

*Theatre and the Imagination of the World*

*"Object Metaphor: Archetypal Riddles, Baroque Solutions"*

a lecture given by

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at the

Second Annual Conference of the London Convivium for Archetypal Studies and the Arts

London, June 11, 1988

to Liza, to James  
for their inspiration

The lecture was preceded by two renderings of Caliban from "The Tempest" by William Shakespeare. The first rendering presented a melancholic, even bitter, dark and deep voiced Caliban; the second, an enthusiastic, almost hysterical, childish, high voiced one. Both spoke the following text:

Be not afeared, the isle is full of noises,  
Sounds, and sweet airs that give delight  
And hurt not.  
Sometimes, a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices,  
That if I then had waked after long sleep  
Would make me~ sleep again  
And then in dreaming the clouds methought would open  
And show riches ready to drop upon me,  
That when I waked, I'd cry to dream again.

(ACT II, SCENE III)

## PANIC CREATURES

In the legend that reports the death of Pan, there is that extraordinary moment when the ship stalls outside the island of Paxos and the Egyptian pilot decides after all to shout the announcement that he was asked to make, by a mysterious voice, to the deserted island: "Great Pan is dead!" What the passengers of the boat then heard was a concert of groans, sobs and moans from the rocks and shrubs of the island: Nature's grief at the loss of Pan. The shrub-nymphs and the rock-gods have since remained silent, except for very few exceptions, in Western History. Nature withheld her soul song, became dead matter, and we lost our imaginal ears.

Pan is the patron-god of the work I will be reflecting upon, called Pantheatre. The performance which gave rise to it was titled "Calling for Pan," and it started with the renowned Socratic prayer: "Beloved Pan and all ye other gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inwards soul, and may the inward and outward man be at one." Caliban is a panic creature whose world is enchanted. He can help the actor get back in touch with the inward Pan through his playful, if treacherous animality. His fantastic hybrid challenge can give life and colour to the inward soul. But what about the outward soul, the Pan-shrub, the Pan-rock and his animistic pandemonium?

This paper addresses the question from within theatre. It is based on what is technically called "object-metaphore" work and refers to a dramatic situation in which an actor confronts an object on stage. It was developed in Pantheatre as a way of studying the archetypes of imagination that are called upon in such moments. This is what the subtitle of this lecture alludes to, in deference to the Convivium's publication "Sphynx," when referring to "archetypal riddles." They are the sources and fundamental patterns through which images are constellated, through which, in this specific work, objects become images and acquire metaphorical life: images which "know no repose" as Gaston Bachelard puts it.

The definition of imagination that I will be using refers quite simply to this process of image-making: when images appear, where do they come from? How do they constellate? What archetypal set is at work? Such questions come alive when asked within a theatrical context.

To give an idea of what object-metaphor work entails, let me give a succinct description. An actor is presented with an object on stage; he engages with it physically, moving it and being moved by it. He may choose to push it, lift it, lay it down, throw it, etcetera. The objects vary considerably but usually have a strong material personality, one which is not too linked to a utilitarian function. A knife, for instance, on stage, will inevitably be caught up in literary networks to do with murders. The aim of the work is to struggle and free the object from such conventional stereotypes, as well as from subjective projections, and to find other imaginal modes. We have used in recent sessions large cardboard boxes, delicate balsam wood rods, a rather big river stone, a torn pine tree branch, large pieces of cloth, sets of bamboo sticks, etcetera.

Presenting such work requires a formal staging that is not appropriate here. I choose rather to preface the lecture by two renderings of Shakespeare's Caliban, a senex and a puer version, and I would like them both to be emblematically present throughout this reading. You will notice that the headings of the lecture announce some rather heavyweight figures: colossus, giants, deadpans, Titans. With the rather melancholic Caliban, I wanted these figures to weight down the flighty, unreal connotations with which imagination is incorrectly associated. Yet in the same headings you will notice a rather hair-raising cultural mobility: neoplatonism, African ethnology, baroque esthetics, alchemy.. I would ascribe that freedom to the younger and more enthusiastic Caliban.

## **COLOSSAL FIGURATION**

Caliban's dreams show riches ready to drop upon him. In a brief article in the first issue of "Spynx," I mention "colossal figuration" and quote the Cuban poet, Jose Lezama-Lima, by saying that every object aspires to a colossal dimension which is not to do with size but that is imaginal. The implication is that objects, as individual entities, contain imagination. This is the working premise of object-metaphor: to realise the colossal imagination of the object-world. One could also put it that Pan lives in the bush, in the rock, in the object. When he comes alive, objects become colossal and achieve figuration, and both actor and spectator encounter objective emotion. Almost always implicit in this emotion is a colouring of panic, which is one of the principal epiphanics of the god Pan.

A colossal approach to an object will therefore reveal its imaginal will and caprice—what it wants to say and do. This teaches the actor to observe, serve and interact with what I have called the "objective imagination," as opposed to our usual western notion that imagination is a subjective inventive personal power. Imagination becomes a perceptive function.

Strictly speaking, I am inverting the proposed theme of this Convivum "Imagination and the Theatre of the World." I am proposing theatre as a means to reapproach the imagination in and of the world.

## **THE LABOURS OF IMAGINATION**

Some years ago, during a work session, a great Italian clown teacher started shouting at the actors, "Manuel, manuel. . .more manuell!" I knew of no Manuel on stage; he actually meant "manual.. .act like a manual worker, like a labourer." He was raging against the precious boudoir sentimentality with which the actors were engaging imagination. For him fiction was to be dealt with

like labor, thick bodied, with earthy gestures. His was a tradition of what I would call Hephaistian clowns, proletarian Augustes, a caustic no-nonsense, rather aggressive, physical buffoon. Without adhering exclusively to such prosaic realism, for me too, theatre that "matters" implies sensual engagement with imagination, in which the body's presence is central, in which image-making is a physical craft.

But image-making is also a cultural and psychological labour; archetypal awareness requires both cultural knowledge and self knowledge—lest we fall into naive and unqualified virginal ecologies of imagination—those that believe only in so-called natural spontaneity and who end up unknowing prisoners of banal stereotypes. In *Pantheatre*, I am not only wishTiig to bring together cárporal theatre and archetypal psychology, but also emphasizing the hard work, the labour that this implies at both levels.

## THE NEOPLATONIC ANIMAL

Following platonic traditions, as reviewed by Archetypal Psychology, imagination is a function of soul, psyche, or the roman "anima." It is from soul that images come, following archetypal patterns: psyche speaks through images, for instance in dreams and fantasies. Images also can be said to fulfill the soul's archetypal needs. I will now share some reflections on how these metaphysical distinctions are at work in practice, on the theatre's shop floor, in keeping with the labourer's perspective.

In the *Timaeus* (34c), Plato describes the world as an animal that has a body, a soul and an intellect. In *Timaeus'* words, the creator-god put soul at the center of the universe, and then extended it throughout and beyond its confines, as a sky enveloping it. World, anima and animal are overlapping categories in Plato's cosmogony. Our language only differentiates the words "anima" and "animal" by the tail-end of the letter "l". One can hear in the platonic interplay of these two words that the objects of the world are animals with a soul; that imagination is the animal in the object; that image-making is soul speaking in the world.

These are extrapolations that I try to root through object-metaphor work. The actor seeking out imagination enters into an animal rapport with objects; the animal in him will sense the anima in matter, this implies animal moves, animal receptivity. Such an approach to the "theatre of the world" is an education of what I have called the "instinct of image." The actor's training becomes an anima/animal approach to images. Creative imagination is a soulful conversation between the body and the world; the animal helps us to converse with the soul of the world. Inspiration, for instance—which is the epiphany of image, is finding vision in our breathing: we inspire, we breathe in images. The imaginal animal's awareness is instinctive, alert. It realises imagination as perception, receptivity and response-ability.

The cosmogony that Plato lays out in the *Timaeus* is followed by a whole section of detailed formulas, of measured combinations of how to dose, mix, blend, compound, compress, suspend, synthesize "nous" and "soma"—all these are his terms. One could describe it, in "manual" terms, as "the cosmological cuisine" of imagination: how to achieve that subtle third element which partakes of the nature of both body and spirit, but which transcends them, being simultaneously "same" and "other" with them, to quote Plato.

Theatre image-making is a microcosmic reflection of this platonic "haute cuisine." It brings together "nous" as the breath of poetry and the world of ideas, with the plastic matter of visual and vocal materiality. It kneads them together in an architecture of fusions and tensions, and openings where imagination constellates. Image rises out of this paradoxical alchemy where language, voice, body and objects are mixed and held in physical and metaphorical tension.

## MASTERS AND MISTRESSES

By insisting on the animal discovery of a soulful world I am renewing with the etymology of invention as finding, rather than as creation ex nihilo. And this all the more because theatre is full of sorcerer's apprentices caught in the hubris of kingly mastering creation.

Plato describes the soul as a feminine entity—psyche—and says that it was fashioned "in origin and excellence prior to and older than the body.. .to rule as a mistress over the soma, body" (34c). One could infer therefore that image-making is a mistressing process, a subtle play, a musicality that parallels the ebbs and flows of platonic eros. In this interplay the actor is a lover-catalyst, an imaginal mediator, activator, instigator, a medium that fosters the display of anima in matter. By mixing words, objects, movement and song, he stirs enough psychic complexity for the anima/animal to appear. Theatre becomes an alchemical laboratory, a synthetic platonic manufacture.

The animation of the actor's own body is central to this process. My own early years in theatre were caught up in the late sixties upsurge of physical theatre: acrobatic bodies, broken voices, harsh but idealistic and even religious physicality. A powerful rebellious tide waned to sweep away the empire of intellectual secular theatre. The disruptive immediacy of Dionysus took over the stage, in preverbal wild rituals, in contortions of more or less sacred expressionism. The animal had been repressed too long; it burst back on the scene. In its turn, it too became a tyrannical mode: Dionysus returned with a certain brutality that often terrorized and transgressed the very body we wanted to celebrate. One saw actors transfixed in ecstatic terror, seeking total vibrating presence. The platonic animal was, to a great degree, literalised into a mad, possessed, vibrating medium.

This ecstatic quest often hardened the bodies into numb mystical presences through which a transpersonal spirit was meant to speak. It even yielded its own form of iconoclasm in acting rituals that sought something like pure energy. Counterreaction swiftly followed with the sleek visual pageantries of dreamy, of disembodied post-modern imagery, to say nothing of the soft therapies of the cool new age.

Axial to these oscillations, there remains the body's genuine eloquence, which is not entrapped in trance alone, nor in stylized semiologies. What is at stake is the corporal ability to link idea-images to emotions. Emotion etymologically implies motion. When moved, the body responds through the poetry of every muscle, joint, skin sensation or internal stirring. This is especially important when confronting language: through words, the intellect can drain bodies and voices of all animation. We become talking heads without gestures, with flat voices, the body a numb support for speech. When animated, the body comments ideas, gives them image, gives them emotion. To comment means to "create mind with": it is an imaginative partnership with language.

## THE MORONIC THEATRE

Conversely, excessive emphasis on physical expressivity can blunt a more refined eloquence and yield only the most coarse interplay with language. A case in point is a recent work session with a group of young actors I was involved with in Germany. Because of the physical strength and hypertonicity with which they approached most exercises, I was brought to work on yawning, stretching and sighing. Besides allowing optimum relaxation, these are highly acute and articulate manifestations. We worked on listening meticulously to how these symptoms "speak" the body and reveal its hidden impressions, its pockets of tensions of pleasures, the traces and trails of memories, in sinuous waves, in gripped stretchings, in noisy awakenings, like snippets of dreams lodged in specific corporal fibres. One mistresses these subtleties through uninhibited but highly

selective compositions of sighs, whimpers, glissandi, purrs, squeaks, grunts, gasps, moans, cooings, snivels, chortles, etcetera. It is full of scurrying animals, full of misty and elusive anima figures.

To call this kind of work "The Moronic Theatre" is heavy-handed and carries aggressive overtones; it carries a certain rage to speak up for the body eloquence. Reanimating the body allows it to give matter to language, makes it matter, gives it substance, stands under it, under stands it.

Reversing view points, the realm of ideas in theatre craves for the support, the imaginal blood of the so-called "moronic" body. In a recent talk, James Hiliman stressed how internal images seek embodiment; he linked this to the passage in the Odyssey where the souls of Hades came out seeking blood. He also linked this to giving voices, physical voices, to our fantasies: talking alone aloud. By giving eloquent, bloodful emotion to language, the body moves language, dances with it. My pugnacious ulterior motive in labelling this work "moronic" is to make sure that the corporal foundations, the *materia* is animated and can contribute its autonomous eloquence to the platonic synthesis—and not be reduced to being only a "porte-parole," a numb or at best illustrative servant to text. In its clash with the realm of ideas, the *moronic theatre* can then give rise to one of the main baroque rhetorical figures, that angel/demon called the "oxymoron." Without body, there is no reality to oxydate, to corrode, no substance to transmute — and I feel like playing with that word: to transmute, to go through the mute trance, to enter the realm beyond the mute trance, in other words: paradoxical eloquence. Without body there can be no oxymoronic baroque solution.

Let us now return to the theatre, to the object-metaphor work, and to the notion of "objective imagination." To reflect on the distinction between subjective and objective imagination and to question our inherited definitions of imagination and of its workings, I will now refer to and draw parallels with an article by French ethnographer, Jean Bazin, an article titled "Retour aux choses-dieux" (return to the things-gods, where the words "things" and gods" are tied together by a hyphen: *things-gods*). The article is based on what are called "bolis," which are conglomerates of objects used by the Bambara tribes from Mali. In specific ceremonies, bolis are placed in earthenware and sprayed with the blood of animals killed by an officiant. Jean Bazin defines the aim of his article (one could speak here of the "object" of his article) as follows: "I simply want to question the nature, the ontological status of these things: I try to have some idea of what happens when they are thus sprayed with blood."

Bazin uses neither the word "soul" nor "imagination," and his article is precisely about the danger of projecting our western notions of "soul" and "imagination," through so-called scientific observation, onto such ceremonies and cult-objects as the Bambara's bolis. This is specially relevant to the French culture and language, where the word "âme," in its very sonority, has overwhelming catholic-romantic connotations. By caffing on Heidegger, his essays on things and thingness and contemporary French post-modern criticism, he enhances the status of these boli, and demonstrates how they have been diminished by being associated with the derogatory connotations of notions like fetichism, idolatry and animism. He disentangles and, in a sense, delivers these objects from our western moralised rational fear of imagination, and of its ambivalent polysemic potential.

## **BOLI: AN AFRICAN RIDDLE**

I have often spoken harshly of what I have referred to as "anthropological esthetics" in theatre. By this I refer to the excessive veneration paid to exotic non-western rituals, and to the model of the shaman in the imagination of acting, models that come mainly from the credentials of anthropology. Anthropology combines the fascination of exotic and reputedly authentic religious phenomena, with the detachment of scientific observation. If I here call on Jean Bazin's article, it is

precisely because of the way in which he questions his own field, and the lenses it has used to serve and to fascinate itself.

The notion of fetishism turns imagination into a religious pathology; the fetish thing, by being turned into a replacement idol, loses its autonomous imaginal identity, its thing-ness. According to Bazin, one does not ask a boli, "What do you represent?" In itself a boli is seen as a singular object, a thing-god. A boli is not a symbol representing a god or a genius hidden somewhere in the bushes. Nor is it a tabernacle enclosing a hidden or invisible being. These are speculations that come out of the observers' spirit/matter dichotomy. The "symbolic" and the "tabernacle" approaches turn out to be the prevalent ones one encounters in theatre object exercises. Actors construct and get caught in scenarios that are based on these premises, like the ethnographers whose theories Bazin deconstructs. The first question one asks a boli is: "What are you made of?" which, within the perspective of this paper is very much a labourer's question. The answer is in sensual perception, in physical engagement. One does not search the object for symbols but for the immediate images of its material presence. The more a boli acquires a unique, singular status, the more "god" it is. Similarly in object-metaphor work: the more an actor recognizes and respects the individual thingness of the object, the more in touch he comes with its soul. Imagination rises from the detail perception of the object's singularity, its texture, patina, articulation, location, scars, awkwardness; its character and the tangible memory it has accrued onto itself. Such an encounter moves imagination. The actor then deploys the object's colossal figuration; he is moved by its will. When this occurs, object and image are one, in the same manner that Bazin says that thing and god are one, and the onlooker perceives its metaphorical power or mana and is "showered by a rain of metaphors."

Bazin actually speaks of the "process of individuation" of a boli—of how it acquires individual god nature: "the principle that presides its production is of individuation, not of representation.. ." It is a question of "constantly engendering a new singular body" (p. 264) of becoming a "thing-person" (p. 266). To my ears, these statements are a struggle with what Wallace Stevens calls the "angel of reality": "Yet I am the necessary angel of earth for in my sight you see the earth again, cleared of its stiff and stubborn man-locked set."

The process of spilling blood onto the boli is central to the individuation process. According to Bazin, the sacrificial model does not apply to these ceremonies since the blood is not offered to an absent or represented deity. The blood directly enhances the presence of the object which gets "charged, so to speak, with enormous metaphorical power." Rather than using terms like "transference" or "projection," Bazin suggests that a term like "transfusion" would be more appropriate. Similarly in object-metaphor work, if there is any sense in which the term "sacrifice" can be used, it is in the relinquishing of personal subjective imaginations. As a form of transfer it is an exorcising of the actor's subjectivity by the "thing-god." One offers one's metaphorical blood to it, like to the souls in the underworld.

## **A MATTER OF ENGAGEMENT**

The object of the exercise is engagement: how to engage with an object so that it manifests its god-individuality? There is a sacrificial price in the notion and etymology of engagement. One puts down a gage. Engagement should lead to a marriage with matter, and Bazin reports that among the Bambara, one does not speak of acquiring or buying a boli, "one marries it" (p. 266). If one follows this metaphorical line through, one would of course then talk of the pregnancy of matter; of how matter can give birth to image. This casts another light on the labours of imagination and makes of the actor a midwife Bazin speaks of the officiant as "surgeon," and I will return later to the technical implications of this comparison. To finish these reflections on sacrifice and to qualify the type of marriage involved, here another very relevant quote from Bazin's article: ". . . in

no case is it the material mass that is being 'adored', but a sufficiently complex body so as to be held as more individual than the human ego itself' (p. 266). There is a platonic ring to that phrase!

A few remarks on "animation," since the word contains "anima," is close to "animism," and is often used in describing creative processes. We return to the imaginal workshop, the labourer's manual of how to deal with the imaginal. To call, once again, on a parallel with Bazin, he states that with bolis, "We are rather on the side of mystic devotion: the divine is not only felt effectively, but materially manipulated, in the same beatitude of the immediate" (p. 270). Here is another phrase that seems to come straight out of an object-metaphor theatre session! The mechanics of engagement I spoke of imply setting the object into motion and emotion: waking it up, animating it. Correct engagement—which is of the heart of this imaginal craft—allows the thing-god to take over the motion and emotion of the image. But, it is at this point that there is a strong ambivalence about words like animation, or even more "manipulation." The latter word has strong connotations of cheating, misappropriation, prestidigitation, manufacturing illusion, fakery. Similarly, animation can connote Walt Disney, or the craft and psychology of masks or puppet work. These are part of a broad view of reference to it. What I would like to elaborate on and which links b~ to my reserves about "anthropological esthetics" is the fact that we ~ speaking theatre, artifice, fiction, agreed illusion and not so-called authentic or pure religious phenomena. We are talking of the actor, showman in the shaman," or even the charlatan. Furthermore, b:  
speaking of baroque, I allude to a highly artificial art world, one that even "disenchanted," as we shall see later. In an earlier quote of Ba he mentioned "mystical devotion" and "beatitude of the immediate.' There is no doubt that there is an atmosphere of religiosity in first approaches to object-metaphor exercises; of necessity, neophytes to work, in questioning and discovering other dimensions of imaginati non-personal ones, do link back, re-connect (re-ligare the original meaning of "religion") with other patterns of creation. Yet, since wi in theatre, the trickster and the miraculous are intertwined. The herr element is ever present as an awareness of fiction, or metaphorical commerce. Irony and play are an integral part of imagination and, beyond reverential first approaches, the actor enters into a highly complex and ambivalent dialogue with thing-gods. Image-making becomes a complicity, often irreverent and sacrilegious, involving e' to paraphrase Bazin, negative transfusions, demystification.

## ON TECHNIQUE AND TITANIC TEACHERS

Let us now return to the fabulous neoplatonic philosophies, ~ more specifically to the Orphic fables on the dismemberment of Dionysus that so fascinated Proclus. Proclus read the passage on th "anima mundi" that I quoted earlier from the Timaeus, as Plato's interpretation of the allegedly earlier orphic tales on Dionysus. In tF lineage of thought, which we know to be outside historical logic, imagination speaks through fabulous allegorical spirals. I will further iborate on these stories and cast some mytho-poetical light on the thnical aspect of "object-metaphor" work. I wish to give the word ~chnique" a fabulous, soul-making dimension. More than ever, at thi mt it is necessary to hold together mythological speculation and actical, manual exercising, blood and psyche, fantasy and object.

The orphic story tells of the dismemberment of the infant onysus by the Titans at the instigation of the goddess Hera. Proclus w in the scattered members of the god, the multiple ubiquity of Plato nima mundi," and he saw in the preservation of the infant's heart, the ul's unity; the Dionysian heart remained unaffected by the cruelty of ~ Titans. I will now associate the Titans with technique: they are the ~ulous technicians, the mythical surgeons, that operate the ;memberment and scatter soul into the world. Without them, onysus, reputed to be the god of theatre, would have remained a bab~ d, and imagination would have remained in the crib, identified with ~ infant, as it remains for so many today. Titanic cruelty tears this by-imagination apart, boils it, and casts it Out into the world. The ocentric, unified imaginal body of the infant is torn into its different mponents, differentiated. The Titan, called "diaretikoi"—dividing cl—



represented for the Greeks, if anyone did, the notion of evil—as literally distinct from the Christian notion of evil as animality. Titans ~re said to have souls of steel, which fits our image of technology, but necessarily of evil. The hard, arid steel-like analytic disassociation techniques that actors are put through in Pantheatre's "object metaphor exercises are a titanic endeavour, tearing apart the infant's subjective sion, its innocent wholesome body, so that it may see the world and •en its own members, as "other."

These are exercises of disassociation that tear movement away

often seeking the poetics of contradiction. They frustrate illustration, emphasis, global unified energy. They exercise the independence of voice, language and movement. This approach also questions the different levels of identity of the actor—it pulls apart the person, actor, literary subject, dramatic persona. It tears into the fabric of fiction in order to reassemble complex synthetic images. Titanic dissociative techniques are the basic tools towards baroque solutions.

## ON DEADPAN ALLEGORIES

To round up this fantasy exegesis on the Orphic Titans, some remarks on the Dionysian heart, on the infant's play-pen, and on the role of Hera. There is much to be said about the survival of the heart of Dionysus in these tales and on the reunification of the god by Apollo. I would like to simply point out that within titanic technology, the heart of the matter must remain alive, while the body of theatre is being torn apart. Proclus identifies the "intelligent heart" with Plato's universal intellect. James Hiliman devoted a recent Eranos lecture to "The Thought of the Heart." The titanic nature of dismemberment disseminates Dionysian imagination and inseminates the world with soul. Within this process of disjunction, explosion, separation, there must remain at the center a presence of mind that is heartfelt. The heart irrigates the soul in the world, gives it its semantic blood. Without this thoughtful heart, we are in a universe of aleatoric surrealism, in a random cosmogony of imagination, as is a lot of contemporary theatre (what I have also called "deadpan allegories").

A few remarks now on objects as toys, the world as playground. The Titans lure the infant Dionysus through a collection of toy-objects. Titanic dismemberment is preceded by game. Playful animation is a prerequisite to a heartfelt dismemberment, a stage where objects are caught in the realm of game, a playful soulfulness. Maybe this is saying that imagination has an infant animal playful heart which must precede and survive titanic dismemberment, like the fascinating games that kittens play with woolen balls.

My last remark on this orphic fantasy pertains to the role of Hera. She commissions the murder, the titanic dismemberment of the child. Within this perspective we encounter the so-called bad stepmother (and Hera has tended to get very bad press from all quarters, from the advocates of family as from feminists, as from artists). We encounter Hera as the figure behind the maturing soul-creating titanic operation. Maybe her ruthless cruelty is necessary to break up the Zeus-Dionysus father/infant protective bond. This interpretation seems to say that the titanic intervention of Hera is necessary in order to recognize soul in the world. Until one has come to terms with the Titans, and the so called bad mother, one remains an eternal Cinderella, and the "Theatre of the World" will not move out of the infant's playground, a sweet pumpkin fairytale.

## ON BAROQUE GIANTS

One of the greatest writers and theoreticians on the baroque, the Spanish Jesuit, Baltazar Gracian, places the notion of "disenchantment" at the heart of baroque esthetics. Re-ensouling the

world on the other hand is often referred to as the "re-enchantment of the world," making the soul in the world sing again. Let us play with the dynamics of this opposition. Gracian's disenchantment implies the melancholic, even disabused insight of the most famous baroque metaphors: life is a dream, all the world is a stage, we are but walking shadows, made of the stuff of dreams. . .Enthusiastic traditions of enchantment see soul in the natural beauty of the world. Like Saint Francis talking to the birds and flowers, as paracletic divine manifestations. Gracian's seems to be a falling decadent universe, while the Franciscan vision links up with the rediscovery of soul in the world, the enthusiasm of a Renaissance, a rebirth. These two are seemingly opposite imaginations, two seemingly opposite "Theatres of the World." One presents a lifeful miracle, the other a deadly metaphorism. Both are essential for a full, simultaneous apprehension of the baroque notion of imagination that I am wishing to convey. This involves the conjunction of titanic metaphorical dispossession while keeping intact the enthusiastic bloodful heart. Baroque images seek the tensions and paradoxes that can contain such abysmal disparities, like stasis in extasis, depth in superficial profusion, holding together beauty and death, Persephone and Pluto. In the performance, "Hercules: Twelve Baroque Labours," the mythic hero confronts through muscular enthusiasm the theatre of object-metaphor, completely missing the point. The result is both comic and pathetic for, after all, he represents our own egos obsessively fighting the metaphorical monsters of death. Through his heroic failures he allows us a tragic insight into the otherness of the imagination of the world. This baroque Hercules, like the roman Farnese statue of him, is a heavy, melancholic, depressed figure pondering on the futility of his life's labours.

The Farnese Hercules is a baroque giant, like that other figure, whose point of view we might well profit from considering: Goliath. Michelangelo's colossal struggles are the turning point of the Renaissance—his saturnal gigantic efforts exhaust a certain imagination, they weight down the youthful enthusiastic Renaissance, of which the figure of David, the young intrepid shepherd boy, is in many ways the emblem. Mannerism and baroque art turn in titanic compassion to the decadent, heavy, anchoring figures of Goliath/Hercules, to their disenchanting insight. A figure who is literally caught in this dilemma is Calderon de la Barca's Sigismundo, a giant of vitality, imprisoned in the very play titled "Life is a Dream." From his dark cell, from his torn soul, come some of the most glorious celebrations of nature. I am thinking of the central speech on the freedom of the bird, the fish, the beast, the stream: the unbearable contradiction in which god has placed man. A song that rises from the heart of baroque disenchantment, where Calderon describes a wild animal, a daring and cruel beast whose fur markings were painted by divine brushstrokes to reflect the constellations of the stars.