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Recombinant text, circa 1500.

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Utopian Plagiarism,

Hypertextuality, and

Electronic Cultural Production

Plagiarism has long been considered an evil in the cultural world. Typically it has been viewed as the theft of language, ideas, and images by the less than talented, often for the enhancement of personal fortune or prestige. Yet, like most mythologies, the myth of plagiarism is easily inverted. Perhaps it is those who support the legislation of representation and the privatization of language that are suspect; perhaps the plagiarist's actions, given a specific set of social conditions, are the ones contributing most to cultural enrichment. Prior to the Enlightenment, plagiarism was useful in aiding the distribution of ideas. An English poet could appropriate and translate a sonnet from Petrarch and call it

his own. In accordance with the classical aesthetic of art as imitation, this was a perfectly acceptable practice. The real value of this activity rested less in the reinforcement of classical aesthetics than in the distribution of work to areas where otherwise it probably would not have appeared. The works of English plagiarists, such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Sterne, Coleridge, and De Quincey, are still a vital part of the English heritage, and remain in the literary canon to this day.

At present, new conditions have emerged that once again make plagiarism an acceptable, even crucial strategy for textual production. This is the age of the recombinant: recombinant bodies, recombinant gender, recombinant texts, recombinant culture. Looking back through the privileged frame of hindsight, one can argue that the recombinant has always been key in the development of meaning and invention; recent extraordinary advances in electronic technology have called attention to the recombinant both in theory and in practice (for example, the use of morphing in video and film). The primary value of all electronic technology, especially computers and imaging systems, is the startling speed at which they can transmit information in both raw and refined forms. As information flows at a high velocity through the electronic networks, disparate and sometimes incommensurable systems of meaning intersect, with both enlightening and inventive consequences. In a society dominated by a "knowledge" explosion, exploring the possibilities of meaning in that which already exists is more pressing than adding redundant information (even if it is produced using the methodology and metaphysic of the "original"). In the past, arguments in favor of plagiarism were limited to showing its use in resisting the privatization

of culture that serves the needs and desires of the power elite. Today one can argue that plagiarism is acceptable, even inevitable, given the nature of postmodern existence with its techno-infrastructure. In a recombinant culture, plagiarism is productive, although we need not abandon the romantic model of cultural production which privileges a model of *ex nihilo* creation. Certainly in a general sense the latter model is somewhat anachronistic. There are still specific situations where such thinking is useful, and one can never be sure when it could become appropriate again. What is called for is an end to its tyranny and to its institutionalized cultural bigotry. This is a call to open the cultural data base, to let everyone use the technology of textual production to its maximum potential.

> Ideas improve. The meaning of words participates in the improvement. Plagiarism is necessary. Progress implies it. It embraces an author's phrase, makes use of his expressions, erases a false idea, and replaces it with the right idea. [1]

Plagiarism often carries a weight of negative connotations (particularly in the bureaucratic class); while the need for its use has increased over the century, plagiarism itself has been camouflaged in a new lexicon by those desiring to explore the practice as method and as a legitimized form of cultural discourse. Readymades, collage, found art or found text, intertexts, combines, detournment, and appropriation—all these terms represent explorations in plagiarism. Indeed, these terms are not perfectly synonymous, but they all intersect a set of meanings primary to the philosophy and activity of plagiarism. Philosophically, they all stand in opposition to essentialist doctrines

of the text: They all assume that no structure within a given text provides a universal and necessary meaning. No work of art or philosophy exhausts itself in itself alone, in its being-in-itself. Such works have always stood in relation to the actual life-process of society from which they have distinguished themselves. Enlightenment essentialism failed to provide a unit of analysis that could act as a basis of meaning. Just as the connection between a signifier and its referent is arbitrary, the unit of meaning used for any given textual analysis is also arbitrary. Roland Barthes' notion of the lexia primarily indicates surrender in the search for a basic unit of meaning. Since language was the only tool available for the development of metalanguage, such a project was doomed from its inception. It was much like trying to eat soup with soup. The text itself is fluid—although the language game of ideology can provide the illusion of stability, creating blockage by manipulating the unacknowledged assumptions of everyday life. Consequently, one of the main goals of the plagiarist is to restore the dynamic and unstable drift of meaning, by appropriating and recombining fragments of culture. In this way, meanings can be produced that were not previously associated with an object or a given set of objects.

Marcel Duchamp, one of the first to understand the power of recombination, presented an early incarnation of this new aesthetic with his readymade series. Duchamp took objects to which he was "visually indifferent," and recontextualized them in a manner that shifted their meaning. For example, by taking a urinal out of the rest room, signing it, and placing it on a pedestal in an art gallery, meaning slid away from the apparently exhaustive func-

tional interpretation of the object. Although this meaning did not completely disappear, it was placed in harsh juxtaposition to another possibility—meaning as an art object. This problem of instability increased when problems of origin were raised: The object was not made by an artist, but by a machine. Whether or not the viewer chose to accept other possibilities for interpreting the function of the artist and the authenticity of the art object, the urinal in a gallery instigated a moment of uncertainty and reassessment. This conceptual game has been replayed numerous times over the 20th century, at times for very narrow purposes, as with Rauschenberg's combines—done for the sake of attacking the critical hegemony of Clement Greenberg—while at other times it has been done to promote large-scale political and cultural restructuring, as in the case of the Situationists. In each case, the plagiarist works to open meaning through the injection of scepticism into the culture-text.

Here one also sees the failure of Romantic essentialism. Even the alleged transcendental object cannot escape the sceptics' critique. Duchamp's notion of the inverted readymade (turning a Rembrandt painting into an ironing board) suggested that the distinguished art object draws its power from a historical legitimation process firmly rooted in the institutions of western culture, and not from being an unalterable conduit to transcendental realms. This is not to deny the possibility of transcendental experience, but only to say that if it does exist, it is prelinguistic, and thereby relegated to the privacy of an individual's subjectivity. A society with a complex division of labor requires a rationalization of institutional processes, a situation which in turn robs the individual of a way to share nonrational experience. Unlike societies with a simple division of labor, in which the

experience of one member closely resembles the experience
of another (minimal alienation), under a complex division
of labor, t he life experience of the individual turned special-
ist holds little in common with other specialists.
Consequently, communication exists primarily as an instru-
mental function.

Plagiarism has historically stood against the privileging of
any text through spiritual, scientific, or other legitimizing
myths. The plagiarist sees all objects as equal, and thereby
horizontalizes the plane of phenomena. All texts become
potentially usable and reusable. Herein lies an epistemology
of anarchy, according to which the plagiarist argues that if
science, religion, or any other social institution precludes
certainty beyond the realm of the private, then it is best to
endow consciousness with as   many categories of interpreta-
tion as possible. The tyranny of paradigms may have some
useful consequences (such as greater efficiency within the
paradigm), but the repressive costs to the individual (ex-
cluding other modes of thinking and reducing the possibility
of invention) are too high. Rather than being led by se-
quences of signs, one should instead drift through them,
choosing the interpretation best suited to the social condi-
tions of a given situation.

> It is a matter of throwing together various cut-up
> techniques in order to respond to the omnipres-
> ence of transmitters feeding us with their dead
> discourses (mass media, publicity, etc.). It is a
> question of unchaining the codes—not the subject
> anymore—so that something will burst out, will
> escape; words ben eath words, personal obsessions.
> Another kind of word is born which escapes from

the totalitarianism of the media but retains their power, and turns it against their old masters.

Cultural production, literary or otherwise, has traditionally been a slow, labor-intensive process. In painting, sculpture, or written work, the technology has always been primitive by contemporary standards. Paintbrushes, hammers and chisels, quills and paper, and even the printing press do not lend themselves well to rapid production and broad-range distribution. The time lapse between production and distribution can seem unbearably long. Book arts and traditional visual arts still suffer tremendously from this problem, when compared to the electronic arts. Before electronic technology became dominant, cultural perspectives developed in a manner that more clearly defined texts as individual works. Cultural fragments appeared in their own right as discrete units, since their influence moved slowly enough to allow the orderly evolution of an argument or an aesthetic. Boundaries could be maintained between disciplines and schools of thought. Knowledge was considered finite, and was therefore easier to control. In the 19th century this traditional order began to collapse as new technology began to increase the velocity of cultural development. The first strong indicators began to appear that speed was becoming a crucial issue. Knowledge was shifting away from certitude, and transforming itself into information. During the American Civil War, Lincoln sat impatiently by his telegraph line, awaiting reports from his generals at the front. He had no patience with the long-winded rhetoric of the past, and demanded from his generals an efficient economy of language. There was no time for the traditional trappings of the elegant essayist. Cultural velocity and information have continued to increase at a geometric rate since then, result-

ing in an information panic. Production and distribution of information (or any other product) must be immediate; there can be no lag time between the two. Techno-culture has met this demand with data bases a nd electronic networks that rapidly move any type of information.

Under such conditions, plagiarism fulfills the requirements of economy of representation, without stifling invention. If invention occurs when a new perception or idea is brought out—by intersecting two or more formally disparate systems—then recombinant methodologies are desirable. This is where plagiarism progresses beyond nihilism. It does not simply inject scepticism to help destroy totalitarian systems that stop invention; it participates in invention, and is thereby also productive. The genius of an inventor like Leonardo da Vinci lay in his ability to recombine the then separate systems of biology, mathematics, engineering, and art. He was not so much an originator as a synthesizer. There have been few people like him over the centuries, because the ability to hold that much data in one's own biological memory is rare. Now, however, the technology of recombination is available in the computer. The problem now for would-be cultural producers is to gain access to this technology and information. After all, access is the most precious of all privileges, and is therefore strictly guarded, which in turn makes one wonder whether to be a successful plagiarist, one must also be a successful hacker.

> Most serious writers refuse to make themselves available to the things that technology is doing. I have never been able to understand this sort of fear. Many are afraid of using tape recorders, and

> the idea of using any electronic means for literary or artistic purposes seems to them some sort of sacrilege.

To some degree, a small portion of technology has fallen through the cracks into the hands of the lucky few. Personal computers and video cameras are the best examples. To accompany these consumer items and make their use more versatile, hypertextual and image sampling programs have also been developed—programs designed to facilitate recombination. It is the plagiarist's dream to be able to call up, move, and recombine text with simple user -friendly commands. Perhaps plagiarism rightfully belongs to post-book culture, since only in that society can it be made explicit what book culture, with its geniuses and auteurs, tends to hide—that information is most useful when it interacts with other information, rather than when it is deified and presented in a vacuum.

Thinking about a new means for recombining information has always been on 20th-century minds, although this search has been left to a few until recently. In 1945 Vannevar Bush, a former science advisor to Franklin D. Roosevelt, proposed a new way of organizing information in an *Atlantic Monthly* article. At that time, computer technology was in its earliest stag es of development and its full potential was not really understood. Bush, however, had the foresight to imagine a device he called the Memex. In his view it would be based around storage of information on microfilm, integrated with some means to allow the user to select and display any section at will, thus enabling one to move freely among previously unrelated increments of information.

At the time, Bush's Memex could not be built, but as computer technology evolved, his idea eventually gained practicality. Around 1960 Theodor Nelson made this realization when he began studying computer programming in college:

> Over a period of months, I came to realize that, although programmers structured their data hierarchically, they didn't have to. I began to see the computer as the ideal place for making interconnections among things accessible to people.

> I realized that writing did not have to be sequential and that not only would tomorrow's books and magazines be on [cathode ray terminal] screens, they could all tie to one another in every direction. At once I began working on a program (written in 7090 assembler language) to carry out these ideas.

Nelson's idea, which he called hypertext, failed to attract any supporters at first, although by 1968 its usefulness became obvious to some in the government and in defense industries. A prototype of hypertext was developed by another computer innovator, Douglas Englebart, who is often credited with many breakthroughs in the use of computers (such as the development of the Macintosh interface, Windows). Englebart's system, called Augment, was applied to organizing the government's research network, ARPAnet, and was also used by McDonnell Douglas, the defense contractor, to aid technical work groups in coordinating projects such as aircraft design:

> All communications are automatically added to the Augment information base and linked, when appropriate, to other documents. An engineer could, for example, use Augment to write and deliver electronically a work plan to others in the work group. The other members could then review the document and have their comments linked to the original, eventually creating a "group memory" of the decisions made. Augment's powerful linking features allow users to find even old information quickly, without getting lost or being overwhelmed by detail.

Computer technology continued to be refined, and eventually—as with so many other technological breakthroughs in this country—once it had been thoroughly exploited by military and intelligence agencies, the technology was released for commercial exploitation. Of course, the development of microcomputers and consumer-grade technology for personal computers led immediately to the need for software which would help one cope with the exponential increase in information, especially textual information. Probably the first humanistic application of hypertext was in the field of education. Currently, hypertext and hypermedia (which adds graphic images to the network of features which can be interconnected) continue to be fixtures in instructional design and educational technology.

An interesting experiment in this regard was instigated in 1975 by Robert Scholes and Andries Van Dam at Brown University. Scholes, a professor of English, was contacted by Van Dam, a professor of computer science, who wanted to know if there were any courses in the humanities that might

benefit from using what at the time was called a text-editing system (now known as a word processor) with hypertext capabilities built in. Scholes and two teaching assistants, who formed a research group, were particularly impressed by one aspect of hypertext. Using this program would make it possible to peruse in a nonlinear fashion all the interrelated materials in a text. A hypertext is thus best seen as a   web of interconnected materials. This description suggested that there is a definite parallel between the conception of culture-text and that of hypertext:

> One of the most important facets of literature (and one which also leads to difficulties in interpretation) is its reflexive nature. Individual poems constantly develop their meanings—often through such means as direct allusion or the reworking of traditional motifs and conventions, at other times through subtler means, such as genre development and expansion or biographical reference—by referring to that total body of poetic material of which the particular poems comprise a small segment.

Although it was not difficult to accumulate a hypertextually-linked data base consisting of poetic materials, Scholes and his group were more concerned with making it interactive—that is, they wanted to construct a "communal text" including not only the poetry, but also incorporating the comments and interpretations offered by individual students. In this way, each student in turn could read a work and attach "notes" to it about his or her observations. The resulting "expanded text" would be read and augmented at a terminal on which the screen was divided into four areas. The student could call up the poem in one of the areas (referred to as windows) and call up related materials in the

other three windows, in any sequence he or she desired. This would powerfully reinforce the tendency to read in a nonlinear sequence. By this means, each student would learn how to read a work as it truly exists, not in "a vacuum" but rather as the central point of a progressively-revealed body of documents and ideas.

Hypertext is analogous to other forms of literary discourse besides poetry. From the very beginning of its manifestation as a computer program, hypertext was popularly described as a multidimensional text roughly analogous to the standard scholarly article in the humanities or social sciences, because it uses the same conceptual devices, such as footnotes, annotations, allusions to other works, quotations from other works, etc. Unfortunately, the convention of linear reading and writing, as well as the physical fact of two-dimensional pages and the necessity of binding them in only one possible sequence, have always limited the true potential of this type of text. One problem is that the reader is often forced to search through the text (or forced to leave the book and search elsewhere) for related information. This is a time-consuming and distracting process; instead of being able to move easily and instantly among physically remote or inaccessible areas of information storage, the reader must cope with cumbrous physical impediments to his or her research or creative work. With the advent of hypertext, it has become possible to move among related areas of information with a speed and flexibility that at least approach finally accommodating the workings of human intellect, to a degree that books and sequential reading cannot possibly allow.

> The recombinant text in hypertextual form signifies the emergence of the perception of textual constellations that have always/already gone nova. It is in this uncanny luminosity that the authorial biomorph has been consumed.   [2]

Barthes and Foucault may be lauded for theorizing the death of the author; the absent author is more a matter of everyday life, however, for the technocrat recombining and augmenting information at the computer or at a video editing console. S/he is living the dream of capitalism that is still being refined in the area of manufacture. The Japanese notion of "just in time delivery," in which the units of assembly are delivered to the assembly line just as they are called for, was a first step in streamlining the tasks of assembly. In such a system, there is no sedentary capital, but a constant flow of raw commodities. The assembled commodity is delivered to the distributor precisely at the moment of consumer need. This nomadic system eliminates stockpiles of goods. (There still is some dead time; however, the Japanese have cut it to a matter of hours, and are working on reducing it to a matter of minutes). In this way, production, distribution, and consumption are imploded into a single act, with no beginning or end, just unbroken circulation. In the same manner, the online text flows in an unbroken stream through the electronic network. There can be no place for gaps that mark discrete units in the society of speed. Consequently, notions of origin have no place in electronic reality. The production of the text presupposes its immediate distribution, consumption, and revision. All who participate in the network also participate in the interpretation and mutation of the textual stream. The concept of the author did not so much die as it simply ceased to function. The author has

become an abstract aggregate that cannot be reduced to biology or to the psychology of personality. Indeed, such a development has apocalyptic connotations—the fear that humanity will be lost in the textual stream. Perhaps humans are not capable of participating in hypervelocity. One must answer that never has there been a time when humans were able, one and all, to participate in cultural production. Now, at least the potential for cultural democracy is greater. The single bio-genius need not act as a stand-in for all humanity. The real concern is just the same as it has always been: the need for access to cultural resources.

> The discoveries of postmodern art and criticism regarding the analogical structures of images demonstrate that when two objects are brought together, no matter how far apart their contexts may be, a relationship is formed. Restricting oneself to a personal relationship of words is mere convention. The bringing together of two independent expressions supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater possibility. [3]

The book has by no means disappeared. The publishing industry continues to resist the emergence of the recombinant text, and opposes increases in cultural speed. It has set itself in the gap between production and consumption of texts, which for purposes of survival it is bound to maintain. If speed is allowed to increase, the book is doomed to perish, along with its renaissance companions painting and sculpture. This is why the industry is so afraid of the recombinant text. Such a work closes the gap between production and consumption, and opens the industry to those other than the literary celebrity. If the industry is unable to differentiate its

product through the spectacle of originality and uniqueness, its profitability collapses. Consequently, the industry plods along, taking years to publish information needed immediately. Yet there is a peculiar irony to this situation. In order to reduce speed, it must also participate in velocity in its most intense form, that of spectacle. It must claim to defend "quality and standards," and it must invent celebrities. Such endeavors require the immediacy of advertising—that is, full participation in the simulacra that will be the industry's own destruction.

Hence for the bureaucrat, from an everyday life perspective, the author is alive and well. S/he can be seen and touched and traces of h/is existence are on the covers of books and magazines everywhere in the form of the signature. To such evidence, theory can only respond with the maxim that the meaning of a given text derives exclusively from its relation to other texts. Such texts are contingent upon what came before them, the context in which they are placed, and the interpretive ability of the reader. This argument is of course unconvincing to the social segments caught in cultural lag. So long as this is the case, no recognized historical legitimation will support the producers of recombinant texts, who will always be suspect to the keepers of "high" culture.

> Take your own words or the words said to be "the very own words" of anyone else living or dead. You will soon see that words do not belong to anyone. Words have a vitality of their own. Poets are supposed to liberate the words—not to chain them in phrases. Poets have no words "of their very own." Writers do not own their words. Since when

> do words belong to anybody? "Your very own
> words" indeed! and who are "you"?

The invention of the video portapak in the late 1960s and early 70s led to considerable speculation among radical media artists that in the near future, everyone would have access to such equipment, causing a revolution in the television industry. Many hoped that video would become the ultimate tool for distributable democratic art. Each home would become its own production center, and the reliance on network television for electronic information would be only one of many options. Unfortunately this prophecy never came to pass. In the democratic sense, video did little more than super 8 film to redistribute the possibility for image production, and it has had little or no effect on image distribution. Any video besides home movies has remained in the hands of an elite technocratic class, although (as with any class) there are marginalized segments which resist the media industry, and maintain a program of decentralization.

The video revolution failed for two reasons—a lack of access and an absence of desire. Gaining access to the hardware, particularly post-production equipment, has remained as difficult as ever, nor are there any regular distribution points beyond the local public access offered by some cable TV franchises. It has also been hard to convince those outside of the technocratic class why they should want to do something with video, even if they had access to equipment. This is quite understandable when one considers that media images are provided in such an overwhelming quantity that the thought of producing more is empty. The contemporary plagiarist faces precisely the same discouragement. The potential for generating recombinant texts at present is just

that, potential. It does at least have a wider base, since the computer technology for making recombinant texts has escaped the technocratic class and spread to the bureaucratic class; however, electronic cultural production has by no means become the democratic form that utopian plagiarists hope it will be.

The immediate problems are obvious. The cost of technology for productive plagiarism is still too high. Even if one chooses to use the less effici   ent form of a hand-written plagiarist manuscript, desktop publishing technology is required to distribute it, since no publishing house will accept it. Further, the population in the US is generally skilled only as receivers of information, not as producers. With this exclusive structure solidified, technology and the desire and ability to use it remain centered in utilitarian economy, and hence not much time is given to the technology's aesthetic or resistant possibilities.

In addition to these obvious barriers, there is a more insidious problem that emerges from the social schizophrenia of the US. While its political system is theoretically based on democratic principles of inclusion, its economic system is based on the principle of exclusion. Consequently, as a luxury itself, the cultural superstructure tends towards exclusion as well. This economic principle determined the invention of copyright, which originally developed not in order to protect writers, but to reduce competition among publishers. In 17th-century England, where copyright first appeared, the goal was to reserve for publishers themselves, in perpetuity, the exclusive right to print certain books. The justification, of course, was that when formed into a literary

work, language has the author's personality imposed upon it, thereby marking it as private property. Under this mythology, copyright has flourished in late capital, setting the legal precedent to privatize any cultural item, whether it is an image, a word, or a sound. Thus the plagiarist (even of the technocratic class) is kept in a deeply marginal position, regardless of the   inventive and efficient uses h/is methodology may have for the current state of technology and knowledge.

What is the point of saving language when there is no longer anything to say?

The present requires us to rethink and re-present the notion of plagiarism. Its function has for too long been devalued by an ideology with little place in techno-culture. Let the romantic notions of originality, genius, and authorship remain, but as elements for cultural production without special privilege above other equally useful elements. It is time to openly and boldly use the methodology of recombination so as to better parallel the technology of our time.

Notes

1   In its more heroic form the footnote has a low-speed hypertextual function—that is, connecting the reader with other sources of information that can further articulate the producer's words. It points to additional information too lengthy to include in the text itself. This is not an objectionable function. The footnote is also a means of surveillance by which one can "check up" on a writer, to be sure that s/he is not improperly using an idea or phrase from the work of another. This function makes the footnote problematic, although it may be appropriate as a means of verifying conclusions in a quantitative study, for example. The surveillance function of the footnote imposes fixed interpretations on a linguistic sequence, and implies ownership of language and ideas by the individual cited. The note becomes an homage to the genius who supposedly originated the idea. This would be acceptable if all who deserved credit got their due; however, such crediting is impossible, since it would begin an infinite regress. Consequently, that which is most feared occurs: the labor of many is stolen, smuggled in under the authority of the signature which is cited. In the case of those cited who are still living, this

designation of authorial ownership allows them to collect rewards for the work of others. It must be realized that writing itself is theft: it is a changing of the features of the old culture-text in much the same way one disguises stolen goods. This is not to say that signatures should never be cited; but remember that the signature is merely a sign, a shorthand under which a collection of interrelated ideas may be stored and rapidly deployed.

2   If the signature is a form of cultural shorthand, then it is not necessarily horrific on occasion to sabotage the structures so they do not fall into rigid complacency. Attributing words to an image, i.e., an intellectual celebrity, is inappropriate. The image is a tool for playful use, like any culture-text or part thereof. It is just as necessary to imagine the history of the spectacular image, and write it as imagined, as it is to show fidelity to its current "factual" structure. One should choose the method that best suits the context of production, one that will render the greater possibility for interpretation. The producer of recombinant texts augments the language, and often preserves the generalized code, as when Karen Eliot quoted Sherrie Levine as saying, "Plagiarism? I just don't like the way it tastes."

3   It goes without saying that one is not limited to correcting a work or to integrating diverse fragments of out-of-date works into a new one; one can also alter the meaning of these fragments in any appropriate way, leaving the constipated to their slavish preservation of "citations."

Four examples of plagiarist poetry.

Like A Big Dog*

A big dog stands on the highway
He walks on confidently and is run over by a car.
His peaceful expression shows that he is usually better
looked after—
a domestic animal to whom no harm is done. * *
But do the sons of the rich bourgeois families
who also suffer no harm* * *
have the same peaceful expression?
They were cared for just as lovingly
as the dog which is now run over.

Annotations for Like a Big Dog

* From Horkheimer & Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*,
"Animal Psychology."

* * In Kafka's "Investigations of a Dog" the same dog is
referred to as "impossible to abuse and impossible to love."

* * * a reversal of the German expression "the wealthy fear
harm for they cause most of it."

Crônicas III

The one who told me the story was a very dear friend.
The child was a little Indian boy, really quite small.
All the members of the tribe took care of the manioc patch.
The new buildings were very daring constructions.*
He expected the child to have a shock when he saw all those
        apartments in just one building.
However, the sight had no effect except for a yawn.
"When are we going to visit the theaters, the banks, and the
        squares?" he asked with impatience.
To me, your attitude is completely incomprehensible.
The interest we show is related to our own lives.
Without fortune and a good car, our social group feels there
        can be
no well-being.**

* To show local tribes the value of the paper industry that
was destroying the jungle in which they lived, the corpora-
tion built huts made of corrugated cardboard for the
tribespeople.
** The motto of one of the Samba troupes, most of which
come from the poorest sections of Rio and dress like wealthy
aristocrats during Carnival.

Narkotika I

this is the diseasing of America.
Normal joy and pain are denied us,
through being defined as clinical syndromes.

our failure will differ from that of previous civilizations,
in that our demise will be scientific.
Medical treatments will expand endlessly
but will not be able to help us.
In this perverted medical effort, we lose hope.
Disease conceptions have come to stand for all our fears.

While we rush to spend money in new ways,
More seek treatment for the disorder
Only to relapse, and the very failures of
disease treatment are cited as proof of its effectiveness.

One reaction to a dearth of cultural theory

A few theoretical issues in the study of modern systems:
material objects are not part of culture.
certain cultural performances create wastes that
are products, not parts, of the culture proper.
Confining an earthworm, a snail, and a chicken
together in one box does not make them members of the
        same species.
No modern system is completely consistent or compatible.
For example, in our system the manufacture of rubber heels
        for shoes
is in neutral consistency with the professional study of
        literature.
The use of the slang word "shucks" has little or nothing to
        do
with our system's adjustment to its environment
or with its relations with foreign cultures.
Let us ask again how they can be held together.
The answer that many would give is "force."

XIII
1 8 3 2

Thou buildest upon the bosom of darkness,
out of the fantastic imagery of the brain, cities
and temples, beyond the art of Phideas and
Praxiteles, beyond the splendors of Babylon
and Hekatómpylos; and, "from the anarchy of
dreaming sleep," callest into sunny light the
faces of long buried beauties.

Thou buildest upon the bosom of darkness, out of
the fantastic imagery of the brain, cities and
temples of digital perfection, beyond the art of
Phideas and Praxiteles, beyond the splendors of
Babylon and Hekatómpylos; and, "from the
anarchy of dreaming sleep," callest into cathode
light the faces of long buried beauties.

XIV
1 8 4 3

What is abstract thought? It is thought without
a thinker. Abstract thought ignores everything
except the thought, and only the thought is,
and is in its own medium.

What is virtual thought? It is thought without a
thinker. Virtual thought ignores everything except
the thought, and only the thought is, and is in its
own medium.