

centre; the seascape map that projects the conflict between sterility and cultivation, between rock and farmland; and the third map that represents the circular movement of her factual trip basically from London to modern Oslo and back.

I have also shown how the struggle between the two biospheres is dramatized by a parallel tension on the human level where the seascape people and their living conditions are portrayed with a colonialist's degrading glosses and metaphors. Explicitly and implicitly, her travelogue insists that it is "civilized" Europe's – England's and France's – duty to undertake the campaign to improve the conditions of "barbaric" people. Her main metaphor for this rotates around aspects of confinement and imprisonment. Her colonization programme is a freedom appeal.

To produce a cultural tract of the strongest persuasion Mary Wollstonecraft has first of all resorted to a number of interlinking literary and cultural traditions; secondly, she has synthesized her observations through her eyes which renders power and hegemony to her, what then could be called, "masculine" construct of space and people; thirdly, she has "humanized" and thus problematized her narrative by inserting a split persona, the agonized Romantic ego and the detached intellectual.

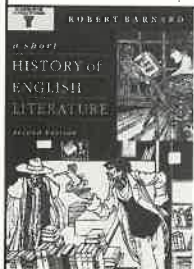
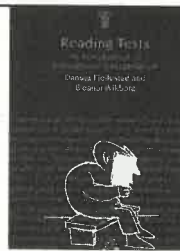
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H. W. FAWKNER

Roots of the Geo-Poetic Going beyond Linguistic Man

It is a latterday fashion in late twentieth-century literary circles to hold that literature is primarily a form of language. In the literary artifact, nothing escapes from language or from the principles of language. Even "the other" is organized as a language (Lacan). For Linguistic Man, in short, there is no other. Linguistic Man is too egocentric to admit an other (for instance a poetic other) that would presence itself in terms of not-language. Linguistic Man does his best to transform the world into a library and the human being into a librarian.

Contra the librarian, however, it may be asserted that the roots of the linguistic artifact are not in essence linguistic. In the manner of the contemporary Scottish poet Kenneth White, we need to call attention to this smudging of difference. Once we lose sight of the ontological difference between language and the roots of language, we find ourselves living not only in a language without roots but in a world without roots. In order to fight nihilism *as a writer*, the one who writes cannot merely indulge in "writing". The writer must dismantle the world of verbiage and effectuate a showing of the archaic spaces that antecede the pipe dreams of Linguistic Man. Archaic Humanity precedes Linguistic Man in the way that poetry precedes language. Poetry is not an archaic "form" of language any more than a storm is a "form" of weather. There were storms long before "weather", and there were lyrical root-moments for mankind long before the establishment of civilization as a language-centred construct.

The essence of language is the poetic, the essence of the poetic is the lyrical, and the essence of the lyrical is the musical movement of nature in and across silence. These pulsations in their turn have their roots in the most archaic of all experiences on this planet: the sensation of the primitive, free openness of geo-poetic space. When, as Professor of Poetics in the University of Paris IV, Kenneth White founds the *Institut International de Géo-poétique* in 1989, this event expresses a counter-intellectual need within the intellectual community of Europe: a desire to get back to poetic foundations. Such returns, as in the case of the Romantic movement two hundred years ago, are essential traits of the poetic life itself. Poetry cannot *not* return to its roots, poetics cannot *not* revolt against Linguistic Man, and a poetic root-manifesto cannot *not* involve itself with the geo-poetic.

In the return to the archaic and geo-poetic, and starting with Rousseau, the Romantics discovered the poetic roots of mankind as roots not simply

of creativity but of freedom and hope. The geo-poetic in itself gives space and hope, gives space *for* freedom and *for* hope. Without this archaic root-space, freedom, as in contemporary society, becomes verbiage, sloth, indifference, and sleep. The sense of global and political disillusionment in the generations currently calling themselves "new" suggests a manner in which newness itself goes to sleep when its geo-poetic originations become overclouded by the linguistic hype and technological representations of semiotic culture. When "communication" has replaced the geo-poetic, the geo-poetic no longer itself has anything to say; it itself ceases to communicate, becoming the pretty or soiled background we call "environment".

If, as Schelling felt, the geo-poetic is the origin of freedom, this is so because our thoughts about freedom can never be merely cognitive-linguistic. Freedom only emerged out of the Age of Reason at the time when reason became an expanded notion. An entirely-rational freedom would not be *human* freedom at all, for freedom as a human idea for global hope includes a core-element of geo-poetic affectivity. Contemporary political-abstract freedom furnishes us with the verbiage and hype of the abstract notion of freedom, while at the same time utterly abolishing freedom's originary truth-affectivity: hope as a geo-poetic, self-realizing tonality for universal mankind as such.

For Kenneth White, the realm of hope is at once real, lyrical, open, spatial, and concrete. In his seminal work, *La figure du dehors* (Paris, 1978), freedom is understood as a geo-poetic apriori. In a not-yet-risen realm, where the ego itself has not yet arisen, the reality of the ego is anticipated by a preliminary non-ego that antecedes it. This non-ego is poetic because it is geo-poetic. My aboriginary geo-poetic ego is the roots of my poetic ego, which in its turn roots my ego. On the level of language, this means that the roots of my being know beforehand a preliminary non-language which arises in me in a depth of geo-poetic consciousness preceding Linguistic Man. The freedom of my empowering language-resources is in this way not itself linguistic in essence. The poetic or geo-poetic strikes a dimension of my overall awareness that is not reducible to the laws of language, nor therefore reducible to the principle of reason (cf Heidegger's *Satz vom Grund*).

Rather than seeing this primordial dimension of language and self in terms of an affectivity naming itself "inner feelings", Kenneth White views it as an outerness (*dehors*). The event in which ego sees the manifestation of its egoless root is thus not an inward-moving event, an affect, but an emancipatory, outward-moving apperception...the geo-poetic consciousness as such. Here the "I" is freed into egolessness without there being any fully formed ego to move out from in the first place. There is thus a freeing-from-self without self. Only the radicalism of Buddhist thought captures this root-sensation.

The distinctly airy quality of White's philosophic affectivity is in this way deflected from the neo-Romantic toward the Asiatic, a movement that is thematized in his poetry as well as in his reflective essays. In the "void" of the languageless, I perceive the geo-poetic as the non-linguistic worlding of world where my words and my thoughts must find a sense of peace and composure before I transmute them into language, politeness, and civilization. I see my freedom from my ownmost egoity in the outside-me that precedes my ego and my affiliations with Linguistic Man. I come to love the poetic as the outside-my-language that I "speak" before I can speak. It is this speaking (and not the freedom jargon of Linguistic Man) which unites mankind at the root-level; it is this speaking, and not linguistic competence, that surreptitiously functions as the universally understood language of freedom itself. Universal enhancement of linguistic competence in mankind may not lead to freedom at all. On the contrary, it might be the discourse of the most totalitarian system ever implemented or imagined.

In Kenneth White, this occasion of finding a "way", precisely because it involves aboriginary sightings of the pre-linguistic, pre-cognitive, and pre-representational open (birds, fjords, cloud-ways, white-outs, coastlines), does not end up in the pseudo-Nietzschean standardizations of outerness promulgated by those French "stars" of criticism who have managed to persuade American intellectual culture that they deserve university chairs in European thinking. Within the world of Kenneth White we do not end up in a "new interpretation" of reality. We end up in the free exteriority of that reality itself.

The condition of possibility for our universal understanding of this reality is the condition of possibility for our universal understanding of democratic freedom: not, as the idealists thought, that we are all equally well able to *think* freedom; nor, as the materialists think, that we are all caught in a selfsame materially real "history". The condition of possibility for a *universal* comprehension of the geo-poetic and of freedom is rather the fact that the sap of our actual, day-to-day being flows through a universally ancestral root-affectivity pointing us toward the open. To be pointed toward the open: this is a shared experience within mankind. A common perspective requires a common prospect. To state that "protecting the environment" is an issue of "common interest" to "all peoples" is a travesty of this insight. This is a roundabout thinking that places the root in the periphery. The geo-poetic is not merely "environmental".

The Swedish word "*umgänge*" (German *Umgang*) is a clue-word for the one seeking to understand the nature of that which arises in us prior to language and for the one seeking to understand the essence of that dimension in

language (the geo-poetic) that arises “in it” prior to its own full presencing of itself (prior to articulation, representation): As a tiny child, I have “*umgänge*” with the things of my world prior to any linguistic-representational involvement with the world. The cot I sleep in and the diurnal rhythm night-day are at the roots of all my experience. The “*umgänge*” itself is not language-like.

The roots of “*umgänge*” are not the roots of linguistic signification. (This may today be scientifically verified through elementary neuroscience.) This difference was clarified phenomenologically by Husserl as the difference between *Ausdruck-Sinn* and *Bedeutung-Sinn*. There is an originary expressiveness ahead of discursive cognition. Put neurobiologically: the left hemisphere of the brain is not geo-poetic. The totality of our nervous system, as producer of an enduring, archaic life-Gestalt, is not monitored by the cognitive systems elevated by Linguistic Man to the rational pinnacle of universal, semiotic truth-speaking. The geo-poetic evades the hierarchies of the language police.

It should be noted that this aboriginal “*umgänge*” we have with the world of things is not some “intercourse” with “objects”. (As soon as we utilize all-too-Latinate labels, we have already begun to activate the rules fixed by Linguistic Man.) “*Umgänge*” never suggests the mere existence of objects but instead the existence of a world of things. To speak of “perception”, “subject”, “object”, “interaction”, “interpretation” etc is to mislead; it is to intellectualize “*umgänge*” and to pretend that it is constructed as a system of “components” that have some sort of real-life actuality apart from the “*umgänge*” that makes them possible in the first place.

As a Scottish thinker and poet with a literary and intellectual reputation based in Continental Europe rather than in England, Kenneth White looks for the foundations of a geo-poetic outlook not in the naive realism of empiricist thought but in the sophisticated realism of twentieth-century phenomenology and in the hard-headed anti-idealism of originary Buddhism. In naive realism, the foundation of the world is “sense impressions”. But so far, on this planet, no one has ever had “sense impressions” without first having “*umgänge*”. We are always in a “with” situation. With someone. With something. In particular, we are always *with* the world. Already, in each single second of life, we are implicitly *with* the geo-poetic. This means that the event of “forgetting” the geo-poetic “*dehors*” is like forgetting the root that feeds you. Conserving the free, open space of the geo-poetic is thus not some ecological or intellectual gesture that may or may not be necessary. Preservation of the geo-poetic and of the *valuation* of the geo-poetic is to touch the reality of the state of finding oneself to be alive in life.

Kenneth White looks in the direction of nature. What can this mean today? Technological man speaks superciliously of the Romantic soul and its “ro-

mantic nature-philosophy”, as if nature has forever been displaced by something more powerful at work in the origination-processes of advanced human thinking. Kenneth White’s world conveys the pantheistic sensations we know from the works of the American Transcendentalists. What can this do for me in this day and age? Two hundred years ago the three young Swabian friends Schelling, Hegel, and Hölderlin used the motto *Hen kai pan* (The One is also the whole). Is this apperception strictly speaking an idealist Romanticism belonging exclusively to youth? Does it signify a phase of innocence, one that we overcome once we arrive in the “maturity” of middle age?

If that is the case, we must congratulate certain beings on the event of not growing up in the first place. Perhaps, contra Linguistic Man, it is not a very good idea to “grow up”. Why not grow down instead?

As he maps an ownmost, self-authorized route between the freedom-ways of Rousseau and Nietzsche, Kenneth White finds himself in a perplexing crossing of freedom with itself. In the airiness of this contradiction, like a bird negotiating two conflicting air-streams to lift to an uppermost tier of free atmospheres, the artist-thinker makes a paradigmatic encounter with nothingness...with a dream of freedom and concrete possibility that empties itself so purely of all polite limits that it can only be continued verbally through the icy medium of the thought-procedures of philosophic Buddhism.

Several consequences flow from this methodology. Firstly, Kenneth White plunges in an opposite direction to the one taken by Nietzsche (and indeed Hölderlin) in their quests for the ultimate roots of freedom. The world of Kenneth White, like the world of Tibetan Buddhism, is profoundly sane, utterly earthy and practical. An extraordinary, supersane limpidity is in this way transported alongside the very sentences of Kenneth White...giving the impression that one is moving at an even pace down some smooth, blue canal of astonishingly effortless onwardness and appeasement.

The second consequence of the Asiatic inclination is that White’s critique of the nihilism of modern civilization is not itself nihilistic. There is no fashionable despair in the critique of inner devastation and lostness. There is not the self-pity that the cynics of modernity borrowed from their Romantic predecessors, turning it into irony. Kenneth White is not himself lost, for the geo-poetic, rather than being a speculative notion, is a dwelling. This writer does not fantasize about the geo-poetic. He lives in it. He walks in it.

This is the artist-philosopher’s ultimate proximity to nature. Nature’s optimism is not a discursive one, not an opposite of pessimism, a negation of “death”. Its optimism is without foundation. Optimism founds itself on optimism. The rose blooms because it blooms (Silesius). This “because” is

neither metaphysical nor physical. It is geo-poetic. It is at once recklessness and letting-be (*Gelassenheit*). The gaiety that flows from this non-discursive optimism is not the bonhomie of the positivist-empiricist: the sort of determination-to-be-optimistic that we witness in the speeches of politicians, scientists, and industrialists as they busily move on to the next Big Plan for Human Progress.

This element of relaxation in Kenneth White has nothing to do with traditional British blandness (reinforced by "Christian meekness"). Here relaxation signifies no slackening of the powers of prehension. Being-alive continues, as in Nietzsche, to be conditioned on enhancement (*Steigerung*). We formulate an alternative vision of the world; but the escape from the contemporary nightmare must not itself be escape-like in its tonality and orientation. It must be *Steigerung*. It must be on the look-out.

Steigerung is to be understood as mood. The one who is free is not simply a being who has a multitude of rights; the one who is free is caught up in elation...not in the kind of elation that goes up in mere smoke after a while but the kind of elation that signifies a steadfast buoyancy of outlook, a readiness to tackle and to live.

Mood, in its turn, cannot be understood merely as a "state". Affectivity is not mere affect, no mere conglomeration of emotional states and emotional meanings. If affectivity is to counter the nihilism at work in the age of consummate meaninglessness, it cannot simply implement affirmative states ("happiness") and affirmative meanings ("freedom"). For in modernity meaninglessness has not simply become "the meaning" of life. On the contrary, meaning has *attained power*. This attainment of power, paradoxically, is reinforced by reason. Thus reason's *power* of turning everything into explicability and flat comprehensibility is part and parcel of the self-totalization of power that goes on in meaninglessness itself. Indeed, if reason has its way completely, affectivity too will be turned over to flat comprehensibility and universal explicability. This is precisely what occurs in our times in the ongoing marriage between "entertainment" and "information": the calculability and manipulability of everything includes the calculability and manipulability of affectivity. (Gigantic Film Festivals and Book Festivals totalize this development.)

Mankind's affectivity is transformed by technology and media into a commodity: a mere affect, a mere emotional or libidinal outpouring "screened" in this or that way, marketed according to this or that law of economic reason. In so far as the arts and the humanities themselves capitulate to the prevailing laws of Technological Man, Linguistic Man, and Aesthetic Man, they too are assimilated to reason as nihilism: the assassination of all value in the name of value and of all morality in the name of morality.

Within this Nietzschean scenario, the work of Kenneth White as *aesthetic mood* is not the function of some act in which we dispassionately dissociate ourselves from the world in order to attain that pleasing and self-con-

gratulatory "state" of "disinterest" that Kant formulated for the rational benefit of countless generations of bourgeois nihilists. For Kenneth White, as for Nietzsche, the aesthetic state is not a "state" at all, if by "state" we mean some displaced mood in which we are aesthetic rather than not-aesthetic.

If the aesthetic sensibility as *Steigerung* involves will and passion and not mere "pleasing representation", these are never an encapsulation of the ego from its surroundings. Being-already-by-things ("*umgänge*") does not merely mean being in the midst of objects. Nor does it merely mean having to do with them, having commerce with them. It means discovering things as sources of archaic disclosure (truth).

Discovery, the ultimate motif of Kenneth White's imaginative world, is not "finding" a place or a being or a truth. Discovery is understanding "*umgänge*" as something that in itself is disclosive (itself a truth-source). Having to do with things is of itself disclosive, is of itself discovery. In the one who has not been attacked by the deteriorizing forces of nihilism, the disclosing (the truth-showing) that operates in things through our *Umgang* with them is not a latecomer. If art is the distinctive counter-movement to nihilism, Kenneth White as Nietzschean or post-Nietzschean artist-philosopher is thus not a wizard calling attention to things beyond the ken of ordinary mortals; nor is he a realist of the institutionalized Anglo-Saxon type, traditionally representing reality "as it is". Rather, he is one who, in pointing to the glow of a horizon of perpetually ongoing geo-poetic disclosure, apprehends the revelation of feeling to itself and the manifestation of the thing (bird, mountain, river) as parts of a single, common, planetary event.

Nature, in Kenneth White, is at once Romantic and void of Romanticism. It is simply the horizontal scope of the constant as it perpetually surrounds mankind. Nature provides "perspective" in precisely the literal sense: *per/spective*, looking-through, seeing-through, looking-ahead. Art comes closer to the actual when it discovers the real as self-overflowing superabundance of life. This richness in the actual, which is always at hand beneath our stale representations, needs to be fathomed by humans who have abandoned the ideals of rationalist materialism and rationalist idealism. Such a human being must ultimately experience Nietzsche's "loneliest loneliness": the aloneness that subsists prior to every quasi-linguistic and quasi-logical distinguishing of I from Thou. In that solitude, which is at the root of all authentic (i.e. geo-poetic) disclosure, individuation is not isolation but exposure. It is not that, in the terminology of Jung, we pass from Ego to Self, transcending Ego, but that we *return* from Ego to Self.

This return, already identified by Rousseau as the realm of *natural* disclosure, solicits the body. But this body, as flesh [*Leib*] rather than body [*Körper*], cannot merely be the anatomical-libidinal construct theorized by common sense as a biological apparatus attached to our psyche. In Kenneth White, as in Nietzsche, body is the configuration of environmental energy in which power is always immediately accessible. As a poet of subjectivity, Kenneth White is in this way no mere poeticizer of the psyche; for the re-

versal of absolute subjectivity (Hegel) into absolute animality (Lawrence) effectuated by poetic modernity only replaces the preeminence of reason with the preeminence of the body by understanding the body in ways that are unknown to reason. The body as command-post of a post-nihilistic world is not a body, not subjectivity, not psyche, not language, not animality, not reason... and not truth. In his Media Festivals, Linguistic Man tends to make the body into a nihilistic fetish, to aestheticize it nihilistically. This reification in itself deepens the age of consummate meaninglessness.

The alternative body that disregards this nihilistic body is not a "geo-poetic body" but the *physical life* of the geo-poetic manner of being, our actual "*umgänge*" with the glow and with the horizon. In such living there is sooner or later an event of indistinguishability and even of disappearing. This primeval dissolution, because it goes deeper than language and man, is utterly sane. In archaic mankind the indistinguishability of humanity and world points to the world. Words deepen into powerful and truthful language when this outward-pointing indistinguishability attains the simple potency of a perfectly ordinary revelation.

Awards

Prix Médicis Etranger (1982)
Grand Prix du Rayonnement (1985)
Prix Alfred de Vigny (1987)

Selected Works

The Cold Wind of Dawn (1966)
The Most Difficult Area (1968)
Les Limbes incandescents (1976)
Scenes of a floating World (bilingual, 1976)
Approches du monde blanc (1976)
Terre de Diamant (bilingual, 1977)
Segalen: théorie et pratique du voyage (1979)
Mahamudra (bilingual, 1979)
Le Grand Rivage (1980)
La figure du dehors (1982)
Une Apocalypse tranquille (1985)
Atlantica (1986)
L'Anorak du goéland (1986)
L'Esprit nomade (1987)
The Bird Path (1989)
Dérives (1978) [Penguin 1990]
Les Cygnes Sauvages (1990)
Le Plateau de l'Albatros: Introduction à la géopoétique (1994)

Commentary on Kenneth White

Rivages: lectures de Kenneth White, ed. Terriers (1987)
Kenneth White: l'homme et l'oeuvre (1987)
Le monde ouvert de Kenneth White, ed Michèle Duclos (1995)

FOLKE FREUND, BIRGER SUNDQVIST

Schulgrammatik versus wissenschaftlich fundierte Grammatik

Motto: Noli turbare circulos meos (Archimedes)

Das schwedische Hochschulgesetz schreibt vor, daß Lehre und Forschung auf wissenschaftlicher (...) Grundlage sowie auf bewährter Empirie basieren sollen.¹ Für den Unterricht in deutscher Grammatik dürfte das bedeuten, daß er wissenschaftlich fundiert sein sollte.

Daß wir an diesen Paragraphen des Hochschulgesetzes erinnern, liegt daran, daß sich in letzter Zeit im schwedischen Grammatikunterricht des Deutschen sozusagen zwei Richtungen entwickelt haben, eine "*schulgrammatische*", die unseres Erachtens in Terminologie, Begriffsbildung und Satzanalyse z.T. inkonsequente, mangelhafte, wissenschaftlich nicht befriedigende, oft veraltete Regeln und Beschreibungen bietet, und eine "*wissenschaftlich fundierte*", die es wenigstens versucht, mit den etablierten, neueren wissenschaftlichen Ergebnissen Kontakt zu halten. (Vgl. unten das Ziel einer schwedischen Deutschgrammatik.) Daß die "*schulgrammatische*" Variante vorwiegend in der Schule vorherrscht, ist leicht einzusehen. Ein Anlaß zu diesem Aufsatz ist es aber, daß diese ("*schulgrammatische*") Variante ganz offenbar in gewissem Umfang auch an Universitäten und Hochschulen verbreitet ist. Diese "Zweiteilung" des besagten Grammatikunterrichts in Schweden ist – auch für die Grundschule und das Gymnasium – unglücklich und unnötig. Die "*schulgrammatische*" Beschreibung des Deutschen ist für den Spracherwerb meistens nicht etwa leichter oder pädagogischer. Sie hängt hauptsächlich damit zusammen, daß viele ältere Deutschlehrer/-innen gewiß einsehen, daß sich fast alles in der Welt ändert, dies aber nicht wahrhaben wollen, wenn es um die Beschreibung der deutschen Grammatik geht: Sie müsse so bleiben, wie sie war, als sie einst selbst unterrichtet wurden. Nur selten ist für Anfänger eine leichtere Regel, die den strukturellen Verhältnissen in der Grammatik *nicht* entspricht, berechtigt. Sie kann dann leicht als "Hilfsregel" bezeichnet werden. Dies gilt aber nur für die Schule, und nicht für Hochschulstudenten, an die wir hier in erster Linie denken. Außerdem ist die Zweiteilung des (deutschen) Grammatikun-

¹ "Staten skall som huvudman anordna högskolor för

1. utbildning som vilar på vetenskaplig eller konstnärlig grund samt beprövat erfarenhet, och

2. forskning och konstnärligt utvecklingsarbete samt annat utvecklingsarbete." (Högskolelagen (SFS 1992:1434), 1 kap., § 2)

Vgl. auch M. Östman, Rapport över utvärdering av grundkursen i tyska (1–20 poäng) vid Institutionen för Tyska och Nederländska vid Stockholms universitet, vårterminen 1996, S. 8 ("Högskolelagen").