, your efficiency in organization and intelligence in vision have, by inviting me to open this convocation and to focus its themes, yes, you have made a grand error! For I am born in New Jersey on the Atlantic Ocean and emerged from my mother's womb facing over the sea toward Europe, and then educated in a language style that enjoys short sentences, a style whose realism is without magic, devoid of flourish, strict in vocabulary and with a careful Puritan ban on the erotics of adjectives and the qualifying impediments to action of adverbs, a style whose notion of a “good idea” is one that can fix a stalled motor, invent a new tool, or make a quick buck.

Besides, psychology, the profession which claims me, lives in a land of conceptual realism where the native animal magnetism of the soul has been encapsulated by such terms as transference, suggestion, borderline, and synchronicity. A profession that deliberately retreats from John Keats's admonition against "the irritable reaching for reason and fact" because it condemns as pathological the soul's land of "negative capability."

And so, because of psychology, those constituents of actual life lived on earth that are the very stuff of both psychology and poetics—I mean Family, Sexuality, Death, Loyalty, Injustice, Absurdity, Obsession, the Animism of things and places, details of the senses, the

irreality of History and the reality of Tragedy—these vital constituents of life on earth have, owing to psychology, been rationalized and literalized into "problems." So if there is one thing we shall avoid in these days together, one Devil we shall ask to be banned from the room, it shall be the Problem. *No hay problema.*

The Devil has a host of little devils in his train, much as the Gods of Neoplatonism could be distinguished by the sorts of archons, principles, daimons and minor personalities who followed and preceded each God. So, too, the "problem" is preceded by small worries and larger obsessions whose main function is to elevate "the Problem" into the highest rank of importance, all the while disguising the fatal feel of the tragic (as if tragedy were a Problem) and also the composting decay of civilization as it releases eruptions of culture and nourishes soul-making by means of fermentations and putrefactions.

So, to repeat the disclaimer, though you have invited a psychologist, we shall not be indulging in the therapy of anxieties, guilts, worries and problems. Worry itself is a demon who has been converted by psychology from a useful animal function to one wholly internal. "I worry," alone, inside myself. Once, however, "worry" referred to a direct action, as a dog worries a bone, a captain worries the enemy by laying siege to a fortress. But now worry is subjective, all internal. I waken at night and worry myself— my future, my marriage, my children— rather than actually worrying, attacking, laying siege to the future, the children, the marriage with reflexive actions. This little example intends merely to free us from our psychological predicament: We are unable to envision the soul's life and the soul's world apart from psychology, And so this disclaimer is also my way of renouncing psychology as the mode of entry to our themes.

III. Three Excursions on History

Oppression and History: There are no problems until we imagine solutions. Problems begin in their solutions. When we wish something, anything, to go away, then it stands as an obstacle, very hard, very literal indeed. Precisely, this hardness is implied by the original meaning of the word "problem." It arrives in our mouths via unyielding military redoubts, via mathematics and chess and logic. A problem, according to the dictionary, is something thrown up at us asking for a solution, such as a riddle or an enigma.

Abandon the idea of solutions, and problems cannot exist. Instead there is an enigma, from the Greek *ainigma*, meaning all things with a second sense, symbols, oracles, mysteries, secrets.

So, let us say each problem contains a secret, is the emblem of a secret or, better said, is a secret emblem, secretly an emblem, and it is for the reason of this secret that we carry problems with us, treasure them, idolize them, carry them as our banners—I have a health problem, a mother problem, a drug problem, a money problem. Under these emblems we march forward into our day.

Civilization, too, marches forward by "solving" its problems, as the Roman engineers invented their bricks and arches to build their bridges and aqueducts to solve the problem of unifying their wide empire. And even as we speak, especially in this city, civilization marches forward by focusing on one big problem, the world economic problem—the homeless and the hungry, the unjust distribution of land and goods, the disruption of balance and the destruction of nature—in short, the weight of economic oppression and the imagination of consumption as liberation.

What is this mystery of oppression and liberation now captured by the problem of economics? Here for a moment I must remind you that economics has taken prisoner many secrets of the soul so that we forget they once were expressions of moral beauty and human collaboration; trust, credit, guarantee, obligation, bond, share, security, saving, interest,

balance, warrant, deed, loss, foundation. So, too, oppression is not merely an economic problem; it needs as well to be considered a mysterious emblem, whether conceived in Feminist terms, in Freudian terms, in Marxist terms, always the riddle of *los de abajo*, the peasant, the proletariat, the indigenous peoples, the enslaved, the women, the children, the illiterate, the young, the aged, the darker-skinned, the urban dislocated, the physically impaired and handicapped, the exiles, migrants, imprisoned—always the oppressed.

And this unsolvable oppression gives rise to that other popular problem and its programs: the call for freedom, human rights, equality, choice, opportunity. The idea of freedom arises from the mystery of oppression. History never lets us forget oppression, in fact, history records itself in the documents of oppression, from the earliest conquests of the New World, through slave trade and financial exploitations and missionary conversion—oppressions by guns, by diseases, by alcohol, by laws and crucifixes.

Oppression as a problem of history, even, history as oppression itself; yes, but what of oppression as an emblem of culture?

Our question begins to turn. Instead of the question: "What is the problem of the New World—why does it originate in and maintain itself by oppression?"—instead let us ask: "What is the secret of the New World, of what is this hemisphere emblematic so that its soul feels oppressed, and must imagine experiments in freedom, revolution for freedom, Great Liberators and Declarations of Independence, Bills of Rights and Four Freedoms? What is this yoke in the cosmic imagination? What secret sits in oppression, like an archetypal Grand Inquisitor wearing different dress in different centuries: imperialist, colonial, *blanco*, yanqui, banker, patriarchy, Church, prelate, financial boss, United Fruit Co., Rockefeller, Trade Agreement, drug lord, colonel, F16, George Bush, . . . ?

If oppression is archetypal, as the ubiquitous, repetitious and relentless affliction of Hemisphere, an oppression which oscillates between indolent fatalism and frenetic

consumption, then its secret is beyond personal psychologies and historical determinants.

Neither manic-depressive personality disorders nor histories of repression and revolution can reach the deeper ground that lies in the geographical soil of an entire hemisphere, the animal soul shared by two continents.

To grasp oppression more fully we must step down and behind the human altogether and pose our question to the animal soul. What in the cosmic imagination allows the animal soul, in so many moral and intellectual systems of thought, to be ranked below? What is this willingness on the part of the animal to enter domestication, to be bred, hunted and trapped, to be subject to experimentation, to be beast of burden, to yield its aesthetic displays—skins and horns, feathers and shells—to be so tastily and nourishingly edible and—above all—to partake with its sacrificial slaughter in rituals that serve the Gods? This "oppression" has been portrayed, is being portrayed, as the result of human perversity, but what in the animal's own nature makes this possibility? What is the cosmic significance of what we understand only as oppression? For some peoples, animals are not, never can be, oppressed since they are divinities; in fact, for some peoples, the animals gave us both fire and speech. How so? Because the rich give to the poor, and in the beginning they had it all, and humans had nothing, so they gave us those gifts we now assume to be only human possession. Always, everywhere, they have been the teachers.

What is there to learn here? Is the oppression of the animal soul a lesson in metamorphosis and re-incarnation? A lesson in the supreme justice of natural law, that all beings have their pre-ordained place? Or, is it a lesson in evolution that the animal soul is fundamentally oppressed because it is lower in the great chain of progressive being in which human intellectual reason is, of course, at the top? Or could the oppression of the animal be teaching us something else?

We do not speak of plants and trees as oppressed, though we hack the underbrush, mow the grass and chainsaw the timber; we don't imagine rocks and soil oppressed though we mine, crush and smelt the former, and tread and harrow the latter. Only the animal kingdom, as it says in the Bible, shall suffer the human heel, and all creatures on earth are here as human helpers. In fact, these creatures do not even know their own names.

The current despair of animals in the face of their extinction is today met with human nostalgia for freedom in a primitive Eden. But freedom is only a sentimentally contemporary reading; service is their actuality. For, in the essence of the animal soul there must lie a willingness, a docility, an innate knowledge of service, now called ecological interdependence, a knowledge that all existence is predicated upon the very lack of freedom, within that inescapable enclosure not only of the great food chain, but within the yoke of mortality to the immortals.

An Inuit (Eskimo) said to Rasmussen that the great sadness of life is that we are always eating what is alive. His statement reflects something archetypal beyond the ecological idea of the great food chain which reduces to a paranoid anxiety of predation and material necessity the cosmic chains of service, and its tragic sadness, called Moira by the Greeks, who oppresses even the Gods within limits. The eternal laws governing the animal imagination and which the actual animal serves led Jung to write that animals are utterly law-abiding, beyond good and evil, unable to stray from the path because they do not have the hubris, the willfulness of the human ego, the possibility of affronting Moira.

This Hemisphere can envision the feelings of oppression permeating the New World, and the acts of oppression and rebellions against oppression, from an additional vantage point than those found in Marxist history books and Feminist sociology texts. Maybe that is why this Hemisphere cannot escape these feelings. It is bound by the cosmic imagination to find out something different and fresh about oppression, for which it can locate its reflection in the

overwhelming immensity of this Hemisphere's animal nature, the Americas as a living animal body—the teeming vibration of insects, quivering fish in jungle rivers, flocks of parrots, black caves of a million bats, Chilean rocks covered with sea birds, pink clouds of flamingos in Florida, miles of buffalo in Nebraska and Wyoming, of caribou on Canada's tundra.

Animals prove that to be oppressed is not to be vanquished. In fact, we turn to animal life for evidence of survival through eons, just as animals for most indigenous peoples are the guarantors of survival. The yoke of oppression does not have to be thrown off literally to lift oppression. Oppression can be "lifted" by revision, that is, by placing oppression itself in service to a wider imagination of inhuman archetypal powers. They provide deeper significance to all occasions of existence. Sometimes, in the eyes, or through the eyes, of animals, we can see the tragic sadness and beauty of ineluctable service to these powers that are not human.

There is a second secret in our hemispheric dedication to oppression. This is the mythologem that invented the "New" World. What fantasy, what cosmic imagination held the minds of the intrepid European adventurers? This we all know from schoolbooks: like Prophets, their minds were filled with visions and dreams. The Fountain of Youth, The Seven Cities of Coronado, The Circumnavigation of the Globe, Lost Atlantis, *Tierra del Fuego*, The Impossible Connection either as Northwest Passage or double flowing river between the Orinoco and the Amazon. The Lost Tribe of Israel, the Tribe of Amazon Women, the most precious grail and garden as Florida, Virginia, Corpus Christi, Vera Cruz. The most precious jewels and metals: Argentina, Rio del Plata, Esmeralda, Columbia—and all things New: New Spain, New England, Newfoundland, New York, New Leon, even New Jersey; and the spices that the three Kings brought to the Infant Lord; and finally, above all, El Dorado, the crazed appetite for Gold.

The imagination that invented the New World together with the secret oppression in its heart is quite clearly the same imagination of alchemy, which, within enclosed introverted laboratories and hermetically sealed language, sought above all else, Gold. Its fantasy worked with silver and jewels, imagined rare birds of all colors and prized the dove, configured strange unknown Kings and Queens, attempted the impossible in the perfection of the rotundum, in the rebirth of age into youth via the alchemical fountain, all driven by the redemptive image of Gold.

The project of the new world is an alchemical projection of renewal, an extraversion of European alchemy's introversion. The New World carries in its psychic substrate an alchemical desire for redemption by transformation of material nature. The New World, from its beginning as a "new" world, is thus a geographical alchemical retort, a labyrinthine laboratory, continually experimenting, continually laboring to transform the leaden weight, the *massa confusa* and *materia prima* of physis into the gold of noble and sophisticated accomplishments. Mining the raw and processing it into the cooked—Bolivian tin, Brazilian amber, Chilean copper, the huge deposits of bauxite, iron, emeralds, oil, coal, nickel—this became the opus of the Americas.

With this extraversion of alchemy into a geographical project an inevitable concretization occurred. Classic alchemy warned ever and again: "Beware of the physical in the material." The Gold of alchemy was not the usual gold that is smelted, not metallic gold, monetary gold, but a noble and sophisticated elixir, a condition of soul. But with the extraversion into the Americas, this gold petrified, became that mineral madness obsessing the conquistadores into modern times, and appropriately named "black" gold of the Maricaibo oil wells, a "gold" still being sought in the wilds of Ecuador and the depths of the Mexican Gulf.

The sense of oppression in the New World—that it is born vanquished, conquered, exploited, that it must throw off the yoke—testifies to a loss. Escaped from its vessel of

interiority the soul arrives in the New World stripped, in exile, a migrant victim clutching at anything "new," imagining a new containment in geography. In this state of extreme vulnerability, exposed to an elemental nature and denying its exhausted sensitivity with a sulfuric fury of action, the migrant soul expects the New World to offer gold in the rivers and streets of extraversion.

And what does it meet? *Les tristes tropiques*, the plains without horizon, the swamps and pampas, the placid indifferent rivers, ropes and sheets of endless rains, the melancholy torpor of equatorial heat, and that green tangled darkness of devouring forests so very, very green, the precise color of Hope, yet concealing the primeval serpent, disease and death; green hope ironically betrayed into a place of no hope, hope abandoned which, when translated by the mythic imagination of the European, becomes the soul's abandonment in Hell, no exit.

Even more oppressive than this deceitful emerald city of America's nature is the plain fact of the indigenous peoples who can be at home in "Hell," who live wholly inside this new world without any conception of it as "new." These natives at once became symbolic representatives not only of Hell's denizens and the denial of Christ, but the denial of civilization, of money, of history, and of the very fantasy of renewal that spurred the European effort to "discover" them in the first place. Of course they must be ignored, converted or killed—as residents of Hell, were they not already soulless and dead?

If the secret within the "oppression problem" that we are tracking here leads to the Hell given with the alchemical fantasy of a "new" world, then only by seeing through this idea of the "new" can the American spirit make a fundamental move. The exit from Hell is to abandon the hope that makes the Hell, America's dominant myth, Newness.

"Newness" excites the American mind with the delirium of development. Development—not magic, or virtue, or beauty, or *charis*—governs our endeavors; developing

land, developing economies, products, technologies, our personalities. We value even the arts in terms of new developments. We seem to be always progressing from the old to the new, always recapitulating the ocean-crossing, heroically each of us a captain of our fates, a pioneer, conquistador, converting whatever is unknown, strange, spontaneous or odd into the single category of newness, with our backs always turned against the old, Old Castille, Old King George—all the while secretly oppressed, not by the old, but by the designation of this Hemisphere as "New," forcing Americans to a manifest destiny of development, ever wider wings on the Puer who discards what is for what might be, ever more virginities to penetrate and own. The aging-terrified, limelight craving, throwaway civilization begins in the fantasy of this, a "New" World.

But the geography is not new, only history declares it so. The plateaus are of the most ancient geology, the anacondas and abalones, the condors and caimans are not new, nor were the Caribes that lined the shores and danced on the islands. The most clever of all oppressions carried over the seas to this Hemisphere is the fantasy of a "new" World. Newness still remains the Americas' prison.

History and Geography: Rather than "The History of Oppression in the Americas" we are investigating "The Oppression of History in the Americas." For history invaded and captured Americas' geographies. European history—its incests and sibling rivalries, its religious wars, its competitions—Phillip and Elizabeth—its crusading mission to "civilize" all its pomposities, delusions and greeds, carried over in little ships, converted the complex varieties of geographical peoples into a unified historical fantasy of "Indians." Not only that conversion, but the conversion of its geography into "heathen and barbarous landes" since they were not "actually possessed by any Christian Prynce or inhabited by Christian people." So it was written in Walter Raleigh's patent in 1584 prior to his obscure trips to Guyana and the Orinoco.

History in conflict with geography, or shall we say Time in conflict with Place. This, too, is archetypal in the cosmos of our American struggles. From the first, geographical accounts were called "journeys" and "journals," that is, places were translated into pieces of time, the extent of one day-lit day. The struggle of the Americas to throw off history and return to geography is one of the few common themes in all American cultures. Everywhere we can find the desire to free language, style, manners from the oppression of Europe's history in order to release the native voice of the land. That's why in the United States we elevate Whitman, and Faulkner and Hemingway, and Martin Luther King—to reassert the indigenous geography, the depth of place over the disease of time.

A fear of geography runs ever strong in the European for whom it must be civilized with roads and bridges, transformed into landscapes, pacified for vacation and possessed as property.

Remember Conrad's novel? What did Kurtz say from the bottom of his soul when he was plunged into the heart of darkness, utterly immersed in geographical terrain beyond the compass of European history: "The horror, the horror," Not Africa, slavery, exploitation and the socio-political explanation of "the problem" can account enough for Kurtz's despair. His is the cry of history when abandoned to geography.

A stain of blood streaks the documents of all America's history from Christian colonial times to the times of contemporary capitalism. The indigenous and environmental disasters, the extinction of languages, customs, songs, insects, birds, plants and animals, the rape, let us say, of geography by history shows the attempt of time to vanquish and harness place. The entire phenomenology of the vanquished and the oppressed—the suicidal stoicism, the stubborn passivity, the appeal of magic—can best be grasped as the resistance of geography to the violence of history.

The fear of geography, the panic that remains as a dormant God in the European imagination of nature—nature that must be climbed to the highest peak, the farthest pole, mapped and charted so that the demonic naturalness of geography is conquered by abstraction—is this "geographical panic" in face of the geographical immensity of the Hemisphere the untold root of this Hemisphere's violence? Is it our inability to face geography that drives the simple soldier and common settler into excesses of unspeakable violence, so ugly and cruel that they can be justified only by the highest authority, i.e., in the name of the Christian God?

Already in the seventeenth century, history's Age of Light, the New England forests were savagely cleared by the puritan settlers because in that dark and damp geography there lurked the unhealthy spirits of miasma and evil—and as well the local pagan communities. Nathaniel Hawthorne exposes this fear of geography as a temptation to paganism, as does D. H. Lawrence later. Both hint that in the panic lives the ancient God Pan whom European history so dreads that it must be forever declaring him dead.

Geography was best served by the Romantics: For Humboldt it was inspirational, for Bonpland exhilarating, for Darwin instructional, and for Frederick Church, geography radiated the warm glow of love. The Romantics gave themselves over to place in their sketches and paintings, in their logbooks and narratives, in their exhaustive observations and collections. But then, this is to be expected since the Romantic spirit had already reverted to that devoted attention to geography known as Paganism. The meaning of "pagan," by the way, is rocky hillside. It is a word originating in the idea of being firmly set, of fixed place, implying a geographical dedication to each place, separate and distinct and belonging to the *spiritus loci* who inhabits it. How unlike the unifying monotheism of time which subjugates all phenomena with the same chain of events called history.

The moral of this preachment? If you would get out of history, get into geography.

On Confusing Culture with History: Let me try two definitions civilization and culture.

Civilization gets the job done, as best it can. Culture is song, the song that breaks out in the midst of the job. Culture pops up, sprouts in a petri dish. It is surprising, inexplicable, unpredictable—and largely unlearned. How strange that these spontaneous inventions startle and also feel necessary, as if it couldn't have been otherwise. How curious that an event can be utterly fresh and yet is greeted as part of the culture. Culture breaks into civilization, and yet is assimilated to it. Assimilation makes culture and civilization appear to be identical.

Because surprise, which means to be seized by the sudden, is a category of its own, a surprise is not merely something "new." The freshness is less a novelty than a blessing. To confuse novelty with spontaneity keeps us still within the framework of history, measuring the surprise against what was or already is. But a blessing is like grace; it just happens.

To believe history makes culture traps the soul in notions of development and in the belief that the past is a causally determining force. We then believe the past created the present, that we and everything around us are "results," eventually "victims." We then believe, further, that culture is defined by historical development—the development of music, of painting, schools of influence, tradition. History would make culture conditioned by contingencies, whereas I want to say that culture is governed by invisibles, the Gods, the Zeitgeist, the presence of the Other—a beloved, an audience, a group of friends, a dead master, a spirit—for whom the cultural act is presented as a gift. Civilization honors and maintains human achievements; culture gives them back to the Gods.

Historical antecedents need not be taken literally. They give a mythical ground to culture. They open the gates of fantasy. We fall back on the cave walls of Altamira, the red walls under the ashes of Pompeii, the library walls of Alexandria, or the ancient Andean Kingdoms. Culture needs images and figures apart from any immediate civilization, its time, its

language. These historical antecedents, even if appealed to for authentication, imitated in style, and relied on for origination, are not so. They are rather evocations of alien spirits, required for incantational purposes, called upon to bless as a magic enhancement of a present project. It is not the past that gives a cultural work its validity.

Culture does require, however, rituals to aid its birth. These are not only the ones to do with skills: art school, music school. I am speaking now of the rituals of food and love, of conversations, civil necessities, places of opportunity in the midst of civilization where culture is invited to appear. These places may or may not be dinner parties, cafes, museums, theatres, or little magazines; these places where culture is invited may also be the streets, the taverns, the garages and dance halls. They do not require historical precedents so long as a kind of mythical impregnation of the atmosphere can be felt that sometimes is believed to descend into a place or a style from a historical personage—a great writer, a group of intellectuals, a public hero, an exceptional woman's originality. But this is fantasy, not history.

For this reason we must beware of academic institutions as cultural guardians, as if preservation of the dead and passing it forward to the young were the means of bringing culture to them. These institutions help civilize the young—or they may not, instead challenging them to rebel and dismember the dead and those who serve to keep them present. Such acts of destruction may be acts of culture challenging civilization.

We must also beware of the idea that culture is slow, that it takes wise ripenings, that it belongs to mustachioed elders who can quote aphorisms and to women who have traveled through many foreign lands and many bedrooms, The curio cabinet of collected mementos is not culture.

More likely, culture is made by the spirit often embodied by the young in its conflict with history. The young force the guardians of tradition to defend their accumulations ever more strongly, a reaction that maintains the civilization from generation to generation and

justifies the reactionary conservatism of its defenders against the cultural incursions of jazz, boogie, rock, punk, salsa, rap, hip-hop, hardcore. Historians try to civilize these inventions by tracing their continuous evolution from basic common stems. They can account for everything except the surprise, the fresh departure from the basic stem. When history becomes the guide to culture we see the trace running through the variations, but never notice the unexpected. How account for the magic of change, the actual moment of culture breaking into the history of civilization?

The magic of change cannot be grasped by evolution. It does not show the epiphanic moment where one form becomes the next, the "missing" link—that hiatus where the surprises of the spirit, its inventions (in-venio = incomings) transform the same into the different. First three toes, then two; where is the connecting creature? How account for the magic of the first human to stand up tall? The smooth line of history is broken by the spontaneous interventions of the spirit. Magic makes culture. Or, as some argue, God in His Heaven intervening every microsecond.

The spectre who haunts the historical definition of culture is not senex as such; nor is it the senex fantasy of learnedness. Learning has an altogether different significance for culture. Rather than setting standards for accomplishments by measuring them against what has already been achieved, learning provides culture with inspiration and backing for courage to risk.

No, the worst spectre is the haunting urge of Progress. How many towns in the New World were named Progress, Hope, Liberty, Promise, Paradise, Eden, even Future. Deliverance, Redemption, Progress is merely an enthusiastic infusion of the emotion of Hope into Saturn's linear chain of historical continuity: History becomes Hope literalized.

In itself, continuity is merely a line from here to there, nothing better nothing worse, this then that, a series of contiguous moments, until the evil Hope appears. Then we have progress.

Once hope, longing, desire, regret—the full potency of what Freud called the "wish"—attaches itself to the chain of events, suddenly there are expectations and disappointments, the fantasies of progress and decline.

Culture has no need to get better, and so it cannot get worse. Magic fades; it loses luster; the trick no longer works. The song stops its singing. Like Hermes who suddenly was with us and just as suddenly vanishes. Here, say, in this or that city, among this crowd in the quarter, or around a university group a little theatre, there is a blossoming of culture; then it disappears to pop up somewhere else, among others. No progress; no decline. Appearance and disappearance. Celebration and mourning. When the God appeared there was hilaria; and when he disappeared, tristia. So it was with Dionysos.

In the animalized cosmos there is no progress either. Let's say you own a cat and keep your cat for seven or twelve years until one day it dies, stiff and straight on the floor. You get another cat, a different one, maybe a female one, and red. But there is no progress through the line of cats, or repetition of cats.

Memory makes comparisons among these avatars of the cat spirit; we see differences. But differences only become progress from better to worse or worse to better when differences are linked to history. For the native Plains peoples in what is now the United States, the buffalo that appeared each spring to eat the new grass after the snow were always the same buffalo roaring up out of the earth and disappearing at the end of the season as the snows came on again. Repetition. Differences and Sames—to use Aristotle's basic category; suddenness; changes; epiphanies—anything but progress.

Therefore a Foundation that aims to support culture will plant one foot firmly against history, against civilization in order to hold open a door to culture. It must welcome at its reception desk the apparitions that do not make historical sense, the appetitions that seem an abrupt break, without progenitors, something in and of itself without traces or sources, or with origins so remote they can only be imaginal.

Nor may a cultural Foundation build bridges that aid the assimilation of culture by civilization. The spirit does not use bridges; it prefers gaps so that it can leap. Nor will a cultural Foundation be occupied with renewal. New always implicates us in history. Instead, a Foundation will foster the pre-historical and a-historical, that a-civilized aspect of the soul which today we are calling the animal soul. Like the French painters sought the South Seas and African masks to get out of history, to defeat its civilizing influence. But not to get to "early Man" or "the origins of Art." No, the appetite for primitivity seeks the utterly different, an alien beauty, like the display of the animal soul unadorned by civilization; archetypal in its constancy, and therefore not new but utterly familiar.

I am here echoing the voices of Lorca in regard to the Duende and Lautreamont in regard to the animal cry that is at the root of all poetic expression. "A need to animalize ... is at the origins of the imagination [whose] first function is to create animal forms." "In this universe the energy is aesthetic." [Cf. Gastón Bachelard's *Lautreamont*.] The risks are great; for in this moment of the a-civilized, this moment of the animal soul, as Lautreamont and Bachelard have each said strongly we cannot tell creation from destruction. If creation is *ex nihilo*, out of nowhere, then the first step may be the creation of the *nihil*.

So this small society here, may find its historical traces back in Switzerland and Eranos, back in Romantic movements among friends in Germany and England, or back in associations of American artists and intellectuals in this Hemisphere—but these associations are not the source of what we do, providing no model, offering no guidance.

Rather we must imagine ourselves in a geography uninhabited except by the mythical figures who inhabit that geography. That's why the animal soul is so crucial in all our deliberations: only it can sniff out and know what is going on below the historical trappings we bring with us. Then we may imagine our activities and inventions unburdened by history, having progressed from nowhere, bearing no hopes, an absurdity, a free radical binding with no other molecule anywhere, for no practical end, no future, no historical significance, quite useless—and that we are definitely not making history even if we may be instigating culture by being together in this place and serving the ritual of this meeting.

IV. Return to the Animal

Imagine that we let go of depending upon the new. To what then can the Americas turn to when facing the unknown— for American civilization always relies on Newness to mask its anxiety. What can nourish our optimism, our manic excitations that insist upon "explorations," "improvements," "inventions" that must speak of this hemisphere as a "discovery?" What would happen to God, the Economy, and the frenzy of consumption from which this God lives, if the New were obliterated as a category; no new frontiers, no new fashions, new and improved products, diets, restaurants, no new generations of computers and cars, no newest state-of-the-art! No idea of the "latest." Without the New we would have dropped completely out of science and technology, out of economic development, personality growth. What would we then notice if we had no News? [*Ultimas Noticias*] We would have fallen altogether through the supportive structure of history.

What remains below? Where does this fall take us? Into the pool of the ancestors, the eternal ones, the invisibles, waiting in the dreams, waiting in the melancholies, whispering still from childhood, like animal spirits, or animals themselves. They are not new. There are no new animals. Nor can we embrace the secret of their existence with such terms as repetition,

eternal return, cyclical time, since these terms lead us back into history. The animal records no history and is therefore neither old nor new. Those fossil remains that establish its heredity, the carbon-dating of its bones, the paleozoology that reconstructs the millennial animal, are attempts to place this or that animal—the jaguar, the lizard, the monkey—into our scheme of time, into history again with traces of animal evolution. For the sake of what? The animal? No, so that we can be again at the top of the tree of time, the crown of creation.

So I make this turn to the animal for the sake of this Hemisphere, the reality of the world [*mundo*] when "*Nuevo*" is deleted as its qualifier. I am stripping this American world of its historical adjectives in an attempt to undo the cosmology inherent in the very style and order of our assembly here and now, this architecture, this schedule, the very syntax of the words and ideas as I stand here. Clearly, my attempt is absurd and will fail, but better absurdities, than conventions; better difficult failures than quick success.

The turn to the animal is an archetypal move when the mind has trapped itself into its own cages of thought. Aristotle—who gave us the scaffolding for all later European constructions in politics, ethics, logic, physics, poetics and metaphysics, the fields and disciplines of our institutions—Aristotle devoted three of every eight words to his study of animals. Yes, thirty-seven percent of his works concern animals. What fantasy did the animal carry for him? And Plato? In the midst of constructing his grand cosmology, the *Timaeus*, suddenly, while describing the geometric figure of the All, which includes the abstract shapes of the elements, fire, earth, air and water, he states that there is a fifth, most comprehensive figure, a dodecahedron, a twelve-sided form which "had a pattern of animal figures thereon." Already in his *Republic*, Plato there, too, interrupts his dialectic with what seems like an absurd non-sequitur, "the symbolic image of the soul" as a many-headed beast with a ring of heads, tame and wild. Aristotle and Plato—I reverse the usual order in order to escape the historical convention—must be the Shamans of the European tradition in their turning to animals for proposing the nature of the cosmos and of the soul.

This final and essential image of Plato's cosmology—strange, unexpected, obscure as it may be—awards animals with cosmic superiority. Plato's image suggests that mathematical abstraction and elemental substances, i.e., theoretical physics, expressed by the first four components, the elements, require something further: an animation, an animalization. But Plato's animal image also indicates that the mathematical and organic do not have to be divided, just as God's instruction to Noah (Genesis 7:15-16) uses the exact numerical language of architecture. In both cases, a single image holds the abstract and the animated together.

Within an animalized cosmos, theories would not depart from the actually palpable: we would have no hidden God, pure Being, abstract truth, linguistic fundamentalism, symbolic logic, unobservable particles as sufficient accounts—little physics and less metaphysics. Yet, the Biblical ark is precisely measured in cubits and the fifth essential shape in the *Timaeus* is a dodecahedron.

May we conclude that formal abstractions provide containing shapes for animation? But that is all they are: houses for the habitation of animals. Or, because form and animal are presented together in these ancient cosmologies, let us conclude that the animal is structured, contained and law-abiding within the inherent shapes of its specific species. This inherency of cosmos (order) which self-limits animal life and is as eternal as geometry, as surviving as the ark, psychology calls "instinct."

And yet, for all this profound recognition of the animal—as ancestor who protects the soul and totem that maintains social kinship; as dominant companion of the child's imagination and play; as astral determinant of all cosmic events; as primordial source of the impulse to make art of them on a cave wall and sing their sounds, dance their motions—yet for all this magical and shamanistic and philosophical appreciation, human opinion, to uphold its delusions of grandeur, continues to speak of the animal as "brute" and "beast," to curse other humans as dogs, pigs, rats, wolves and vultures, to identify the lower human soul of hungers,

lusts, fears and greeds as "animal." In the popular science of television, we are taught to see the animal as example of predator, competitor, territorial warfare, gender domination, hierarchical order—a media reflection of the capitalist self disguised as nature education.

Of the many attempts to seize the essence of animal being in a net of human concepts, "pinned and wriggling on the wall" (T. S. Eliot), of all the derogatory comparisons between human and animal that keeps a cut between us so that the human may keep faith with its own dissociation, the most apparent and necessary characteristic has escaped our cleverness. This characteristic is animal display. All animal life *shows*; it has visible exteriority, whether skin, coat, feathers, scales, or even the thinnest membrane of simple life-forms. Adolf Portmann, the eminent Swiss zoologist (who was, among all his renowned accomplishments, also the guiding spirit of the Eranos Foundation for thirty years) wrote: "Appearance like experience is a basic characteristic of living beings...". All living things are urged to present themselves, display themselves, to show, *ostentatio*, which was a usual Latin translation of the Greek *phantasia*, fantasy. Each animal's ostentation is its fantasy of itself, its self-image as an aesthetic event without ulterior function. Portmann brought many kinds of evidence for these "unaddressed appearances." For example: the small transparent oceanic creatures living in the interiors of other larger creatures or below the depths where light can reach or having no visual organs themselves, and so whose brilliantly vivid and symmetrically patterned forms serve no functions—neither as messages to their own species, as attractions, as warnings, or disguises.

It is sufficient just to display. Display is fundamental to animal life and this is the first lesson the animal teaches. The animal continually reminds that the play of creation is revelation. To be is to be seen; beauty is given with existence. As Portmann shows, to be seen is as genetic as to see: the organic structures of patterning, coloring and symmetrical display are as genetic as the ocular organs that allow seeing the display. In fact, the coat is ontogenetically prior to the eye that sees the coat. It is this beauty of the phenomenal and its everlasting return of the same that the animals reveal, as if they revel in their own fantasy—

not information, not communication, not metaphor, beyond understanding and meaning, the beauty of these amazingly complicated and "other" living beings. It is as if they say: Respect us—re-spect, which means, "look again."

And what then do we see, once we open our own animal eye? We see, says Portmann, sheer appearance for its own sake. Display not directed at anything, anyone, or what he terms "Unaddressed appearances." "*Die Erscheinung ist ihr eigener Zweck*"—the self-presentation of the animal is its own end, and its color and shape and pattern, he says, is the work of very specific biological structures.

Does this not say that the animal is above all an aesthetic creation, that an animal eye sees first of all the display of beauty, and that the animal is compelled by instinctual necessity to present itself as an image? Portmann's radical insight into the biological necessity of the aesthetic explodes the sheerly functional notion of animals, struggling to feed and breed, ever in fear and trembling. It also explodes the silly, lightweight, decorative notions of aesthetics; instead "show" is laid down in basic structure of biological life. Biology itself insists on aesthetic display.

The animal opens not only into the flesh of life but also towards the Gods. According to legends and rituals worldwide, animals impart the secrets of the cosmos. They are instructors in cosmology, that is, they mediate between the Gods and humans; they have divine knowledge. In polytheistic cultures they are themselves divinities. For ancient Egyptians, according to Henri Frankfort, animals were divine because of "their inarticulate wisdom, their certainty, their unhesitating achievement, and above all their static reality. With animals the continual succession of generations brought no change... They would appear to share...the fundamental nature of creation," its repetitious, rhythmic stability.

For indigenous peoples from Amazonas to far Northern latitudes, for whom animals display the divine, an animal is an eternal form walking around, the palpable presence of the

regeneration of time, of adapting and surviving life—an immortality utterly of this world, this world its Eden, needing no elsewhere, and no ecstasies. No Being guarantees its existence; its existence guarantees being. Each animal is eternity sensuously displayed, and so the stars, most enduring of all images, were imagined with animal names. For this animal certainty and unchanging reality, psychology, as I said, has invented the term "instinct."

Instinct, too, ignores progress and the New. It knows no problems. It has no notion of history. And so, moralist philosophers often declare instinct the enemy of civilization. They assert that the continuity and certainty below the human will and its civilization belong to a lesser kingdom. Long before actual animals in the seas and the jungles vanish, much philosophy continues to authorize extinction by an ontological definition of animal as soulless, irrational, mechanistic. All the while, this same position does admit that the animal's basic instinct is continuity, i.e., the "preservation of the species," thereby affirming that the animal is the unhesitating answer to nihilism. It must go on, each according to its kind in its eternal repetitious displays. Each animal recapitulates the survival of the Ark and the original Garden.

V. Shaman: A Human Animal

Mircea Eliade, in his complete, pioneering, and extraordinary study of shamanism, observed that the shaman has a special relation with the animal kingdom. He (or she) heals by means of animal potencies, speaks directly with animals, masters them, takes on animal forms, and often bears an animal name. Part of his initiation is the special interfusion of his powers with the power of the founding totem animal of the tribe or clan.

Our narrowly humanistic anthropology conceives the animal aspect of the shaman as his (or her) possession by spirit-powers so that the human form becomes mimetic to a jaguar, a tiger, a bear, an eagle, hawk, snake, etc. The human imitates and identifies with the animal and can enact its nature.

Now, what if we reverse our cosmology so that the human does not come first? Then, perhaps, that horned shaman dancer-image on the paleolithic cave-wall, and all the animals since who accompany the shaman in so many societies, would be prior to the human. Then "possession," "imitation," "identification" and "enactment" would not be the right terms. Then the shaman is the actual incarnation of an animal spirit, an animal image in human form, and not a human at all, or at least not altogether human. Rather than think the human is enacting the bear, it is the bear appearing as a human, as tribal accounts report. The physical animal and the corporal shaman share a common bear image, so of course they communicate. They are imbued by the same spirit that is neither human nor animal, and both. The shaman is that particular human who acts as plenipotentiary representative of the animal kingdom, endowed with the animal's wisdom, its ferocity, its inhumanity and yet strange caring regard for the human, and its rectitude—and hence the shaman's capacity to "heal," i.e., set things straight and put them on the right path.

These animal presences appear nightly in our urban dreams. As invitations of the image, they can lead us out of our human confinement, bringing wisdom, ferocity, detachment and healing. We are each lesser shamans, shamans of a minor magnitude, in our receptivity to the animal presences that come to our dreams. These presences also bless our peculiarities—our serpentine wiles, our aquiline rapaciousness, the smothering clutch of our bearish hugs. Their images provide an imaginative backing to human pathologies and traits—fishy, mousey, piggish, crabby, ratty, wolfish, weaselly, cocky, foxy. They remain beautifully independent of our interpretations which attempt to cage them within our subjectivity as bits of our selves, as impulses, instincts, appetites, fears, complexes, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and sexual fantasies.

The first sign of shamanistic power, according to Joseph Campbell, is hearing song. Song as the breaking in of the invisible; song as vision. The animal translates its presence into the human shape by means of vocal display; lyric, chant, melody, poem. The child, relapsing

into the primeval forest of penumbral unconsciousness, needs to be sung to sleep or sings in its sleep. The Orphic voice spans the gap, holds the rhythmic tension between human and animal.

Earlier we referred to Joseph Conrad's Kurtz as the representative of history succumbing to geography as horror. "All Europe," says Conrad, "contributed to the making of Kurtz." But something else unmade him, for, "Whatever he was, he was not common. He had the power to charm or frighten rudimentary souls into an aggravated witchdance in his honor..." The signal trait of Kurtz was; "A voice. He was little more than a voice." "Of all his gifts the one that stood out preeminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words—the gist of expression, the bewildering, illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness." (Chapter Two)

As Kurtz disintegrates, his talk becomes ever more strange and wild. From the viewpoint of the European colonizer, he was going mad; from the viewpoint of the primordial geography he was reverting to the earth (a word Conrad uses again and again) and becoming the voice of it. He was "adored" by his natives. "His ascendancy was extraordinary... Chiefs came everyday to see him. They would crawl." "He had taken a high seat among the devils of the land... I mean literally ... to preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites, which ... were offered up to him." One disciple repeats: "He made me see things." "He enlarged my mind." "You ought to have heard him recite poetry—his own too... Poetry!" And the images of him are phantomlike: his head, bald as an ivory ball; "He looked at least seven feet long," (Chapter Three) The fascinating power he held, the rites he presided over, the mantic poetic speech, the range of mind, the weird appearance— the disintegration. Was it madness; was it initiation? In short, was Kurtz not only a colonial but also a shaman? And was "the horror" a last repenting insight into the colonial by the shaman, into the human heart by the animal vision?

VI. Penultimate

The return to the animal has been urged on us by every sort of ideological bestiary, the primitivists, the Rousseauian Romantics, the primal therapists, the shaman-guiders, the liberationists, and by those who have just found the wolf, running with them or dancing with them, and we are further urged to save all animals by abstaining from leather and fur, meat and tallow, eggs and milk, and to use no medicine that might save our lives because it has cost an animal's.

All of this noble. Yet all of this is symptomatic of the marvelously unconscious tendency to literalize. I mean that urgency to fix in the concrete physical world what has gone astray in the symbolic metaphysical world. Once again: animal becomes a physical problem when the animal is failed by the metaphysical imagination.

Now that we have recognized that the essence of animal display—for that is how we distinguish their kinds, name them, classify them, as Adam did when the species paraded before him in Eden and he could see their names, and as Noah did when he had them come two by two according to their different kinds—then the question which follows is: In what manner do we, as human animals, display our essence? What is the essential self-presentation of the human species?

It can hardly be our skins, our mating dances, our posterior exposures, or threatening gestures. These are like other creatures. Anthropologists who study humanoid history find certain traits distinctive to humans—but these too are questionable, because birds make collections of small beautiful objects; insects construct homes; lions collaborate; ants have social organizations; elephants remember the dead; dogs mourn; squirrels plan ahead; horses take instruction; cows respond to music; migrating fish remember; birds read the stars; chimpanzees learn words; and many species use tools. Besides, our question asks not the usual

one: "How do humans differ from animals?" We are asking: "What is the specific human form of animal display? How have we, like animals, a particularly characteristic mode of self-presentation?"

There is one answer, I believe, that takes care of both sorts of question: What is different in the human species, and what is the most characteristically human kind of display? That answer is speech. Only we have the palate, tongue, epiglottis, larynx, pharynx arrangement that permits articulation. Sounds, melody, rhythm, communication, imitation, symbol systems, yes, many animals have these elaborations, but not rhetorical speech.

The signal mark of "wolf children," that is, those raised in the wild by animals or deprived of all human contact in early years, would seem to be their rhetorical disability. Not merely eating with mouth and hands, absence of toilet training, or postural deformities, but speech turns out to be their most damaged instinct. The humanization of the wolf-child, in fact, the incorporation of any alien (barbarian in the Greek sense), or voice-afflicted person requires the learning of rhetorical skills. By this I mean not merely language for communication, expression, socialization or literacy. It is more than functional use; it is to regain the primordial basis of human nature.

By means of speech we enact what animals do in behavior. With speech we warn, claim territory, challenge and destroy. With speech we court and seduce a mate, and by means of speech we instruct our offspring and organize our group disciplines. The primacy of the word is confirmed by what our civilization considers its holiest text which states clearly, "In the beginning was the word." And this word was imagined, let us remember, not as making order or providing meaning, but as the display of light, the ostentation of a divine radiance.

VII Terminus of the Interminable

At the end now I ask myself in your behalf what has been happening here? What indeed have you all been listening to? And your listening has been superb—gracious, generous, willing. So it is time to review what we have been doing. Certainly no problems were solved. And certainly nothing new was presented. We have not helped with the dilemmas of The Economy, or saved the environment. Nor has oppression been lifted, or history made. Neither has a psychology been elaborated.

Two themes of those touched upon do, however, remain, the theme of Culture and the theme of Animals. So it is the duty of the speaker at the end to close the gestalt by bringing the only two remnants of a generally destructive engagement together. I am obliged to show a connection between culture and animal.

We may build this connection very simply upon the premise that speech is the specific display of the human animal. I would here both narrow and expand the term "speech," on the one hand, to exclude the signals of ordinary communication and information which can be relegated to symbol systems, gestures, and electronic devices; on the other hand, to include song, poem, oration, incantation, speculation—in short rhetorical display in a variety of forms.

I am saying that care with speech is the human way of preserving the animal, our way of self-preservation. I am saying that devotion to rhetoric becomes a primordial human task because it is the essence of our animal nature. This dedication to speech was a characteristic noted first in this Hemisphere among the natives of Tierra del Fuego whom, it was observed by early visitors from Europe, lived in most primitive conditions—exposed to endless cold rain with minimal shelter, a poverty of tools and food, and yet had the most astounding vocabulary and tradition of fables, tales, stories. Living "like animals," as the observers may have noted—indeed, living the human animal's primordial necessity of rhetoric.

The specific essence of human display cannot be the image. Animals, too, are images. Even if C. G. Jung declared that psyche is image, psyche is not confined to humans. Animals,

too, display their images and, in the narrower sense of the word, animals also "imagine"—as the dog kicks and growls in its sleep, the spider finds precisely that corner to spin its web, the cat suddenly leaps into a capricious game with its own tail. Image and imagining are shared by humans and animals, but not speech.

To clarify the role of image, let us say that the image is at the aesthetic core of all animation. It is what makes life displayed, i.e., aesthetic. Even plants and stones have a *causa formalis*, a quiddity, those particular patternings which make each thing what it is and different from every other. However, the articulation of the image, the rhetorical elaboration, the translation into word, gesture, syntax, symbol, thought, lyric, rhyme—the poesis that makes the human into *homo faber*—that is specific only to us.

I am declaring a duty to the animal drive to sing, to speak up and speak out, to declaim, confabulate, expostulate, gesticulate, persuade, cajole, deprecate, blaspheme, woo and insult. By these means instinct is satisfied as much as by any meal, any bed, any infant. When we perform these acts we are true to our animal selves and when we fail this display human nature withers and culture evaporates. George Orwell in his *1984* already noted the threat to culture by the shrinking of speech: "Every concept that can ever be needed will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out... Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller."

The narrowing of words to single definitions and the narrowing of vocabulary is only part of it. More significant is the inhibition of rhetorical display, the fundamental disbelief in the magical trans-substantive power of poesis to make reality, which then reduces the idea of reality to the language of stupidity: acronyms, numbers, instructions, sound-bites, slogans, ads, one-liners, package contents, charts, data. It's all in the data-bank, except the sudden song. The murder of speech is the self-murder of the human animal, a suicidal evisceration of our

species' specific endowment. Like tigers losing their stripes, like beached whales and blind eagles are we without our rhetoric. Speech is our body, speech is our shape, speech is our beauty.

The restoration of the cosmic imagination to the vision of those shamans, Plato and Aristotle, the preservation of the human species, and the gift of culture—all come down to the elevation of rhetoric to prime place. For this reason—for now I am literally at an end—the return to the animal means a return to the poetic urge in any citizen, an urge symbolized by the actual poet who, like an alpha animal, leads the herd with the power of display. And, we have ended in this room in a poetic ecology in the presence of these human animals, poets, whose abilities are even more blessed by the Spanish tongue.