INTERLUDE

If the development of civilization has such a far-reaching similarity to the development of the individual and if it employs the same methods, may we not be justified in reaching the diagnosis that, under the influence of cultural urges, some civilizations, or some epochs of civilization—possibly the whole of mankind—have become "neurotic"? An analytic dissection of such neuroses might lead to therapeutic recommendations which would lay claim to great practical interest. I would not say that an attempt of this kind to carry psycho-analysis over to the cultural community was absurd or doomed to be fruitless. But we should have to be very cautious and not forget that, after all, we are only dealing with analogies and that it is dangerous, not only with men but also with concepts, to tear them from the sphere in which they have originated and been evolved. Moreover, the diagnosis of communal neuroses is faced with a special difficulty. In an individual neurosis we take as our starting-point the contrast that distinguishes the patient from his environment, which is assumed to be "normal." For a group all of whose members are affected by one and the same disorder no such background could exist; it would have to be found elsewhere. And as regards the therapeutic application of our knowledge, what would be the use of the most correct analysis of social neuroses, since no one possesses authority to impose such a therapy upon the group? But in spite of all these difficulties, we may expect that one day someone will venture to embark upon a pathology of cultural communities.

    —Sigmund Freud, <u>Civilization and Its Discontents</u> (109-110)

Human history demonstrates the fundamental role of reason in human existence and identity. The universe is ordered and the human mind can perceive and know aspects of that order. Nature's structure and power become available for human purposes. That we can know, use, and communicate to each other about the universe implies a fundamental participation in the order pervading that universe.

-William Condon, "Communication: Rhythm and Structure" (55)

Terror is the realization of the law of movement; its chief aim is to make possible the force of nature or history to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous human action. . . . The rulers themselves do not claim to be just or wise, but only to execute historical or natural laws.

-Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (quoted in Griffin
      148)

He speaks of the natural order of things and the regular movements of heavenly bodies. As for her efforts to make anything different, he directs her gaze to the skies. There is no caring in natural law, he says, things are as they are. As to any meaning in these movements, he says, he cannot say, but listen, he says, to the measurements. He is rarely very much over six feet tall, he says, and there are 5,280 feet in one mile, and the average distance from the earth to the sun, he says, is 93 million miles. Think about the immensity, he tells her. The planet Saturn is 886 million miles from the sun. No star is less than 26 trillion miles away from the earth. Think of the smallness of this life, he says, and the vanity of supposing significance.

-Susan Griffin, "Terror," Woman and Nature (148)

One should not invent unreal persons, e.g., one should not say "nature is cruel." Precisely the insight that no such central responsible being exists is a relief!

-Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power (218)

ORDER

I do not know exactly--or even, for that matter, generally--
where to begin. (Nice irony for an essay about the nature of
order, eh?) In this essay I will try to weave together the ideas
and implications of Luce Irigaray (on fluidity and science, the
feminine and the symbolic), Friedrich Nietzsche (on idealism,
epistemology and the will to power), Talking Heads, ecofeminist
thought, chaos theory, Godfrey Reggio's 1983 film Koyaanisqatsi
(musical score by Philip Glass), and others (De Certeau, Deleuze,
Descartes, Foucault, Haraway). I do not know where to start. I
want/need it to come all at once: instantaneous compiling of all
the parts; the simultaneity of the filling of the mind with ideas;
the ability to see, hear, feel, cognize, embody, experience the
connections and their impacts. Remember Hart's description of
"the Edge." That is what I want to push to here.

Pay attention to the patterns, to the flows both smooth and
turbulent. I will provide signposts along the way, but often I will
leave the navigation to you. You will have to pick up on the cues,
the patterns on the surface and the snags and treasures lurking
below and between. The Mississippi has been so confined, so
channeled, that the pressure on its banks, natural and artificial,
is becoming too great. Levies are breaking, water is gushing over
the top. Entire towns are submerged in the flood plains whose
existence we have pretended to forget. The toxic chemicals used

to grow our food are being washed downstream. Watch out! The distinction between water and sewage, potable and disposable, is lost.

A course called "common medicines" repeats endlessly on my local telecourse channel. It consists of a physician writing an outline on an overhead projector as he verbalizes and minutely embellishes the outline. One particular "lesson" that caught my attention was on "quackery." Various kinds of quackery were explained and warning signs provided. A key warning sign of illegitimate medicine, this physician tells me, is talk about "flushing toxins" out of the system.

Have I lost you already? When you raft down the Colorado river, I am told, you can read the canyon walls "like a book": the history of the earth laid bare for all to see. Mark Twain bemoaned his ability to read the Mississippi "like a book." The river became a series of signs, and he could no longer see and experience the river itself. The cost of his ability to navigate was the loss of nature.

Navigation	Nature
Signified	Signifier
Solidity	Fluidity
"Order"	"Chaos"

Can you keep them "straight"? Do you want to?

If you want to keep it all straight, allow me to identify the points, to trace the trajectories, that make up the heart of this essay. (If you are willing to float through it, to be confused, to make your own way amidst the smooth flows, turbulences, forks

and obstacles, then skip the next few pages, picking up where the typeface changes).

This essay is about, or at least circles around, something that conventionally goes under the label "epistemology"--theories of knowledge, ways of knowing, models for the relationship between knowledge and reality, the knower and the known. My particular entryway into the epistemological realm is the conceptualization and enactment of "order." My motivations for such an exploration are multiple. Conceptually, I want to make evident some connections between Western culture's understanding and performance of rhythm, its sense of order and its dominant epistemological paradigm. Politically, I want to use rhythm as a way to hear the connections between that dominant paradigm and the very literal ways by which we order nature--that is, harvest resources and destroy the environment. I use a cluster of metaphors, roughly binary in nature, to hear these connections and open up alternatives:

singularity	multiplicity
being	becoming
canalization	turbulence
geometric order	"irregularity"
masculine	feminine
categorization	lines of flight
territorialization	deterritorialization
form	matter
knowledge	life
digital	analogic

if-then, either-or, but	and, and, and
reification	conversation
epistemology	ontology
the will to control	the will to power
machinic repetition	the eternal return
nihilism	affirmation
idealism	ecofeminism? dialogics?

By juxtaposing descriptions and responses to the film
Koyaanisqatsi, excerpts from a wide range of critical and
philosophical writings and short essays of my own, I am trying to
draw some highly ephemeral yet absolutely material connections
between rhythm, epistemology and our treatment of the
environment. Sometimes one quote will be linked to another
through a common metaphor, other times as a refutation, other
times as a commentary. As with previous and subsequent essays,
crucial connections are drawn by means of my (admittedly loose)
use if the idea of "isomorphisms" as a methodology of sorts:
similar rhythms, spatial layouts, descriptions of flow, and so
forth.

Following Nietzsche, throughout this essay I treat
epistemology not as a descriptive endeavor but as a command, an
imperative about how we should know; closely related to the
epistemological imperative are forms of environmental practice
that require the ordering of nature along the lines of the
epistemological ideal and according to a model of language that
treats the extralinguistic stuff of "nature" as inert and
insignificant--in need of ordering (in-forming) via language and
material practice. One result: I question the value and

ideological affiliations of the hard and fast distinctions between
epistemology, language-use and material practices. Such
distinctions keep our (philosophers, cultural critics, theorists of
language) hands clean and enable the possession and destruction
of "nature."

I work to construct a new imperative, grasping at the bits and
pieces of a new paradigm presented by the likes of Irigaray,
Nietzsche and Talking Heads, one that values life, that works to
listen to "nature," "reality," "ontology," "the feminine" and to
treat it/her/them as participants in the dialogue. Instead of
subjugating the world with integers, atoms and geometric forms,
I believe we need to learn to listen in different ways, to hear
different rhythms and to affirm what is nearest, what is ours:
not "ideals" but life. The relatively abstract formulation of such
an alternative begins the work toward what will become,
beginning in the next essay, an attempt to formulate more
concrete alternatives in practice--in the form of different
rhythms that perform different forms of social organization and
different sensibilities regarding the earth.

The central inspiration of this essay is the film Koyaanisqatsi,
a visual and musical argument that critiques the dominant way of
life in contemporary North American society, particularly in
relation to our treatment of the earth. The film progresses from
images of "nature" (fluid, dynamic) to images of "culture" and
"technology" (destructive, contained and mechanistic movement).
This film portrays a "life out of balance." My use of
Koyaanisqatsi may seem odd if you read this as a piece of textual
criticism. It may (or may not) help to think of the film's role in
this essay more as "theory" than as "text" (i.e., as a lens or set of

assumptions rather than the object of criticism). Through the juxtaposition of images and the tone set by the musical score, <u>Koyaanisqatsi</u> works to convince its audience of the futility of our attempts to escape the confines of our earthly existence, of the severity of the damage done as a result of our desires to control and exploit nature, and of the insanity of our daily existence. <u>Koyaanisqatsi</u> provides this essay with some of its basic images, with an awareness of some of the crucial similarities between apparently disparate structures and with a model of sorts for the form of the essay. The latter is characterized by argument by juxtaposition, the relative absence of explicit linguistic connections (i.e., logical argument) and a strong, unapologetic commitment to altering our relationship to the environment.

In this essay I am trying to convey my outrage, my anger, my passion and my hope. In this sense, both this essay and the film are more honest than conventional narrative cinema and linear, academic argumentation. At the same time, the relative lack of explicit statements regarding their respective agendas (while such agendas are clearly in operation) open them to the critique of being manipulative. I do attempt to manipulate you here, as does <u>Koyaanisqatsi</u>. I tried to manipulate you in the last essay as well--albeit in a form with which you are probably more familiar. So what exactly am I doing in this essay, what is its purpose and its form? The following statement is one of the best formulations I have found for describing the will driving this essay.

The purpose of this excursion is to write theory, i.e., to produce a patterned vision of how to move and what to fear in the topography of an impossible but all-too-real present, in order to find an absent, but perhaps possible, other present. I do not seek the address of some full presence; reluctantly, I know better.
-Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters" (295)

Koyaanisqatsi begins and ends with parallel scenes, montages, giving the film a (classic, simplistic) sense of unity and balance. "Koyaanisqatsi" is a Hopi word meaning, according to the definition provided at the end of the film, "1. crazy life. 2. life in turmoil. 3. life out of balance. 4. life disintegrating. 5. a state of life that calls for another way of living." Discounting, for the moment, the opening titles and ending credits,

    the first and last image in the film is that of a rock wall with several (presumably Native American)

              petroglyphs: seven dark, solid figures of varying sizes and a single
                  figure, larger than the others, with some kind of patterning. The
                  image is basically static; the camera moves slightly, pulling back
                                  somewhat from the wall.

Whether painted or carved into the wall itself, these are inscriptions of a culture onto the earth. They are traces of a culture, but also a concrete point of intersection between nature and culture (the earth, as usual, provides the signifier, the body and materiality, while at least some of the possible meanings lie somewhere in a cultural consciousness). What is the nature of this intersection: dialogue? violence? imposition? reverence? Certainly the film, in its critique

of contemporary, Western, Euro-American culture and technology (the "and" here creating an artificial duality), with its use of a Hopi word and a series of Hopi prophecies regarding the future destruction of the earth, values, positions itself with the Native American outlook on and relationship with nature. Harmony, balance, respect. Euro-Americans are flocking to Native American forms of spirituality, at least partially because of the idealization (regardless of the accuracy, it is a utopian desire) of its views and treatment of the environment: "sustainability."

Nested immediately inside this image (i.e., immediately after the opening image and prior to the closing image) are a series of related images: dynamic, symbolic of Euro-American culture and technology, opposed (it seems) to the petroglyphs.

These images are of a rocket taking off from the earth. At the beginning of the film, these images are at first unclear: in slow motion, they look like a fireball, an explosion. This initially ambiguous image is superimposed over the petroglyphs—and the image of sustainability is burned away.

As the explosion dies down somewhat, we can identify the exhaust cones at the bottom of a rocket. The rocket is slowly lifting itself from the earth. Near the end of the film, we return to the image of the rocket slowly lifting off, the tower separating from the rocket, the rocket thrusting upward, the camera following its ascent. Two minutes into these images, with the rocket now high in the sky, an explosion destroys the rocket. For the next three minutes the camera follows, still in slow motion, a piece of debris from the rocket as it falls, falls, falls (the music slow, calming, repetitive, circular, organ-like).

This, the film suggests, is the inevitable conclusion of the technology

and its driving will--the will to control--illustrated in the bulk of the film.

Petroglyphs: the inscription of a culture onto the earth. Rockets: the desire to escape, or at least gain some new/greater/higher/ privileged perspective. As the Ronald Reagan/Peggy Noonan-construct put it in its 1986 Challenger eulogy, appropriating part of a poem by a World War Two Canadian fighter pilot who was fated to die in his plane, they "waved good-by and slipped the surly bonds of Earth to touch the face of God." (My American Public Address professor of the time praised the speech as rhetorically and stylistically brilliant.)

Out of the Cradle is the title of one book on space exploration, Breaking the Bonds of Earth, the subtitle of another. "I viewed my mother quite differently when I was in the womb than I did after birth," says astronaut Schweickart in explaining the ways in which the view from space changed his perspective. . . . "Should man fall back from his destiny," a NASA official warns us, "the confines of this planet will destroy him."
-Yaakov Gerome Garb, "Perspective or Escape?" (272)

Also, perhaps, the framing images of the film suggest a caveat concerning the reification of "technology." (And its ever-present opposite, "nature"?) Drums are a technology, as are language, petroglyphs, smudging, fire, drugs. As are the assembly line, muzak, rockets, and formal logic. The question for Nietzsche, always: not "what is it?" but "which one?" The difference is in the will. How might such a difference manifest itself?

This means that in analogic language there are no
equivalents for such vitally important elements of
discourse as "if-then," "either-or," and many others, and that
the expression of abstract concepts is as difficult, if not
impossible, as in primitive picture writing, where every
concept can only be represented by its physical likeness.
Furthermore, analogic language shares with analogic
computing the lack of the simple negative, i.e., an
expression for "not."

   . . .there can be no doubt that man communicates
digitally. In fact, most, if not all, of his civilized
achievements would be unthinkable without his having
evolved digital language. This is particularly important for
the sharing of information about <u>objects</u> and for the time-
binding function of the transmission of knowledge. And yet
there exists a vast area where we rely almost exclusively
on analogic communication, often with very little change
from the analogic inheritance handed down to us from our
mammalian ancestors. This is the area of <u>relationship</u>.
-Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin Bavelas and Don D. Jackson,
  <u>Pragmatics of Human Communication</u> (65, 63)

The concept of a "machine" should not be reified, as perhaps I have
done in my discussions of "Discipline." Machines as we know them
often rely on singularity, linearity, stability, interchangeability and
uniformity. Computers represent a further development along these
lines, but the computers that postindustrial capitalism and scientific
militarism find so useful are <u>digital</u>, based on a binary, on/off coding

system (sequences of ones and zeros). Some early computers were analogic, using resistors, capacitors, inductors, and other electronic devices to simulate the oscillations of, for example, a physical system. There is no "off," only degrees of intensity. Their overall "fuzziness" and inability to replicate results given the same initial conditions led to their replacement with the more "accurate" digital models.

James Gleick, in his popular-journalistic Chaos: Making a New Science, explains that chaos theory developed out of the inability of traditional (digital) computers and modelling techniques to capture the functioning of nonlinear systems and systems with a high degree of sensitivity to initial conditions (e.g., the weather). As a part of this "new science," these outdated analog computers were retrieved from dusty basements. They were far more capable, in many ways, of dealing with nonlinear, fluid, multiple, apparently inconsistent physical systems. In other words, while analog computers (and analogic sign systems in general) do not allow for prediction and control--the goals of mainstream Western science as the inheritor of platonic epistemology--they are far better at modelling many natural systems. The difference is in the will: despite the story we have been told, this is not about progress.

Indeed, wherever relationship is the central issue of communication, we find that digital language is almost meaningless.
-Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin Bavelas and Don D. Jackson (63)

It is already getting around--at what rate? in what contexts? in spite of what resistances?--that women

diffuse themselves according to modalities scarcely
compatible with the framework of the ruling symbolics.
Which doesn't happen without causing some turbulence, we
might even say some whirlwinds, that ought to be reconfined
within solid walls of principle, to keep them from spreading
to infinity. Otherwise they might even go so far as to
disturb that third agency designated as the real--a
transgression and confusion of boundaries that it is
important to restore to their proper order.
                    -Luce Irigaray, "The 'Mechanics' of Fluids" (106)

There was a story about the quantum theorist Werner
Heisenberg, on his deathbed, declaring that he will have two
questions for God: why relativity, and why turbulence.
Heisenberg says, "I really think He may have an answer to
the first question."
-James Gleick, Chaos (121)

"Cloudscape." The screen begins to brighten. At first, the image looks
            like ocean waves, but as the camera pulls back I begin to see it as
            black clouds in front of white clouds in front of a blue sky. The
            images are shown in fast motion.
In one image, the bottom of the cloud layer is quite flat and appears
motionless, while on the top the clouds appear less solid, moving in
very fluid, turbulent patterns: "waves" are pushed up and disappear
            into the sky.
("Evaporation" doesn't quite capture it.)
            Now viewing them from above, a field of billowy white clouds flows
            like a river.

"We all know, of course," that clouds are composed of water. I,
however, rarely think of their motions as fluid. Why not? Rivers in
the sky.

Now even more so as a mountain ridge in the foreground channels the
cloud flow.

Clouds boiling, thrusting upward, not quite flowing like a river now
but erupting like a volcano.

Bird's eye view of a huge waterfall. The ridge of the falls is gently
curved inward, the water crashes down, clouds of water rise from the
bottom.

Looking out across a large body of water, an ocean, with lots of small
waves in, over, on larger, subtler waves that roll along, seemingly
right underneath the surface.

Light plays off the water, millions of facets, alternating dark and
bright silver, the sparkling in constant motion as larger waves roll
"underneath" this effect.

The image is almost like static on a television screen: a lack of any
information or order? Fluid, infinite detail: infinite information,
infinite order at an infinite number of scales? Turbulence as the
accumulation of conflicting rhythms in a moving fluid: as infinite
degrees of freedom (Gleick). "Chaos" as maximimum information,
"Order" (predictability) as the lack of information.

Clouds roll by like a river and, in the background, clouds erupt.
Ocean swells.
An ocean wave builds,
crashes
down.
A cloud river rolls by, very turbulent, roiling,

At this point, I turn to my <u>Roget's Pocket Thesaurus</u> for some
additional descriptors. I look under "turbulence" in the index and am
directed toward section 173, whose main heading is "violence." Under
the adjectives section, the second of five main headings (the first
being "violent," the third "fiery," the fourth "unbridled," the fifth
"spasmodic") is "turbulent," followed by this list of synonyms:
"tumultuous; disorderly, raging, troublous, riotous, obstreperous,
uproarious; frenzied, mad, insane; desperate, rash; infuriate, furious,
frantic, outrageous; stormy, etc." Section 174, in contrast, is
"moderation." The various synonyms listed here include "temperate,"
"reasonable," "measured," "calm," "peaceful" and "within bounds."

> with huge "eruptions" thrusting into the air in the background. In the
> foreground, a mountain ridge appears to hold, contain, channel, the
> cloud flow.

> A close-up of the top of a mountain ridge as flowing cloud waves
> break against its side and come up and over the top, only to dissipate,
> dis-appear.

> A cloud river flows over a ridge and down its side like

(why "like"?)

> a waterfall, pushed to this course by a higher peak on the left.
(The <u>left</u>: channeling, constraining, solid. Get it? Here is Gleick,
master of definitions, trying to nail down what the dominant symbolic
cannot dominate. . . .)

**What is turbulence then? It is a mess of disorder at all
scales, small eddies within larger ones. It is unstable. It
is highly dissipative, meaning that turbulence drains energy
and creates drag. It is motion turned random. . . . All the
rules seem to break down. When flow is smooth, or laminar,**

small disturbances die out. But past the onset of
turbulence, disturbances grow catastrophically. This onset-
-this transition--became a critical mystery in science.
-James Gleick (122)

Gleick describes a. . .   deterritorialization.
                                        A problem, a mystery: chaos.

            Now if we examine the properties of fluids, we note that
                this "real" may well include, and in large measure, a
                    physical reality that continues to resist adequate
            symbolization and/or that signifies the powerlessness of
            logic to incorporate in its writing all the characteristic
            features of nature. And it has often been found necessary to
                minimize certain of these features of nature, to envisage
                them, and it, only in light of an ideal status, so as to keep
                it/them from jamming the works of the theoretical machine.
                                            -Luce Irigaray (106-107)

Irigaray describes a reterritorialization.

Fluid dynamics was no longer really part of physics, the
physicists would say. It was mere engineering. Bright
young physicists had better things to do. Fluid dynamicists
were generally found in university engineering departments.
A practical interest in turbulence has always been in the
foreground, and the practical interest is usually one-sided:
make the turbulence go away. In some applications,
turbulence is desirable--inside a jet engine, for example,

where efficient burning depends on rapid mixing. But in
most, turbulence means disaster. Turbulent airflow over a
wing destroys lift. Turbulent flow in an oil pipe creates
stupefying drag. Vast amounts of government and corporate
money are staked on the design of aircraft, turbine engines,
propellers, submarine hulls, and other shapes that move
through fluids.
-James Gleick (122)

We must control it (fluidity, turbulence, disorder). If we cannot, we
must obliterate it. Whether in the physical world or the world of
ideas. . . .

It is time to set aside unproductive arguments over the
relative merits of various methodological approaches to the
study of communication and to focus on the job of
generating theories of human communication. Until such
theories are forthcoming, our field will wallow in a
confused and angry sea of observations with no prospect of
navigating the more peaceful and serene waters of theory,
data and evidence. Collecting and reporting even more
observations will only serve to agitate further these
already unfriendly mains. Only by advancing substantive
theories can the regular tides that underlie human
communicative conduct be discerned and understood.
-Charles Berger, "Evidence? For What?" (18)

Could I have made up a better statement? Need I underline the metaphors?

I know how it works, I can follow the biochemistry well enough. I
know that B follows A, the methodology, the equations that solve
for x. I am, in truth, fascinated by the forms and language of
science. . . . What can be seen can often be described by a series
of cell divisions and chemical reactions laid end to end, a puzzle
to be solved. But so much cannot be seen. We are like the
nineteenth-century physicists who thought, before Einstein's rude
awakening, it was possible to know the answers, all of them.
Damn the meaning; we're here to catalog.
Sallie Tisdale, The Sorcerer's Apprentice (231)

And what is the consequence of such a "rude awakening"?

Nihilism as a psychological state is reached. . .when one has
posited a totality, a systematization, indeed any
organization in all events, and underneath all events, and a
soul that longs to admire and revere has wallowed in the
idea of some supreme form of domination and
administration. . . . Some sort of unity, some form of
"monism": this faith suffices to give man a deep feeling of
standing in the context of, and being dependent on, some
whole that is infinitely superior to him, and he sees himself
as a mode of the deity. . . . At bottom, man has lost the faith
in his own value when no infinitely valuable whole works
through him; i.e., he conceived such a whole in order to be
able to believe in his own value.
-Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power (12)

Rhythm is a form of order. The will to knowledge, to domination,

imposes its order onto the world (life), at least in part, _rhythmically_. The rhythms of life (the will to power) are silenced. "All the old ideals are hostile to life" (Nietzsche, _Will_ 39). Serenity is to be found in theory, Berger proclaims, not in the turbulence of life. Get over your preoccupation with life, he tells us, and get on with the theory! "He conceived of such a whole to be able to believe in his own value." When life resists the imposition of the totality, value is lost: nihilism.

The rhythmic order of the will to knowledge is singular: one rhythm, one beat. Uniform, regular, predictable: being. The predominant rhythmic base in Western music is composed of four beats, a very "square" number. To maintain this "necessary illusion" of singularity, the rhythms of nature, of life, must be silenced or brought within the frame of the will to knowledge and its rhythmic order: observation into theory, becoming into being, multiplicity and flow into singularity and solidity, turbulence into a controlled and controllable regularity. There must only be (the) _One_. All else is excess and must in some way be eliminated. "Truth is the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live" (Nietzsche, _Will_ 272). What "life" does Truth _negate_?

> **And how are we to prevent the very unconscious (of the) "subject" from being prorogated as such, indeed diminished in its interpretation, by a systematics that re-marks a historical "inattention" to fluids? In other words: what structuration of (the) language does not maintain a complicity of long standing between rationality and a mechanics of solids alone?**
>
> **—Luce Irigaray (107)**

Nietzsche distinguishes between the will to truth, which he sees as the dominant impulse in Western epistemology since Plato, and the will to power. The will to truth relies upon certain presuppositions; most importantly, it casts the world, objects and truths as both singular and stable--as self-identical beings. Aristotle's principles form the basis for science and logic: A cannot be not-A; something cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time. The principles of identity and noncontradiction serve to stabilize the world, fix it, categorize it, make it predictable. "'Truth' is the will to be master over the multiplicity of sensations--to classify phenomena into definite categories" (Nietzsche, Will 280). Only by fixing objects, by insisting that they remain singular and self-identical, can the syllogism hold its validity, can science predict--and therefore control--events. Hence, our sensations--which often indicate that the world is multiple and ever-changing--must be denied. Our bodies can fool us and are therefore negated. Western epistemology and asceticism are deeply intertwined. Truth lies elsewhere, outside the body and the world, as in platonic idealism.

The will to truth, Nietzsche argues, relies on a fundamental falsehood--that the world is characterized by being instead of becoming--and is more accurately identified as the will to control. "Knowledge and becoming exclude one another" (Nietzsche, Will 280). Knowledge, within a western epistemological frame, "is possible only on the basis of belief in being" (281). We make the world identical, coarse, and simple, and thereby comprehensible and calculable. We submit (it) to a totalizing discourse.

The onset of turbulence can be seen and measured in laboratory experiments; it can be tested for any new wing or propeller by experimental work in a wind tunnel; but its nature remains elusive. Traditionally, knowledge gained has always been special, not universal. Research by trial and error on the wing of a Boeing 707 aircraft contributes nothing to research by trial and error on the wing of an F-16 fighter. Even supercomputers are close to helpless in the face of irregular fluid motion.
-James Gleick (122-123)

No totality? That would mean. . . .

Conclusion: The faith in the categories of reason is the cause of nihilism. We have measured the value of the world according to categories <u>that refer to a purely fictitious world</u>.
Final conclusion: All the values by means of which we have tried so far to render the world estimable for ourselves and which then proved inapplicable and therefore devaluated the world—all the values are, psychologically considered, the results of certain perspectives of utility, designed to maintain and increase human constructs of domination—and they have been falsely <u>projected</u> into the essence of things.
-Friedrich Nietzsche, <u>The Will to Power</u> (13-14)

As many theorists (particularly anthropologists) have noted, Western culture and the Indo-European language group have a profound visual bias, particularly in terms of knowledge and mental processes. The

etymology of "idea" is "to see," of "notion" is "to make a mark," of "abstraction" is "to make a visible mark." "Speculation" and "inspect" are both derived from a visual root, as are "evident" and "evidence" ("to see"). We often speak of the contents of our minds as "images" and the operation of the mind with words based on that root: imagine, imagining, imagination. Common phrases enforce this bias: "I agree with that view (point)," "I see your point," "I get the picture," "seeing is believing," "a picture is worth a thousand words." Finally, the preeminence of sight over the other senses is embedded in the absurdity of common phrases of the following sort: "I just wanted to see what it smelled/felt/tasted/sounded like" (Tyler).

More specifically, in the social sciences the dominant method of qualitative research is participant-_observation,_ and is manifested quite literally in anthropological methods. Before more in-depth understanding is to be reached during and after fieldwork, maps are to be drawn, households counted, and genealogical trees constructed. Such quantification and diagrammatic representations allow the researcher to "see" the culture and are prime examples of what Johannes Fabian terms "visualism."

Observation makes sense within the context of a scientific way of knowing that highlights objectivity--a model of knowing based on sight allows for distancing and disconnectedness. Further evidence of this bias towards sight shows up in two forms. First, highly influential philosophers of science explicitly privilege sight over all other senses. Locke maintained that "the perception of the mind. . .[is] most aptly explained by words relating to sight" (quoted in Fabian 108). Kant claimed that "the sense of sight. . .is. . .the noblest, since, among all the senses, it is farthest removed from touch. . . . [and] it also receives its sense organ as being least involved" (quoted in

Schott 103). Second, as Stephen Tyler points out, there is a
"hegemony of things" in Western epistemology, and this focus on
things is reflected in the privileging of sight:

objects ←→ observation ←→ objectivity.

In The Practice of Everyday Life, Michel de Certeau posits a
distinction between strategy and tactics. Strategy is the means by
which dominant forces in modern capitalist societies maintain their
authority. Strategic power relies on the ability to establish and
control space: the military occupation of territory; urban design;
architectural design of institutions such as prisons, factories,
hospitals and schools; the layout of a mall, supermarket or
department store. This power allows not only for the manipulation
and control of the bodies inhabiting the space; it also is predicated
upon the sense most closely associated with space--sight.

> The division of space makes possible a panoptic practice
> proceeding from a place whence the eye can transform foreign
> forces into objects that can be observed and measured, and
> thus control and "include" them within its scope of vision. (de
> Certeau 36)

The spatial and visual nature of strategic power is closely linked
to dominant conceptualizations of the nature of knowledge. De
Certeau argues that the power of knowledge is defined "by this ability
to transform the uncertainties of history into readable spaces"
(recall, in this context, Hart and Stevens' "blank page of the universe"
metaphor) and that a fundamental condition of possibility for this
form of knowing is "the power to provide oneself with one's own
place" (36). De Certeau's work closely parallels the insights of
anthropologists such as Fabian, Stoller and Tyler that dominant lines
of Western epistemology privilege sight. Sight allows for distance

and objectification--the subject/object split underlying not only modern science but, more generally, the Cartesian epistemology de Certeau characterizes as strategic because it posits the subject as the place from which to act, observe and know.

Following Freud, Susan Griffin, James Burke and others, I see astronomy as critical in the historical development of strategic knowledge, as giving rise to geometry as the penultimate endeavor of idealism. Hart and Stevens identify the beginning of the decline of the drum in Western civilization as the shift from the worship of female, earth-based deities to that of male sky gods. The rhythms of the earth were ignored in favor of the rhythms--the visual and spatial patterns--of the stars and other celestial bodies. The study of these unearthly, heavenly bodies, closer to if not with God, can be linked to the development of geometry and certain forms of mathematics. Certainly it is no accident that the Copernican revolution, centered around the understanding of the motions of and relationships between celestial bodies, is at the heart of the scientific revolution (and the corresponding industrial one as well). In his fetishized geometric forms Descartes finds something of an absolute truth, a truth guaranteed by God's benevolence. ("Slipped the surly bonds of Earth to touch the face of God.")

In order to give an account of these practices, I have resorted to the category of "trajectory." It was intended to suggest a temporal movement through space, that is, the unity of a diachronic <u>succession</u> of points through which it passes, and not the <u>figure</u> that these points form on a space that is supposed to be synchronic or achronic. Indeed, this "representation" is

insufficient, precisely because a trajectory is drawn, and time and movement are thus reduced to a line that can be seized as a whole by the eye and read in a single moment, as one projects onto a map the path taken by someone walking through a city. However useful this "flattening out" may be, it transforms the <u>temporal</u> articulation of places into a <u>spatial</u> sequence of points. A graph takes the place of an operation. . . . It is thus a mark <u>in place</u> of acts, a relic in place of performances: it is only their remainder, the sign of their erasure.

–Michel de Certeau, <u>The Practice of Everyday Life</u> (35)

Fluid. . .is, by nature, unstable. Unless it is subordinated to geometrism, or (?) idealized.

–Luce Irigaray (112)

Geometry and idealism are two manifestations of the same will, a will that is hostile (Nietzsche is trying to tell us--will we listen?) toward life.

I find within me countless ideas of things, that, although perhaps not existing anywhere outside me, still cannot be said to be nothing. Although I somehow think them at will, nevertheless I have not put them together; rather, they have their own true and immutable natures. For example, when I imagine a triangle, <u>although perhaps no such figure exists outside my thought anywhere in the world and never will,</u> still its nature, essence, or form is completely determined, unchangeable, and eternal. I did not produce it and it does not depend on my mind. This point is evident from the fact

that many properties can be demonstrated regarding this
triangle--namely that its three angles are equal to two
right angles, that its longest side is opposite its largest
angle, and so on; whether I want to or not, I now clearly
acknowledge them, although I had not previously thought of
them at all when I imagined a triangle. For this reason,
then, I have not produced them.
-Rene Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy" (329;
emphasis added)

After several minutes of southern Utah and "cloudscapes," the music
shifts, becomes "busy" and very repetitive.
The camera is flying, at first over a sparsely forested area of oaks
and low hills. The camera flies quite fast, close to the ground,
breaking out over a smooth body of calm, blue-green water:
the water contained in an artificial lake, within "walls"--the
"natural" contours of the land put to human use, to store, to contain,
to channel, to make calm--to "manage" a "resource."
Cut: now the camera, still quite low, still moving quite quickly, flies,
just off from perpendicular, over rows and rows--long, straight
lines--of various crops. The ground is absolutely flat, the rows
absolutely straight and uniformly spaced. The rows are green, then
orange, then yellow, then purple.
Cut to Lake Powell: the earlier scenes of desert and red rock
formations--Monument Valley, Canyonlands, Zion ("national parks")--
now mostly under water. A canyon submerged.
Beautiful, to me, until the shock of re-cognition:
"My God, what have we done!"
The music continues its busy, repetitive, unrelenting, hectic march.

Explosions tear apart the soil, the rocks, the unevenness, the
inconvenient curves and mounds. Huge earth movers--
almost exactly like the miniature replicas,
the Tonka trucks I played with as a child--

continue the job.
A pipeline: the camera pans, follows the line as it runs: absolutely
straight, with a road beside it: large chunks cut out of the tops of
hills to lessen the vertical curves (there are no curves to the right or
left, only up and down). The line disappears over a notch cut in a
far-off ridge.

The most fundamental, basic tenet of geometry, the one learned so
early, totally unquestionable: the shortest distance between two
points is a straight line. Why would anyone ever think to make a
pipeline other than straight? The straight pipeline is efficient: it is
the shortest it can be, thereby requiring less materials to make, less
energy to pump the fluid it carries. At some point, the levelling of
mountains takes too much effort and so the pipeline may be
lengthened, diverted, required to go up and down or around: but these
diversions from straight (both right and left and up and down) must be
reduced as much as possible. The "natural" rivers we have seen in the
opening portions of the film are so inefficient: they meander to such
a great extent that they must flow several times the length necessary
than if they were to be straight. How can "nature" tolerate such
inefficiencies? How can we? (We don't--that is Nietzsche's lesson.)
This pipeline, its traits, the work done to allow it to be so, its
power/knowledge formation, is an encapsulation of it all: geometry,
common sense, efficiency, linearity, containment of flow, trans-
portation of re-sources, the canalization of the earth, of the body, the

imposition of a certain kind of order, the making literal-physical of a certain symbolic, the inscription of that symbolic onto the body. (Territorialization: the abortion of lines of flight.) And Descartes is certain that he did not produce geometric forms: they are transcendent forms handed down from above.

                                       A red and green desert,
like southwestern Utah, around Zion,
        huge power lines, suspended by large, metal, skeletal towers: towers
                composed of various sized triangles and diamonds visually carve up
                                    the landscape, cross it,
violate it.

Barb and I went to a "Festival of the Drum" in Springdale, Utah, just a few minutes outside the south entrance to Zion National Park. A grey, cement amphitheater has been built in a side canyon a few minutes away from the main part of town. We sat in slightly curved rows of rigid, metal seats, the stage in front and below us--above and behind the stage one of those incredible 1000-1500 foot red rock walls characteristic of the area. The setting is amazing, powerful, awe-inspiring--a great place to listen to radically different styles of percussion, to hear the last, strong beats echo off the wall. And the shock of re-cognition: "My God, what have we done!" On our way there, the same shock of recognition, but without (for us) any counterweight: Wal-Mart has installed its regional distribution center--a flat, rectangular building the size of several football fields, so huge the semi-trailers around it seem like microscopic toys. Just plopped it down in the middle of the high desert, 20

miles north of St. George, in the midst of the growing fields
of trailer home parks, RV parks, Condo parks. Proudly hailed
as the highest growth area in Utah. And I visited there. I
drove the roads. Waited in line with several other cars,
delayed by construction, as huge machines ripped up the
irregularity and inefficiency of the earth's contours to lay
down asphalt in as straight and flat a way as reasonably
possible. The shortest distance. . . .

From several shots of the power lines and towers to an overhead view
of a factory or power plant: three large, very tall smokestacks.
Another angle: four rows of short smokestacks spewing white clouds.
In front of these, a number of settling or storage ponds of various
sizes and shapes: they are triangular, trapezoidal, but always rounded
at the corners:
some practical need of the fluid containment system, some greater
efficiency requires this violation of the perfection of the geometric
forms: a hybrid of angle and arch.
In the background is the red dirt, signifying the desert that these
ponds have been carved out of, imposed upon. Each pond a different
shade: but all are flat, absolutely calm, geometric, graceful with
their rounded corners.
Bird's eye view, looking straight down on a huge dam, holding back
unimaginable amounts of water. The dam, too, is curved slightly: like
the corners of the ponds,
like the rows of seats in the amphitheater outside of Zion.
A huge field full of large, round, squat tanks: each contains, we
presume, some liquid (water, petroleum. . .other chemicals, fuels,
lubricants). Each tank perfectly round, but each in its own little

square box, pipes or roads marking out a grid system.

I live in Salt Lake City. As with most Utah cities and towns, the streets are laid out in a grid system. Most lack names, having only numbers. Addresses are grid coordinates: 285 East 900 South, for example. Very practical except for those streets that curve or do not run directly north-south or east-west. I do not know, but have been told that this grid system was dictated to the LDS (Mormon) church leaders by God himself. I am confident in your ability to guess the coordinates of the Salt Lake LDS Temple.
("Go figure," as Julie says.)

"The Grid": looking up at the side of a huge sky-scraper (reaching up, up, up) made of a glassy surface that reflects the sky and clouds: but the building's mirrored surface is interrupted by a grid dividing each window pane: this grid is imposed upon the flowing movement of the sky. This kind of image, with different sky-scrapers, repeats itself several times throughout the film's examination of the city. Sometimes the surface is a clean, light mirror, sometimes greenish, sometimes ominously black yet still reflective. But always the grid. One of the buildings has, in one of its upper corners, like a student's name on a paper,

a corporate name: "Macrodata."

What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms--in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and

embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after
long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people:
truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this
is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without
sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and
now matter only as metal, no longer as coins.
-Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral
Sense" (219)

And just as a clock made of wheels and counterweights
follows all the laws of nature no less closely when it has
been badly constructed and does not tell time accurately
than when it suffices on all scores the wishes of its maker,
just so, if I should consider the body of a man--insofar as it
is a kind of mechanism composed of and outfitted with
bones, nerves, muscles, veins, blood and skin--even if no
mind existed in it, the man's body would still have all the
same motions that are in it now except for those motions
that proceed either from a command of the will or,
consequently, from the mind.
-Rene Descartes (338)

Freeways, shown at a faster speed, over a longer period of time than
we would normally dwell on such a banality, are amazingly fluid: the
cars and trucks and motorcycles taken as a process, not individually,
flow. And this flow is contained within the walls of the freeway,
with some movement between parallel lanes.
Straight, curved, circular--contained flows.
Within city streets--straight, grid-like, parallel and perpendicular,

regulating devices at each intersection, there is still a definite kind
of flow but with a different quality. Again shown in fast motion, the
cars rush from one intersection, only to quickly slow and stop at the
next:

flow   halt   flow   halt   flow   halt   flow   halt.

There is a definite rhythm to it, and it is almost the same with
pedestrians. What this image calls up--for me, for my students when
they watched it--are the films of blood moving through arteries:
rush stop   rush stop   rush stop.
Each cell like a car or a pedestrian. The city as body.

People going through revolving doors.
People coming in, going out of a row of identical doorways.
People going down, coming off a row of escalators.
People bunching up to get on escalators.

Channeled.

A machine handling packages of hot dogs, putting labels on them.
Another machine picks up packages of lunch meat and places them on
a conveyor belt.
People sorting mail.
A machine arm picks up data/punch cards and places them into certain
slots.
Close-up: the mechanical arm picks up one card at a time:
then another:
another:
another.

Rhythm. Uniform, regular. Repetition.

A woman sews together a pair of jeans:
one:
another:

another.

TV assembly line workers.

Data entry clerks.

Several workers, dressed in white lab coats, working on a hot dog
producing machine. Several metal rows, each with hot dogs moving
through it. The workers clear clogs in the machine.

Close-up: rows of hot dogs zipping by, hands clearing clogged dogs.

People on a row of escalators.

Channeled.

Cars on a highway.

Canalized.

Car racing video game: guide the car,
weaving around slower cars on a straight, narrow road.

Pleasure.

Miss Pac Man video game:
guide your pac-woman through the maze, eating up the dots.

Gobble gobble gobble gobble.

Desire.

People playing video games: their bodies jerk jerk jerk jerk.

A bowling alley.

Pan: people in check-out lines at K-mart.

Close-up: twinkies on a conveyor belt, human hands removing them.

Women with plastic gloves taking the twinkies off one line, placing
them on another, perpendicular line.

Are we willing to hear/see/feel the isomorphism of these
structures?

People eating at a shopping mall, fast food mart area.

Each option the same, but a different "ethnicity": chinese, mexican,
italian, american.

Automated assembly line squirts goop in pastry squares and folds

each over:

one:

another:

another:

another.

Conveyor belt with lunch meat: human hands place the appropriate

quantity of meat substance in each slot.

Human.

Machine.

Human.

Meat.

Food?

Automobile assembly line. Placing engines into chassis.

Several people welding them into place:

one:

another:

another:

another:

another.

A large machine drops over each chassis, several mechanical arms

move, each welding a particular spot:

one:

another.

Each shot ends, right before it cuts to the next, with this welding

machine dropping down:

down:

down:

<div align="right">

down:

down:

down.

Money.

Lunch meat.

Computer chips.

Automobiles.

Hot Dogs.

Humans.

</div>

BART: Bay Area Rapid Transit. About the cleanest, quietest
subway/commuter train I can imagine. I first rode it as a
kid, while in elementary school, once with my class and
another time with my cub scout pack. We rode it to go to a
museum or science exhibition in San Francisco. But the trip
was really just an excuse to ride BART: recently opened, it
went 80 miles per hour and ran through a tunnel under the
bay! Technological marvel!

   To ride BART, you prepay. You put money into a machine
and it spits out a semistiff paper ticket with a magnetic
strip. The strip keeps track of how much credit is left.
When you enter the train area, you put this card through the
machine: it records your beginning destination. When you
later exit, it computes the amount you owe for a trip of that
distance, subtracts the money, refuses to let you out if you
do not have enough, gives you the card back and opens the
gate if you do. This entrance/exit trick with the card is
done with little automatic gates controlled by the computer
that reads your card. The beauty of the system: you need

never interact with a human representative of BART.

   As a kid, we were always told to be very careful with our
tickets: not only not to lose them, but to avoid bending or
mutilating them because then the machine could not read the
tape and we would be trapped inside the station. Keep them
flat, straight, unbent. Otherwise, we would have to repay or
find a BART-affiliated human.

                    One person after another inserts their ticket, removes it, the two
                    triangular plastic pieces move aside, allowing the person to pass
                                                 through the "turnstile."
Blockage.
                    Insert ticket, remove ticket, gate opens, walk through.
                                             Insert: remove: walk.
                                             Insert: remove: walk.
                                             Insert: remove: walk.
                                             Insert: remove: walk.
                                             Insert: remove: walk.
                                             Insert: remove: walk.
                                             Insert: remove: walk.
The Rhythm of the BART:

                    The rhythm is around me
                    The rhythm has control
                    The rhythm is inside me
                    The rhythm has my soul
                -Peter Gabriel, "The Rhythm of the Heat"

After exiting the train area, walking through white sterile

underground halls, the above-ground world is reached by...

what else?...escalators.

Channeled, conveyor-belted people: BART dogs.

Who removes the clogged dogs?

The rhetoric that posits linearity as the norm, nonlinearity as a

supplemental deviation, is pervasive in textbooks on fluid

mechanics. B. S. Massey's comments in <u>Mechanics of Fluids</u> are

typical:

Flow in pipes is usually turbulent and therefore highly
complex. Random fluctuating components are
superimposed on the main flow, and as these haphazard
movements are unpredictable, no complete theory has
yet been developed for the analysis of turbulent flow.
Even the most advanced theories depend at some point
on experimentally derived information.

The "main flow" has "superimposed" on it "random fluctuating

components." These swerves from predictability are "haphazard

movements" rather than dynamics intrinsic to the environment.

What can be modelled is normal. What cannot is an aberration, a

chance event, a superfluity.

—N. Katherine Hayles, "Gender Encoding in Fluid Mechanics:

Masculine Channels and Feminine Flows" (21-22)

Rhythmic sensibilities are intimately connected to a culture's sense

of order, and epistemologies are, in turn, closely linked to a

particular sense of what constitutes "order" as opposed to "chaos,"

"music" as opposed to "noise." Metronome time: equally divided,

discrete units, absolutely uniform, regular, predictable, singular; provides a foundation, a unifying framework, regulates, coordinates. Look at that last word: coordinates. The same signifier, noun and verb. Verb: "the power of entrainment to channel and coordinate human energies is reflected in the close link between rhythmic music and work." Noun: "what are the coordinates, Mr. Sulu?" Think of the dominant Western sense of rhythm that coordinates: metronome time. Think of the coordinate system drummed into our heads in beginning algebra: two axes, four quadrants. Any point can be named (identified) with two numbers: x and y. These are called "Cartesian coordinates" on a "Cartesian plane." (Apparently Descartes _did_ produce something--truths are "metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power.") The dominant Western rhythmic sensibility is intimately connected with this view of geometry, nature, mathematics. A condensation of this connection can be found in the clock and the centrality of clock imagery: a certain kind of rhythm, a certain kind of order, a certain kind of metaphor for making sense of nature. In The Death of Nature, Carolyn Merchant identifies five key assumptions of seventeenth century science that both flow from the clock/machine root metaphor and enable the domination and control of nature:

1. Matter is composed of particles (the ontological assumption).
2. The universe is a natural order (the principle of identity).
3. Knowledge and information can be abstracted from the natural world (the assumption of context independence).
4. Problems can be analyzed into parts that can be manipulated by mathematics (the methodological assumption).
5. Sense data are discrete (the epistemological assumption). (228)

The (pre)dominance of objects, space and sight does not mean that process, temporality, and other "bodily" senses are irrelevant to Western ways of knowing, ordering and communicating.

* * *

Does anybody have any questions?
—David Byrne, Stop Making Sense

* * *

Okay--now pay close attention. This is a crucial link, bringing together the feminine and the fluid with the critiques of Nietzsche and Koyaanisqatsi.

What is in excess with respect to form--for example, the feminine sex--is necessarily rejected as beneath or beyond the system currently in force. "Woman does not exist"? In the eyes of discursivity. There remain these/her remains: God and woman, "for example." Whence that entity that has been struck dumb, but that is eloquent in its silence: the real. And yet that woman-thing speaks. But not "like," not "the same," not "identical with itself" nor to any x, etc. Not a "subject," unless transformed by phallocratism. It speaks "fluid," even in the paralytic undersides of that economy. . . . **Yet one must know how to listen otherwise than in good form(s) to hear what it says.** That it is continuous, compressible, dilatable, viscous, conductable, diffusable, . . .That it is unending, potent and impotent owing to its resistance to the countable. . .that it is, in its physical

reality, determined by friction between two infinitely
neighboring entities. . . .
-Luce Irigaray (110-111)

Koyaanisqatsi gives some kind of "voice" to "the real"--the fluid, the
feminine. It speaks fluid. The real has been "struck dumb" by a
certain kind of symbolic, a certain kind of rhythm, a certain way of
seeing/way of hearing. So "one must know how to listen otherwise
than in good form(s) to hear what it says": a different rhythmic
sensibility, a different epistemology, a different will.

Seemingly banal technique--slow motion photography, high speed
film--allow us to see what happened over a day in a few minutes, or
to see what happened in a few seconds expanded to a few minutes.
Look at it from above, from the side, from below. The juxtaposition
of images. And the guiding--there is no doubt about it--of our sense-
making of the visual images by means of the music: low masculine
chanting, high feminine singing, ominous tones, insane never-ending
tempos, variations of the rhythms. But haven't I indicated the
visualism is part of the epistemological system I am criticizing?

I'm an eye. A mechanical eye. I, the machine, show you a
world the way only I can see it. I free myself for today and
forever from human immobility. I'm in constant movement.
I approach and pull away from objects. I creep under them.
I move alongside a running horse's mouth. I fall and rise
with the falling and rising bodies. This is I, the machine,
manoeuvering in the chaotic movements, recording one
movement after another in the most complex combinations.
Freed from the boundaries of time and space, I co-ordinate

any and all points of the universe, wherever I want them to
be. My way leads towards the creation of a fresh perception
of the world. Thus I explain in a new way the world
unknown to you.
-Dziga Vertov (quoted in John Berger 17)

The photographic image amplifies our already large
prejudice in favor of the visual. It places the final seal on
the disengagement from participation that vision allows, on
the standing back so that subject views object across a
void. The photographic act can be a form of violence when it
allows us to deny the subjectivity of what we view, when it
transforms the external world into a spectacle, a
commodity, a manipulable package. . . .

I think the implications for the whole earth image are
obvious. We were once surrounded by our world,
experiencing it with all of our senses, participating in it
with devout attention to its details. . . . We now possess, as
the NASA control crew were fond of reminding us, the "God's
eye view" of earth, where nothing is hidden.
-Yaakov Gerome Garb (268, 266)

"Fiat ars--pereat mundus," [Let art exist, let the world
perish] says Fascism, and, as Marinetti admits, expects war
to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception
that has been changed by technology. This is evidently the
consummation of "l'art pour art." Mankind, which in Homer's
time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods,

now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a
degree that it can experience its own destruction as an
aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation
of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic.
Communism responds by politicizing art.
-Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical
Reproduction" (588)

My diminutive theory's optical features are set to produce
not effects of distance, but effects of connection, of
embodiment, and of responsibility for an imagined
elsewhere that we may yet learn to see and build here. I
have high stakes in reclaiming vision from the
technopornographers, those theorists of minds, bodies, and
planets who insist effectively--i.e., in practice--that sight
is the sense made to realize the fantasies of the
phallocrats. I think sight can be remade for the activists
and advocates engaged in fitting political filters to see the
world in the hues of red, green, and ultraviolet, i.e., from
the perspectives of a still possible socialism, feminist and
anti-racist environmentalism, and science for the people.
-Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters" (295-296)

Large, solid rock monoliths amidst a flat desert landscape. Clouds
roll by overhead, casting their shadows on the rock faces. Solid stone
monuments (Monument Valley): Rock formations in water (Lake
Powell): Rock canyons meandering because of the river's carving
effect (Canyonlands): Steam rising from rocks: Clouds cast their
shadows: Sand dunes, the wind blowing a layer of sand over the dune

immediately beneath.

Wind, Clouds, Water (rain, run-off, river, lake):

sand particles

(yet they flow):

solid rock

(yet "fluid" in shape and texture).

Gas: liquid: solid. If I sit and look at a rock formation in Southern
Utah, like one I spent some time with near Capitol Reef, I can see the
traces of fluidity in it: the rock is solid but contains fluid patterns:
inscriptions of the water or wind that formed it. But what if I think
of it not as a solid that fluid has acted upon, but as fluid itself? If I
could speed up the film and have it run far longer than scenes in
Koyaanisqatsi, for hundreds of thousands, millions of years, I could
watch the transformations of this sandstone rock. What might I see?
If I sped up the passage of time enough, the rock itself would "flow"
in ways that might not look dissimilar to the sand dunes with wind
blowing particles across, on to, away from. (And I am not talking
about the rock being heated to molten lava.) A certain schema of
causality leads me to see this as "erosion": solid acted upon by liquid:
the liquid (and gas: wind) carves the solid object. No surprise this
story makes the solid very powerful, in that it takes so long for the
constant action of nonsolids to visibly effect it, or that this process
is given a negative connotion: erosion. Just because I can hold the
rock in my hand, touch the rock wall and it appears not to move, I call
it "solid"? These barriers are so artificial--fundamental
falsifications, fictions imposed to make the world coarse, calculable,
controllable.

Logic is bound to the condition: assume there are identical
cases. In fact, to make possible logical thinking and
inferences, this condition must first be treated fictitiously
as fulfilled. That is: the will to logical truth can be
carried through only after a fundamental <u>falsification</u> of all
events is assumed.

-Friedrich Nietzsche, <u>The Will to Power</u> (277)

Empiricism starts with a completely different evaluation:
analysing the states of things, in such a way that non-
preexistent concepts can be extracted from them. States of
things are neither unities nor totalities, but <u>multiplicities</u>.
It is not just that there are several states of things (each
one of which would be yet another); nor that each state of
things is itself multiple (which would simply be to indicate
its resistance to unification). The essential thing, from the
point of view of empiricism, is the noun <u>multiplicity</u>, which
designates a set of lines or dimensions which are
irreducible to one another. Every "thing" is made up in this
way. Of course a multiplicity includes focuses of
unification, centres of totalization, points of
subjectivation, but as factors which can prevent its growth
and stop its lines. These factors are in the multiplicity to
which they belong, and not the reverse.

-Gilles Deleuze, <u>Dialogues</u> (vii-viii)

We are unable to affirm and deny one and the same thing:
this is a subjective empirical law, not the expression of any

"necessity" but only of an inability.

If, according to Aristotle, the law of contradiction is the most certain of all principles, if it is the ultimate and most basic, upon which every demonstrative proof rests, if the principle of every axiom lies in it; then one should consider all the more what presuppositions already lie at the bottom if it. Either it asserts something about actuality, about being, as if one already knew this from another source; that is, as if opposite attributes could not be ascribed to it. Or the proposition means: opposite attributes should not be ascribed to it. In that case, logic would be an imperative, not to know the true, but to posit and arrange a world that shall be called true by us.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power (279)

Ready for some more isomorphisms? Read the rhythmic sensibility contained within, constrained by, produced by, encoded in the spatial and epistemological structures that follow. . . .

The camera flies over a city, giving us a view of the city center, the skyscrapers.
The image switches to satellite photos of the city, photos in red and blue. The "camera" continues its flying pattern over this photo: it stops moving and fades. . .
without much work, the images frighteningly similar
to a microchip or electronic circuit board pattern
The shock of recognition: "My God. . . ."
and another

and another

and another

A clear pattern, strong similarities despite the differences.

another

another

another

"to posit and arrange a world that shall be called true by us."

another

another

another

Knowledge posits equality: it makes equal, identical.

back to: satellite photo of a city

a computer chip

a satellite photo of a city

a computer chip.

Which is which? As the images fade from one to the next every few seconds it is possible to distinguish them, but only with some close scrutiny. Nietzsche: "The world seems logical to us because we have made it logical" (Will 283). I do not think he was thinking of anything quite so literal and physical. An interesting transformation of what might constitute "organizational communication."

I hear "organization" as the enactment--the performance in Victor Turner's sense of "bringing to completion" or "accomplishing"--of order in human social life. If organization is the enactment of that order, epistemology constitutes the underlying assumptions that legitimize, command that order. This "order" is a culture's means of identifying, differentiating, and relating objects, sensations, events, processes in the world--whether "artificial" or "natural," material or ideational, secular or spiritual. One form of order is rhythm, in the

broad sense of patterns through time (but which can manifest
themselves in and be constrained/created by spatial patternings). I
hear rhythm as one means of performing organization, of making
sense, as a form of (foucaultian) power.

> **Nature is for me, and I venture for many of us who are
> planetary fetuses gestating in the amniotic effluvia of
> terminal industrialism, one of those impossible things
> characterized by Gayatri Spivak as that which we cannot not
> desire. Excrutiatingly conscious of nature's discursive
> constitution as "other" in the histories of colonialism,
> racism, sexism, and class domination of many kinds, we
> nonetheless find in this problematic, ethno-specific, long-
> lived, and mobile concept something we cannot do without,
> but can never "have." We must find another relationship to
> nature besides reification and possession.
> -Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters" (296)**

Four men standing around a huge press: under it sits a large, round,
red-hot piece of metal. The press comes down and as the metal is
being formed into the desired shape it emits a bright flash of light, an
explosion.
An above-ground nuclear detonation in the desert: and another: the
camera follows the black cloud up, up, up, up.
The camera shows us hundreds of people sun-bathing on a beach, then
slowly pans up to reveal a huge nuclear power plant right behind them.
The next scene shows camera-toting vacationers taking a tour of the
plant.

I was watching a documentary the other night on Frontline about the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons factory. And it hit me: if you put too much plutonium or uranium together, if you achieve "critical mass," it explodes. This stuff is spread very thin, if found naturally on the earth at all. If you get one particle of plutonium in your lungs, you will likely die: one microscopic particle is all it takes. How much thought does it take? "Nature" is telling us something, just put it all together: spread very thin, explodes if you put too much together, only one particle needed to kill you. The message seems clear: stay the hell away from this substance and do not collect it in one place. But so few seem to listen. Or they are listening, and like Adam and Eve seem inexorably drawn in, curious: what would happen if we. . .? It came out last week, when the Department of Energy began declassifying some of its nuclear documents, that the U.S. government fed several hundred people plutonium (elderly folks in nursing homes, prisoners, cancer patients, pregnant women) just to see what would happen. We still do not know how much plutonium, enriched uranium, or other radioactive substances has been produced. A "simple" "fact" like that: they will not tell us, or perhaps they have no idea. How much?

My insight: all the forces and drives by virtue of which life and growth exist lie under the ban of morality: morality as the instinct to deny life. One must destroy morality if one is to

liberate life.
        -Friedrich Nietzsche, <u>The Will to Power</u> (189)

In a simplistic positivist epistemology, order exists in the world, is
self-evident, available for discovery through observation. In various
versions of kantian epistemology the human mind becomes privileged,
not as a passive receptor of the order in the world, but as an active,
structuring process whereby the world is constituted. In the kantian
world, humans are removed from direct contact with--at least direct
knowledge of--the world. Our experience is mediated by structures
intrinsic to the human mind. These a priori structures become the
guarantor of knowledge as a foundationalist enterprise, much as God's
perfection was for Descartes or the ideal forms and anamnesis were
for Plato.

Kantian epistemology gave rise to structuralism,
poststructuralism, and a variety of "contructivist" positions whereby,
in the twentieth century and after the "linguistic turn," the primary
mediating structure becomes language and other symbol systems. A
foundationalist epistemology is called into question for these
structures are seen, in many instances, as culturally relative.

To take a representative if not necessarily typical example,
Kenneth Burke's theory of language embodies this kantian impulse as
well as a certain degree of visualism. Language constructs
"terministic screens" that not only reflect reality, but select and
deflect reality as well: they direct our attention. The world becomes
meaningful--has social significance--only through its placement in
language. These value-laden structures, Burke explains, operate like
different color filters to produce different photographs of the same
object. While the concept of terministic screens is a useful and

easily accessible pedagogical tool, Burke takes the implications of language as the creator of our reality much farther in other conceptualizations.

Burke is obsessed with transcendence and with language as the primary human means for (an always imperfect) transcendence of the particularity of the world. This link between language and transcendence manifests itself in a number of different ways but can be encapsulated in the equation (the analogy) between language and spirit: "Words are to the non-verbal things they name as Spirit is to Matter" (Rhetoric 16). For example, in proposing that humans are best defined as "symbol-using animals" he asks the question, which of our motivations arise from our animality and which from our symbolicity? He then states that "An 'ideology' is like a god coming down to earth. . . . An 'ideology' is like a spirit taking up its abode in a body: it makes that body hop around in certain ways. . ." (Language 6). Humans learn from their home culture, for example, what constitutes "food" and this somewhat arbitrary choice manifests itself physiologically as a gag reflex when we try to consume perfectly edible substances that fall outside this definition (e.g., blubber).

> In all such cases, where symbolic operations can influence
> bodily processes, the realm of the natural (in the sense of the
> less-than-verbal) is seen to be pervaded, or inspirited, by the
> realm of the verbal, or symbolic. (Rhetoric 17)

This language/spirit analogy, in which language inspirits (passive) matter, does not limit itself to humans as a site where the motion/action, animality/symbolicity, mind/body dualisms cohabitate or blur. In Burke's essay "What Are the Signs of What?" this inspiriting carries into the realm of physical objects and takes

on a decidedly platonic dynamic. He explains that words, by
attributing a generalizable meaning to an object, transcend that
object's specificity. He cites Plato's philosophy that the things of
this world are but imperfect exemplars of ideal forms and, while
admitting it is problematic, values its usefulness as an analogy to the
function of language. The word and its social meaning become the
essence or universal form of which the concrete example is the
manifestation. When we see an object, we inevitably see it through
the screen of our language, and hence what we "see" is the meaning--
the object itself becomes the sign, it stands in for the meaning, and
hence the common sense relationship that "words are the signs of
things" is reversed.

**Every word immediately becomes a concept, inasmuch as it is not
intended to serve as a reminder of the unique and wholly
individualized original experience to which it owes its birth, but
must at the same time fit innumerable, more or less similar
cases--which means, strictly speaking, never equal--in other
words, a lot of unequal cases. Every concept originates through
our equating what is unequal. No leaf ever wholly equals another,
and the concept "leaf" is formed through an arbitrary abstraction
from these individual differences, through forgetting the
distinctions; and now it gives rise to the idea that in nature
there might be something besides the leaves which would be
"leaf"--some kind of original form after which all leaves have
been woven, marked, copied, colored, curled and painted, but by
unskilled hands, so that no copy turned out to be a correct,**

reliable, and faithful image of the original form.
—Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense"
(218-219)

Here is Burke's summary of his argument:

> Thus, in mediating between the social realm and the realm of
> nonverbal nature, words communicate to things the spirit that
> the society imposes upon the words which have come to be
> the "names" for them. The things are in effect the visible
> tangible material embodiments of the spirit that infuses
> them through the medium of words. And in this sense, things
> become the signs of the genius that resides in words. . . . for
> man, nature is emblematic of the spirit imposed upon it by
> man's linguistic genius. (Language 362; emphasis added)

The "screen" metaphor and its implications of a mediating structure
are replaced with logology: the metaphor is not merely platonic but
spiritual and, as shall become clear (if it is not already) sexual—that
is, both gendered and reproductive.

To begin to make clear both the gendered implications of this
model of language and its more widespread use by those holding to
various versions of constructivism, listen to John Fiske's elaboration
of his position concerning language and its relationship to "reality":

> I believe that we have to theorize a "reality" with an extra-
> discursive or non-discursive existence while recognizing that
> such a theorized reality is inert, polymorphous and
> insignificant until put into discourse and thus made
> apprehensible and thus meaningful. The act of putting into
> discourse does not describe a non-discursive reality, it
> produces an apprehensible reality. ("Writing Ethnographies"
> 330)

Reality is "inert, polymorphous and insignificant." Reality plus

language _produces_ our de facto reality. Words "inspirit," "infuse" the
world--the world becomes the "embodiment" of that spirit. Perhaps
it is not the case that these inert things are "imperfect exemplars" of
the meaning. In other words, perhaps this is a more aristotelian than
a platonic model, though the distinction by no means guarantees a
complete separation, nor does it save this widely accepted (within
many circles, "hegemonic") constructivist model from some
substantial critiques. Let me explain both the classification and the
critique.

Unlike Plato's idealism, Aristotle's more materialist approach
fuses form and matter, the active and passive, but still distinguishes
them and maintains a hierarchical relation. The male, rational
element must control the female, passionate, bodily, material
elements--in social life, in the ethical life of the individual, and in
reproduction: the male semen inspirits, drives, directs, provides the
form for the female's contribution: the passive, malleable, even
"chaotic" (unordered) material element. Burke's and Fiske's language
is a uniquely masculine endeavor. The male semen provides the soul
--the spirit, the meaning--that molds matter, that moves it from the
realm of motion (passive, controlled movement) to the realm of
action: choice, ethics, language. Language, for Burke, is indeed _logos_:
spirit, power, order(ing). A constructivist approach is often seen as
critical for a feminist political program, as a part of denying
essentialism, as breaking free from the cage of biological
determinism. Yet these same approaches manifest the traditional
dualisms: male, active, spiritual, symbolic, ordered: female, passive,
mundane, material, chaotic. Not surprisingly, these kantian
epistemologies retain and reproduce Kant's own ascetic philosophy,
his fear of the body, emotion and irrationality (see Schott). And this

link makes clear that these theories of language--so often
appropriated by those desiring liberation for oppressed groups such as
women--are deeply implicated in our treatment of the environment:
the real, the feminine, matter.

> The entire apparatus of knowledge is an apparatus for
> abstraction and simplification--directed not at knowledge
> but at taking possession of things. . . .
> -Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power (274)

> It is this barely admissable recognition of the odd sorts of
> agents and actors which/whom we must admit to the
> narrative of collective life, including nature, that
> simultaneously, first, turns us decisively away from
> enlightenment-derived modern and postmodern premises
> about nature and culture, the social and technical, science
> and society and, second, saves us from the deadly point of
> view of productionism. Productionism and its corollary,
> humanism, come down to the story line that "man makes
> everything, including himself, out of the world that can only
> be resource and potency to his project and active agency."
> This productionism is about man the tool-maker and -user,
> whose highest technical production is himself; i.e., the
> story line of phallogocentrism.
> -Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters" (297)

> She swaggers in. They are terrifying in their white
> hairlessness. She waits. She watches. She does not move.

She is measuring their moves. And they are measuring her.
Cautiously one takes a bit of her fur. He cuts it free from
her. He examines it. Another numbers her feet, her teeth,
the length and width of her body. She yawns. They announce
she is alive. They wonder what she will do if they enclose
her in the room with them. One of them shuts the door. She
backs her way toward the closed doorway and then roars.
"Be still," the men say. She continues to roar. "Why does
she roar?" they ask. The roaring must be inside her, they
conclude. They decide they must see the roaring inside her.
They approach her in a group, six at her two front legs and
six at her two back legs. They are trying to put her to
sleep. She swings at one of the men. His own blood runs
over him. "Why did she do that?" the men question. She has
no soul, they conclude, she does not know right from wrong.
"Be still," they shout at her. "Be humble, trust us," they
demand. "We have souls," they proclaim, "we know what is
right," they approach her with their medicine, "for you." She
does not understand this language. She devours them.
-Susan Griffin, "The Lion in the Den of the Prophets," Woman
and Nature (187)

The elementary unit of language--the statement--is the order-
word. . . . Language is not made to be believed but to be obeyed,
and to compel obedience. . . . Language is not life; it gives life
orders. Life does not speak; it listens and waits.
-Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus (76)

Damn the meaning; we're here to catalog.
-Sallie Tisdale (231)

That entity that has been struck dumb, but that is eloquent
in its silence: the _real_. . . . And yet that woman-thing
speaks. . . . <u>Yet one must know how to listen otherwise than
in good form(s) to hear what it says</u>.
-Luce Irigaray (1 1 1)

Pay close attention, what follows is both difficult and at
the core of what I am driving at here. . . .

<u>Koyaanisgatsi</u> demonstrates, makes evident, visible, the implications
for the earth and its people of the dominant symbolics, the dominant
epistemological assumptions that drive our sense-making and action.
We do not just order or organize the world, make it fit our
preconceptions, in our <u>cognitive</u> world. We are not nearly so passive
or benign: we act out, toward, into the world. Not just <u>on the basis</u>
of these frameworks of sense-making, but <u>with</u> them. This infusing
and ordering of the world through language as discussed by Burke,
Nietzsche, and others is often understood either metaphorically or as
occurring in the symbolic/mental/ideational realm as opposed to the
material. I would argue, however, that this model and conception (!!)
of language authorizes, motivates, drives, is somehow connected with
our very literal, physical attempts to order the earth, matter, bodies
--<u>Koyaanisgatsi!</u> How can they be distinguished: the symbolic and the
actions it author(ize)s? Geometrism, linearity, canalization are
symbolic constructs <u>and</u> material practices. We do not just classify
objects in books, we distribute bodies (in institutions and with

architecture and urban design), we place animals in zoos, we designate "wilderness areas," "wildlife preserves," "grazing land." We build damns, blow up mountains, cut straight lines through and across the earth, carve up geography with lines of geometric shapes using roads, canals, rails, pipelines, power lines, walls of sand, rock and cement. Burke explains that

> nature, as perceived by the word-using animal, would be not just the less-than-verbal thing that we usually take it to be. Rather, as so conceived and perceived, it would be infused with the spirit of words, and of the social orders that are implicit in any complex verbal structure. (Language 378-379)

This infusion is not simply spiritual and/or symbolic. I am talking about material actions, I am talking about the intermingling of different kinds of bodies: physical, social, semiotic, biological, chemical, spiritual. . .categories by which we make sense of the world, not pure realms. Forces. "They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected" (Deleuze and Guattari 261). The social orders have been inscribed onto the face of the earth, into its atmospheric layers, into its surrounding space. City, computer chip. Pipelines, geometry. Crops, linearity. Channel people's movement and desires, deny and destroy fluidity.

If discourses are to be treated first as ensembles of discursive events, what status are we to accord this notion of event, so rarely taken into consideration by philosophers? Or course, an event is neither substance, nor accident, nor quality nor process; events are not corporeal.

And yet, an event is certainly not immaterial; it takes
effect, becomes effect, always on the level of materiality.
Events have their place; they consist in relation to,
coexistence with, dispersion of, the cross-checking
accumulation and the selection of material elements; it
occurs as an effect of, and in, material dispersion. Let us
say that the philosophy of event should advance in the
direction, at first sight paradoxical. . .
                    —Michel Foucault, The Discourse on Language (231)

The fundamental faith of the metaphysicians is the faith in
                                               opposite values.
                    —Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil (10)

                            . . .of an incorporeal materialism.
                    —Michel Foucault, The Discourse on Language (231)

As soon as any philosophy begins to believe in itself [i]t
always creates the world in its own image; it cannot do
otherwise. Philosophy is this tyrranical drive itself. . . .
                    —Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil (16)

We must conceive discourse as a violence that we do to
things, or, at all events, as a practice we impose upon them.
                    —Michel Foucault, The Discourse on Language (229)

                                        Stop making sense.
                    —Talking Heads, "Girlfriend Is Better"

Take it literally:

Stop / Making: producing, imposing / Sense: order, knowledge.

We find ourselves in the midst of a rude fetishism when we call to mind the basic presuppositions of the metaphysics of language--which is to say, of <u>reason</u>. It is <u>this</u> which sees everywhere deed and doer; this which believes in will as cause in general; this which believes in the "ego," in the ego as being, in the ego as substance, and which <u>projects</u> its belief in the ego-substance on to all things--only thus does it <u>create</u> the concept "thing". . . . Being is everywhere thought in, <u>foisted on</u>, as cause; it is only from the concept "ego" that there follows, derivatively, the concept "being". . . .
-Friedrich Nietzsche, <u>Twilight of the Idols</u> (38)

I is an order word.
-Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (84)

This is crucial to what I am trying to develop here. Follow closely. . . .

There is a battle of sorts between what we call the epistemological and ontological realms. Rhythm is one of the tools, forms, media by and through which this battle is carried out; I could say rhythm is the battlefield. Ontology has been subordinated to epistemology (the will to knowledge/control, ego, being, sense, language, mankind). Considering ontology as a conversational partner, the relation as a dialogue--a dialogue that has been hostile, hierarchical, confrontational--is radical, gives "the real"/"woman"/

"nature" a voice of sorts. "Yet one must know how to listen otherwise than in good form(s) to hear what it says." __Simply trying to hear ontology has become a radical deviation: the will to power__.

The social and the natural, the mind and the body, humans and animals, animals and plants, organic and inorganic: __such distinctions are unimportant here__. __The project Nietzsche names is the transformation of becoming into being__. Rhythm--in our languages, in our work, in our technologies, in our transformations of the environment, in our musics--channels these various forces (haecceities) into certain objects, directions, purposes. To study the dominant forms of (Western) organizational communication--as I am defining that here--is to study the transformation of multiplicity into singularity, fluidity into solidity, "chaos" into "order." Listen carefully to Foucault in this context. I have always been drawn to these statements. Their potentials are greatly expanded, for me, in this context.

The essential political problem for the intellectual is not to criticise the ideological contents supposedly linked to science, or to ensure that his own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing people's consciousness--or what's in their heads--but the political, economic, institutional régime of the production of truth. It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power) but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it

> operates at the present time.
> The political question, to sum up, is not error, illusion,
> alienated consciousness or ideology; it is truth itself.
> Hence the importance of Nietzsche.
> -Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge (133)

An epistemology (could I, should I, even call it that?) and an ethics
based on an understanding of the world as a fluid multiplicity, a
becoming, would be characterized by the will to power: the
affirmation of difference, multiplicity, change, chance. What would
rhythm sound like in a such a frame?

> It seems to me important that one should get rid of the all,
> the unity, some force, something unconditioned; otherwise
> one will never cease regarding it as the highest court of
> appeal and baptizing it "God." One must shatter the all;
> unlearn respect for the all; take what we have given to the
> unknown and the whole and give it back to what is nearest,
> what is ours.
> -Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power (181)

When I listen to the Talking Heads, usually Stop Making Sense,
particularly "Once in a Lifetime," but also songs like "Cross-Eyed and
Painless," "Big Business," "I Zimbra," and "Burning Down the House,"
and I really get into it, and I have been writing on this essay (like this
morning). . . my consciousness alters, and my body moves, preventing
me (no accident) from sitting here and writing about it. But this--the
music, the experience--is what I am trying to get at here: the Edge,
in general terms; the Will to Power, in abstract terms; how all this

can be articulated. . .is very concrete, and therefore, following
Nietzsche, it should be no surprise I cannot write it very well within
our (your, my) terms. "The point of critique is not justification but a
different way of feeling: another sensibility" (Deleuze 94). Lines of
flight, deterritorialization.

**For the stakes here are indeed the negative and the positive
in the absolute: the earth girded, encompassed, overcoded,
conjugated as the object of a mortuary and suicidal
organization surrounding it on all sides, or the earth
consolidated, connected with the Cosmos, brought into the
Cosmos following lines of creation that cut across it as so
many becomings (Nietzsche's expression: Let the earth
become lightness. . .).**
-Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (510)

My favorite line from Foucault: "the stark impossibility of thinking
that." What would it mean, feel like, be like, what actions would
"make sense" if we "let the earth become lightness"? If we embrace
fluidity and turbulence along with solidity? Highlight specificity?
Overcome that absurd impulse called idealism with which we have
been stricken for millenia? Value chaos, complexity, nonlinearity?
Get rid of the "either-or" and the "if-then"? Change all the "buts" and
"howevers" to "ands"? Make "nature" (in all its irreducible
multiplicities) a conversational partner? Listen instead of speak?
Allow more than one rhythm at a time? Give up the "all," the "one,"
the illusion of control? Can we do this without a descent in to a
passive nihilism, an "oh my, what's the point to it all?" Can we be

active nihilists: "oh my, there's no point!" These are the questions, the challenges.

Koyaanisqatsi makes clear, to me, the price of the will to control: the negation of life, the reactive destruction, the futile attempts at transcendence, death. Dare we consider, seriously, the alternatives? Overcome our selves, will the active destruction of who it is we are and have been, as a species?

You may find yourself living in a shotgun shack
You may find yourself in another part of the world
You may find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile
You may find yourself. . .in a beautiful house. . .with a beautiful wife
You may ask yourself, "Well. . .how did I get here?"

          -Talking Heads, "Once in a Lifetime"

Can we remove the idea of a goal from the process and then affirm the process in spite of this?
-Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power (36)

Letting the days go by   let the water hold me down
Letting the days go by   water flowing under ground
Into the blue again   after the morning's gone
Once in a lifetime   water flowing under ground

You may ask yourself, "How do I work this?"
You may ask yourself, "Where is that large automobile?"
You may tell yourself, "This is not my beautiful house."
You may tell yourself, "This is not my beautiful wife."

Letting the days go by

Letting the days go by

Into the blue again

Once in a lifetime

let the water hold me down

water flowing under ground

after the morning's gone

water flowing under ground

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

-Talking Heads, "Once in a Lifetime"

Let us think this thought in its most terrible form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale of nothingness: "the eternal recurrence." This is the most extreme form of nihilism: the nothing (the "meaningless"), eternally!
-Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power (35-36)

Water dissolving, water removed

There is water at the bottom of the ocean

If I move the water, carry the water

If I move the water from the bottom of the ocean

Letting the days go by

let the water hold me down

Letting the days go by
Into the blue again
Once in a lifetime
Into the blue again
Under the rocks and stones
Letting the days go by
Once in a lifetime

water flowing under ground
after the morning's gone
water flowing under ground
into the silent water
there is water under ground
into the silent water
water flowing underground

You may ask yourself, "What is that beautiful house?"
You may ask yourself, "Where does that highway lead to?"
You may ask yourself, "Am I right? Am I wrong?"
You may say to yourself, "My God, what have I done!"

-Talking Heads, "Once in a Lifetime"

**If we are "disappointed," it is at least not regarding life:
rather we are now facing up to all kinds of "desiderata."
With scornful wrath we contemplate what are called
"ideals"; we despise ourselves only because there are
moments when we cannot subdue that absurd impulse that is
called "idealism."**

-Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power (15)

Letting the days go by
Letting the days go by
Into the blue again
Once in a lifetime
Into the blue again
Under the rocks and stones

let the water hold me down
water flowing under ground
after the morning's gone
water flowing under ground
into the silent water
there is water under ground

Letting the days go by   into the silent water

Once in a lifetime   water flowing under ground

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

Same as it ever was

-Talking Heads, "Once in a Lifetime"

There is nothing to life that has value, except the degree of power--assuming that life itself is the will to power.

-Friedrich Nietzsche, <u>The Will to Power</u> (37)

Letting the days go by

Letting the days go by

Letting the days go by

Once in a lifetime

Letting the days go by

Letting the days go by

Letting the days go by

Once in a lifetime

-Talking Heads, "Once in a Lifetime"

The eternal return does not mean "the same as it ever was" in the way

we generally know how to hear what that means: "one must learn how to listen otherwise than in good form(s) to hear what it says." The "same" in a world of "becoming" is ever-changing, fluid, unfixed. The "eternal return" is not a return of the same <u>being</u>, but a return of <u>becoming</u>. To will the return of the world as it is, without God, without a singular, eternal meaning, without aim, unity, purpose, logic, order, goal: this is the will to power, the affirmation of difference, of life: <u>this is life</u>. To will something in such a way that you will its eternal return: this is not control, the imposition of being, but an active, joyful affirmation of becoming, of flow, of the "silent water. . .water flowing under ground." (And this complicates the binary opposition: "becoming" is not a stable thing.) What would rhythm sound like, feel like, work like if it was produced by this quality of will?

<u>Utopias</u> afford consolation: although they have no real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical. <u>Heterotopias</u> are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this <u>and</u> that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy "syntax" in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to "hold together." This is why utopias permit fables and discourse: they run with the very grain of language and are part of the

**fundamental dimension of the _fabula_; heterotopias. . .
desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the
very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our
myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences.**
—Michel Foucault, The Order of Things (xviii)

From the images of slick, (post)modern skyscrapers with glass sides
. . .to tall brick buildings with fire escapes:
pull back slowly to reveal the rubble.
"Public Housing": a contradiction in terms in a world of private
property.
Row after row after row of abandoned, windowless brick apartment
buildings.
Pan to the street: garbage, rubble, black people.
An old playground.
A broken streetlamp.
Broken mailboxes.
A broken window.
Another broken window.
Another.
From the inside: broken windows and emptiness.
And again.
And again.
More abandoned buildings.
Row after row after row.
An old brick apartment building: blown up, in slow motion, collapses
into a dust cloud.
And another.
And another.

And another.

And another.

Two buildings destroyed at the same time:

they just dis-integrate.

What has happened, at bottom? The feeling of valuelessness
was reached with the realization that the overall character
of existence may not be interpreted by means of the concept
of "aim," the concept of "unity," or the concept of "truth."
Existence has no goal or end; any comprehensive unity in the
plurality of events is lacking: the character of existence is
not "true," is _false_. One simply lacks any reason for
convincing oneself that there is a _true_ world. Briefly: the
categories "aim," "unity," "being" which we used to project
some value into the world--we _pull out_ again; so the world
looks _valueless_.
-Friedrich Nietzsche, _The Will to Power_ (13)

"Letting the days go by. . .the same as it ever was. . .once in a lifetime."

Put these three all together.

The Will to Power.

The Eternal Return.

An Active Nihilism.

(It is no accident, no surprise that this comes from Talking Heads'
African period.)