The Poetry of André Frénaud

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Abstract

A phenomenological approach is adopted towards Frénaud's poetry. This is broadly inspired by the work of the critic Jean-Pierre Richard in such books as Littérature et Sensation. Separation is taken to be a guiding 'metaphor' for the way in which the poems are constructed, and the kinds of subject matter they repeatedly turn towards.

There are five chapters:

1/ 'L'unité' - treats the abstract notion as a dialectical counterpart to separation, attempts to situate it within Frénaud's overall poetic enterprise.

2/ 'Love & Separation': moves to a more concrete discussion with close analysis of texts. How does intense emotion affect Frénaud's poetic language.

3/ 'La solitude' - How does the poem operate in extreme isolation? The problem of sollipsism and communication/interpretation.

4/ 'Le don' - The poem as act of transmission. Investigates different forms and aspects of this metaphor for the creative impulse.

5/ 'Dislocation' - Both language, and the thing to which language 'refers', are disrupted in a tradition stemming from Rimbaud, here both the structural and deconstructive qualities of this area are discussed.

This thesis also deals with Frénaud's concept of 'une dialectique' in poetry.

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Abbreviations

(EC) L'Etape dans la clairière I966 NRF Gallimard.

(H) Hæres I982 NRF Gallimard.

(IP) Il n'y a pas de paradis I962 Poésie/Gallimard.

(LSF) La sainte face I968 NRF Gallimard.

(NIF) Notre inhabileté fatale I979 NRF Gallimard.

(RM) Les rois mages I977 NRF Gallimard.

(SR/DTD) La Sorcière de Rome/ Depuis toujours déjà
I984 Poésie/Gallimard.

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INTRODUCTION

Separation — the moment when a special kind of unity becomes distant from the poet — is a key element in Frénaud's poetry. The experience of making the poem always reaches a point where separation from 'la force' becomes inevitable: 'la force avec laquelle il lui arrivera de se confondre se sépare de lui déjà' (IP 238). The moment at which unity — loss of limits in mingling together with something — is achieved entails an immediate and perceptible rift.

Unity and separation, it seems, cannot exist apart for the poetic consciousness. It is also subject to temporality, the power of the insidious adverb 'déjà' which introduces a point of dislocation as though it had been ever-present yet not quite perceived: 'Et déjà l'Unité se défait'(EC 35).

Against this background the poet attempts to articulate elements within his poems which may emotionally counterbalance the perceived separation. He calls on 'les frères', uses the metaphor of an inheritor and inherited links ('Hæres') to describe the union which the poem tries to produce. 'La nourriture' and 'la fête', 'le festin' or 'la noce', are also capable of orienting the poem in a certain way towards communion, but also towards its negation.

But Frénaud's view of his whole work, or of his

individual books, is in terms of an architecture, and this demands tension and balance. The attempt at total communication is held in check, the festival is toned down by exclusion or its menacing depths where a repellant and separating force lurks. In this way separation and unity coexist within the poem's themes.

What this examination of Frénaud's poetry attempts is a search through various aspects of his poetry structured by the dominant theme of Separation. There is a strategy based on close examination of texts and the way in which they reveal or concentrate the poetic sensitivity. For, ultimately, this poetry is built upon certain emotional situations which give rise to a series of themes. Separation has been chosen as the main one for this study, but others might have been used such as love, hatred, 'l'ordre' etc.

The aim here is not to end up with an integrated or conclusive view which might 'round off' the poet's work. The approach is more allusive as a poet's language and creative enterprise is always slightly beyond a critic's grasp. In attempting to make it clear one distorts it, and you find yourself no longer talking about the same thing, but rather a kind of schema representing the artist's work.

What is attempted, however, is an investigation into how the idea of 'articulation' works in Frénaud's poetry. With this is the desire to show up points of

poetic conflict and to go some way to explaining why they are there.

Five major areas affected by Separation have been selected, and they form the headings for each chapter: I/ 'L'unité'; 2/ 'L'amour'; 3/ 'La solitude'; 4/ Donation; 5/ Dislocation. In some ways all of these can be found dominating contemporary French poetry. Writers such as Michel Deguy, and Yves Bonnefoy, and before them Pierre Reverdy and Jules Supervielle, are or have been preoccupied with the search for 'l'unité'. Dislocation in some form or other is a characteristic of modern artistic production; from Rimbaud onwards there is an intentional process of disrupting experience and a desire to alter the world and self.

Frénaud reorganises these areas of poetic interest according to his own internal pattern of reactions. In a sense, this is one of the main themes of the thesis; an account of the points where internal and external intersect, and how the poet uses and organises these moments in his work.

Such an area of intersection between internal self and external otherness — further complicated by apprehension of unknown (other) regions deep within the self, and recognition of harmony in the external world — is one of the targets of the quest which the poem forms:

Prisonnier délivré, le poète, ses désirs et ses

/ ...

> contradictions comme la lumière dont alors il rayonne, ne se distingue pas du mouvement des oppositions et de l'unité du monde. Il n'est plus séparé de la Réalité, son drame se confond avec celui de tout et de Tous.
>
> (IP 24I)

This epiphany has at its centre the assumption that there is a continual feeling of separation, a split, underlying everything; it is inside the poet's voice. In fact, it is everywhere and unpositionable :

> Où se place l'indécise, l'indélébile
> fêlure?
>
> (H 244)

This is caused by the possibility of unity and 'confondement', both of which come through the energy of being. However, they are sensed as always hidden, just out of reach :

> Du centre, éperdument, fourmillaient les étoiles, une énergie, dans tous les sens, qui circulait, sortie de nous,s'y réveillait,partout se dérobait, ébranlement inouï, dénonciation solenelle de l'Unique.
>
> (H I98)

One of the aims of this thesis is to bring out the hidden aspects of such dislocation, how it affects language and disturbs the poetic 'flow'. But it also trys to clarify the stylistic and structural nature of a big abstraction like 'l'Unique' which dominates Frénaud's works. In this quotation it is at once 'Du centre', 'sortie de nous', and 'partout', whilst really it is nowhere since it is

hidden. The poem then rests on this sort of oscillation about something not quite definable. This too provides a point of discussion.

Significantly, Frénaud uses the image of a released prisoner to illustrate an all-important instant of contact and unity. There is an evident allusion to war-time suffering here, and its transformation into material for a more general human situation of separateness, the need to reach an all embracing communion.

Frénaud's poetry is not 'easy' or readily accessible. The dialectic of affirmation and negation built into each poetic statement demands multiple and contradictory readings. As he says himself: 'Du mystérieux événement, il apparaît assez que le poème rend compte de bien des manières.'(IP 237). This thesis also attempts to follow these changes in poetic level and to map out the traces of Frénaud's poetic enterprise.

The poem is a 'machine inutile', and it is its paradoxical nature which is approached in these pages. It attempts unity, yet does so through a dislocated basic substance: the poet's whole internal makeup, the dark areas within him which produce a conflicting amalgam of different voices. Yet it is from this that he would produce unity. It is from opposition and tension that the building (metaphor for the poem) is

made.

In turn, the building bears the mark of disparate voices. For Frénaud sees it as a separating influence excluding the other: 'Je voulais me construire avec ma voix/ en château pour me protéger.' (IP 109). It attempts to overcome separation by including also; by making the self an integral singular thing. In the end — like an inheritance, or a charm: 'singulier patrimoine, le poème, s'il vaut à la façon d'un charme...'(H 65) — it can be given and communicate with 'l'autre', with the reader.

The critic then follows these kinds of junctures and splits in the text, and trys to make them explicit. In a sense, this too is a useless task (in an extension of Frénaud's metaphor the critic is a kind of 'mécanicien inutile'). Critical language is often gross and insensitive. It can only point to something in language that gives onto an endless region of emotional meaning which language cannot bring to the surface or make totally clear and safe. It can make known these chasms in the text where the unknown resides.

What the poet aims at is a resolution of the gap between self and other via links which maintain tension. It is the self which prevents this, and he is caught again in the trap of a consciousness which cannot negate its own individuality and achieve

contact at the same time. The otherliness which inspires the poem is subjected to this condition, as Georges Limbour points out :

> à cause de sa nature, qui est d'être irrémédiablement séparé du Tout, enfermé dans l'individualité — cette séparation formant son malheur — l'homme fait obstacle à la révélation fulgurante, mais brève, aussitôt anéantie. C'est le paradoxe et la contradiction fondamentale de l'action poétique, que le poète ne peut restituer sa vision passagère, transmettre l'énergie qu'il a reçue du tout, qu'à l'aide de ses ressources personnelles, moyens fragmentaires, bref qu'en étant lui-même, qui fait écran.
>
> (G Limbour: Il n'y a pas de paradis in 'Critique' No 189 février 1963 p 102)

However it will be the contention of this thesis that such a state of separation produces tension and makes the poem possible in certain circumstances. For the amorous relationship to have any meaning separation has to be present to an extent.

The use of Separation as guiding thematic principle may appear to be somewhat arbitrary. Why not choose any other general theme? But a notion which was central and necessary seemed to be the most apt. The poet's sensitive perception of his separated state and the way in which rifts echoing this permeate his efforts to overcome it seems to fit the bill.

Frénaud's aim is unity and intermingling with a mystical 'présence' :

> à la suite de quelle randonnée nous

/...

> étions-nous aventurés dans ce lieu obscur, pour nous confronter ou pour nous confondre, peut-être, avec une très ancienne présence... qui se dérobait au fur et à mesure que nous avancions,
>
> (H 2IO)

In contrast, some of the chapter headings and sub-titles which hold my material together are concrete or related to directly experienced things. 'La route', 'le don', 'l'amour', 'le pays', 'l'enfance', are all broad themes in Frénaud's work about which his more metaphysical enterprise seems to gravitate. This might resemble the relationship between sacred and profane as defined by Mircea Eliade in his book 'Le sacré et le profane', whereby objects are liable to become suffused with mythical significance for the primitive mind. At some points in this discussion I have tried to illustrate how this might apply to Frénaud's artistic structuring of experience.

Through all this I would hope to show how Frénaud's poems are poetry 'in action', the ways in which 'la machine inutile'(IP 85) as he calls his work, captures silence: 'à grands coups d'ailes inutiles'(Ibid); how the poem oscillates between its attempt and its failure.

I/ Unity

What distinguishes the separation which the poet experiences and introduces into his work from the separation we may come to feel with regard to any object in the world?

The answer is probably that the separation at the core of these poetic moments has a fundamental or necessary nature, whereas that which we experience in the world is usually contingent. It may or may not have been.

Separation, for André Frénaud, is almost a precondition of the poem. By this it is not intended that he requires a Romantic 'isolement'. It is rather that, in the instant of poetic creation, following the sense of fulfilment when unity through contradiction is achieved there is a notion of separation and failure.

Although it occurs in various forms, this experience of estrangement or distantiation is constantly held in relation to a possible exaltation (whether via love, brotherhood, artistic uplifting, or any other communicative enterprise) and, of course, it stands in relation to its opposite 'L'unité'.

Peter Broome, in his article 'La voix fêlée d'André Frénaud' has acutely illustrated the profoundly divided nature of the poet's work :

> Peu d'oeuvres poétiques illustrent si vivement cet étrange jeu d'aliénation et de solidarité, d'accueil et d'exclusion.
>
> (Broome: 'La voix fêlée d'André Frénaud')[I]

Broome goes on to reveal the importance of the multiple and profoundly divided 'voix' which animates the poems. There enters into the region of the poem an expressive quality belonging to an enemy. The voice is 'chantourné', which signifies that - in the word-play which remains a possibility undermining initial meaning - it is 'turned about'; it also means that the song or poem is turned, and it is a term of carpentry linking the poem's production to a noble and strongly affective material, as well as to an important artisanal tradition.

Within these multiple levels of voice takes place a desperate dialectical struggle. Yet the separation which forms the subject here is not that between two opposing parts or aspects of the poet's mind. Its highest expression is in the relationship of 'le vivant-mortel' as Frénaud quoting from Heidegger calls the existing human creature, with 'l'être' or pure being. The latter almost acts as a supreme actuating force which, like a poetic image, can be described from several different perspectives. At once it is the philosophical term for pure being, the fundamental substrate which animates the world, and a vaguely

I/ From "SUD revue littéraire bimestrielle Nö 39/40" p II2.

theological phenomenon having the power of mystery and illuminating energy. It is both mythically and psychologically conceivable as the force of 'noûs' or inspiration, as a kind of libidinous energy which Man can rarely grasp and control. Above all for Frénaud being forms a kind of trinity with 'l'unité' and 'l'anéantissement' or 'le néant'.

These are best attacked through the idea of 'l'unité'. For it is in contrast and dynamic conflict with this that we shall see 'la séparation' develop.

The drama of poetic production which seems to predominate for Frénaud in terms of thematic importance, is deeply marked by this dialectical relationship :

> le poète, au moment où il se dresse avec le château, se trouve atteindre et vivre cette contradiction dans les mouvements de la totalité; ainsi se trouve-t-il délivré du déchirement, dans la mesure où déchirement signifie séparation et entrave, pour participer à la violence des contradictions dans l'Unité; c'est la Réalité dans laquelle il s'est intégré qu'il exprime.
>
> (IP 234)

Separation then is not a passive state of the world, but is actively 'obstacle' and 'entrave', holding the poet back from a communion with that which is other and contradictory.

Not only distance and difference operate as separating forces however. The self in its disunity, its fears, its mediocrity also holds the poet back, threa-

tens to submerge him in 'l'eau noire' of hatred. The world in general, and especially the hypersensitised world of the poem, is scattered with phenomena which separate men, deny them the unity they desire: walls, thresholds, doors, abysses, ramparts, gulfs. These are symbols or cognates of an agonising separation which excludes Man from his ideal, yet it ironically pushes him towards it and becomes the condition of his desire to be united with it in a strained paradox. This sets the tone for Frénaud's remarks on his preference for towns over villages :

> Toujours les grandes villes m'ont troublé plus que la nature qui est trop claire, routes et rides étoilées, mamelons découverts, perspectives, nuages; son équilibre et son habileté constructive m'émeuvent peu. Il est rare qu'un village réapparaissant à la tombée du jour en haut d'une forêt, tant soit peu goguenarde on dirait, donne le sentiment de ce que l'on n'atteint pas.
>
> (H 63)

The things he concentrates into the poetic instant are fraught with the depth of such contradictions. Separation attacks the sensibility. It may almost be described as the enemy the poet faces, since the goal of his quest is unity. Yet he must assume it willingly as the condition of his nature as poet and ultimately as 'vivant-mortel'.

It is also in the nature of consciousness to experience separation, whether it be from the phenomenological world outside, beyond our consciousness,

and which often seems to deny our capacities for coping with it in terms of definition and conceptualisation. The angst of 'l'absurde' as conceived by the French existentialists and their predecessors is also germane to this discussion. For when the clear rationalising structures of Man's world are shaken he may be lead to search for a deeper solution than that offered by habit or intellect. But a truly ontological foundation for his world (since it is finally that for which he searches) proves lacking and the angst of absurdity ensues.

For Frénaud unity in being often appears as possible or actually present for an instant. It is not only in this rarefied atmosphere of the extreme philosophical stance that significant unification is possible. The most important area of communion and communication for the poet is that with his fellow men. This may appear to be less fundamental, less rigorously necessary than the dialectical argument in favour of idealised being as unity. But the poem transcends this contradiction by introducing the bond of friendship as an absolute. In the instant following the virgin birth, it is not subjection to the infinite which the Magus experiences, but a transcendent reconciliation of humanity :

Dans ses yeux, tous les hommes se sont jetés
(dans l'eau

et se fondent réconciliés pour n'être qu'un
(rire

(RM I35)

These lines are packed with contradictory resonances that intensify the idea of union. The Magi are not numerous, nor are the witnesses. Yet he speaks of 'tous les hommes', his affirmation contains its own negation potentially within it. Similarly, the eyes of the child provoke a single laugh rather than uplifting solemnity. By its very nature laughter can only be momentary, otherwise it is liable to become deeply ironic.

A deep sense of vacuity is imparted by this to the whole poem. The Magi seem to have reached their ideal, and to have overcome separation, only to sense it more keenly afterwards.

Water, into which the whole of humanity supposedly throws itself, is an important element in overcoming separation. Man is immersed, in this image, in an ambivalent interior, both 'dans ses yeux' and 'dans l'eau'. One recalls Rimbaud's 'Le bateau ivre' and the descent into a liquid atmosphere, the adventure of poetic self-loss induced there. For Frénaud it operates in a similar way, though it may also become 'l'eau noire' when it is a negative concept.

As the medium of baptism water brings the individual into contact with the generality of pure spirit. Through this the poem's fraternal sentiment no

doubt remains intact, and signifies a point of unity at the heart of conflicting contradictions :

> Lente germination, ma lumière lointaine,
> le vrai chœur de mes voix réconciliées
> avec les voix des frères en deçà et au-delà
>
> (RM I37)

A distance separates the poet-wanderer from the light which figures as the peak of consciousness, the negation of self in a dazzling contact with being. But beyond this separation he is again granted communion with 'des frères' via the voices suddenly brought together. The dissonance and distance are internal as well as external. Separation tears open the centre of the poet's self as well as the community of men he would reconcile. The word 'brothers' has a peculiar potency in Frénaud's verse. Its overtones depend on whether it is introduced at a moment of belief in unity as here, or in the angst of terrifying separation and solitude.

Here it seals the bond he wishes to create, in order to later undermine it with the words: 'mirage sur les gouffres' (ibid). However, its powerful emotional content counterbalances the strange ambiguity of the possessive case in 'ma lumière lointaine', as though the light too, like the brothers' voices, was within and without him, stretching the intellect in this brief moment of imagined relationships. And the paradox is indeed on a highly intellectual plane, whereas brotherhood comes easy to us in its connota-

tions, especially as the distance breached by its evocation is explicitly expressed in 'en deçà et au delà'.

The light of being and unity is tantalisingly present in the above lines, though distant, and it qualifies reconciliation. Unity or the hope and expression of its possibility may emerge from the desperate land somewhere deep in the human subconscious, where light fails to penetrate. Perhaps this is the hopeless void of 'l'absurde' where Man can only survive by extreme measures :

> Là-bas par la si froide Cimmérie,
> par les grands plans jetés sur la famine,
> ô ponts qui marchent, hurlant vers l'unité future,
>
> (RM I39)

Like the poem emerging from barren darkness and silence, the bridges articulate and close the gap between Man and unity in a violent movement. Plans against famine reach into the future, and the unruliness of Man's situation in the world which produces his fundamental separation will be subjugated. 'Le froid' however, is a separation from the 'embrasement' of being, its essentially radiant warmth which identifies it closely with the radiating word in its sudden unity-provoking and multi-levelled communications between men. In a similar area famine can be taken as an absence of nourishment, as a universal kind of hunger, or as an estrangement from that which gives life, the driving force of the universe which the

poet perceives in being.

Here, however, the voice of the poem is in a less immediate contact with the unity perceived or imagined. There is no sudden bringing together of voices in reconciliation, only the perception of a slow movement towards future unity from which human activity as such is carefully excluded. The nature of the separation breached becomes increasingly less substantial, and is certainly less internalised than in the previous poem. The ultimate symbol of unity in Frénaud's poetry is 'le château', and in comparison to this impressive edifice and the tightly structured language with which he describes it in 'Le château et la quête du poème', the bridge is a failure. It is only half way to the true surmounting of separation. It is not a full, living structure, carefully articulated like the 'maison idéale' and other key images.

Unity is treated as a certainty rather than a possibility. It is the definite goal towards ('vers') which one marches. But it remains 'là-bas' at a distance and only reachable by passage 'par'. Only wild hope screaming indistinctly and distorting the poet's voice - in contrast to the dynamic articulation of a bridge, however inadequate that structure may be - can confidently assert that such a structure will reach into the light of being.

By contrast, the italics in a long poem like

'L'Étape dans la clairière' present a striking lucidity with regard to the possibility of unity beyond separation. From the uncertainty and violence of the quest through the wild forest emerges a complex truth, carefully balanced and without excesses of emotional enthusiasm. The barren land of 'désespoir' and 'l'absurde' is not simply hinted at here, we are taken into its centre where there are 'des stèles pour nul événement', the vacuity of a monument which in a virile thrust asserts itself, yet asserts nothing, which, like the poem, celebrates no event. The finely chiselled contours of a truth appear :

> Puisqu'il nous faut bien croire en la joie pleine,
> en l'embrasement des mille sources du diamant.
> L'autre c'est le même?
> l'intérieur afflux émerge du tout,
> le souffle évanoui au rythme de l'unique:
>
> (EC 20)

Things which were threatening and other, often undermining and intensifying the poem with its strangeness,are now compressed into the dialectical identity of 'l'unique'. Given out almost as a purely intellectual perception, this certainty is associated with intense and consuming light: 'être sereinement brûlant' (IP 85). The thought can be held in the poet's mind during this brief instant of bitter idealisation, but as he continues on his 'chienne de bonne continuation' (LSF 101) driven on by the poem's exigencies, intellectual truth is undermin-

ed and the obscure, the separated and fundamentally unobtainable nature of being reasserts itself: 'Il ne peut prendre forme qu'obscurci' (Ibid). The light of intelligence is too clear. Consciousness, although it can imagine forth the 'souffle évanoui', is unable to lose itself and go beyond 'l'écran de mes yeux'(EC 20) into being, whilst remaining itself.

The darkness of the unconscious or the pre-conscious, where the poem and idea of being exist, cannot be fully apprehended in critical language. The words contain their own denial in our consciousness of them. When we are conscious of what they construct it is undermined, since its true nature negates everything, absorbing it in a scintillating instant when consciousness and pre-consciousness are no longer totally separated. The cavaliers or the cavalier, we are never quite certain of their number, on the quest for something of which they are unsure (is it the glimpse of a castle between trees?) stumble upon this truth which highlights the difficulty of their task, its metaphysical depth.

Le confondement

If the poem has separation at its centre, and is continually qualified by this aspect of its creation,

it may, however, figure a movement towards intermingling, a resolution of the deepest conflicts in a strange dynamic, an image of conflicting elements joining indissolubly impresses the reader with its negation of distance and disparity, its wider implications in terms of the movement towards 'l'unité' :

> De l'homme ou de la femme qui se défiaient entremêlés, lequel, pensais-je, était Dieu? Les formes étaient incertaines, évasives. Peut-être l'avaient-elles été dès l'origine. Peut-être fallait-il voir là plutôt l'effet d'un effacement, la longue impatience destructrice du temps... Mais c'était bien par quelque invention étrange de l'artiste si la ressemblance s'aggravait de minute en minute, jusqu'à ce que les antagonistes échangent leurs poses, aurait-on dit, se confondent.
>
> (LSF I79)

The prose poem moves us slowly towards a culminating impression of overall unity, a dispersal of same into other within the real world, and governed by time, provoked indeed by the unifying effect of time. Whereas, for 'le chevalier' beyond hope and time, his perception is in the void, lacking the dramatic impetus which here enforces the vision of separation finally overcome. It is an essentially human form of separation, at the heart of our relationships with self and others,ie between man and woman. Separation is intensified and extended in the contradictory phrase : 'se défiaient entremêlés' as in: 'les antagonistes... se confondent'. Man and woman are held apart both physically, in corporal form,

and spiritually, since one is God and the other presumably a demon. The final mixing or overcoming of separateness, is represented as a goal, a maximal point towards which the aesthetics of the object draws the observer, and which the poet moulds into language with the use of retentive phrases: 'de minute en minute', and the intentional quality of 'jusqu'à ce que...'.

What type of unity is presented here? The mingling of two bodies in a statuette, the crossing of a sexual barrier,but condemned eternally to: 'le silence extrêmement rongeur et solennel.' (LSF I80). The illuminating and articulating power of the voice or of 'la parole' is absent and the mixing dynamic contradicted by lack of spiritual communication. It is as though the antagonistic drawing together of these two opposites, in a repeated movement from one to the other, took place in a vacuum, without the communicative content of the word.

From the depths of the most extreme solitude, even that one may experience when sleeping in a dormitory, exacerbated by the exposed situation and forced intimacy of men sleeping; even from this solitude, the poet draws unity and denies separation. There is an extremely taut joining of self and other in the ambiguous form of the little girl who shares the poet's bed. The beginning of this ecstatic experience is uncertain, somewhere beyond consciousness,

beyond the limits of the poem: 'un moment vint où elle fut entre mes bras' (LSF 25). Is the child his lover or is she in a filial relationship?

> J'étais son père et elle le savait, mais je savais aussi que je n'étais pas son père et cela non plus elle ne l'ignorait pas et jamais... dans aucune rencontre de mon corps avec un corps vivant je n'ai éprouvé plénitude semblable à celle qui fut à ce moment-là...
>
> (Ibid)

This ambivalence of relationships increases the number of links, the modes of 'l'unité'. She is his daughter, but at the same time she is not, and is therefore available for other types of relationship. They are both fully aware of this and it echoes the notions encountered above of reconciliation both within and without. For, as his daughter she is his own creation, emerging from within him; when she is not his daughter she affords contact with something external. Nevertheless, the notion of 'confondre' or of melting together in a lack of identity is not present in their unity, a kind of delicacy is maintained in the evocation :

> Et toujours étourdis elle et moi dans notre commune certitude, nous continuions à nous étreindre, nos yeux profonds et confiants emmêlés, hors de toute volupté et de toute gêne, dans une réconciliation enfin et une ivresse rayonnante.
>
> (LSF 25)

Is it being which has become sexualised and emotionally approachable in the form of a

warm body, young and consequently unaltered by the corruption of the world? The child is pure enough then to enter into communion with the man who is beyond hope, and yet continues to be separate in a dialectical tension. For they remain 'elle et moi'. Their eyes are 'emmêlés' and not 'confondus'. Although beyond the 'perte de soi' (a recurring theme in Frénaud) suggested in 'volupté', or the dislocations of 'la gêne', they experience a mystical 'ivresse rayonnante'. Their reconciliation and communion spreads into the world like an illuminating ray, and is offered out as a gift, just as the poet offers us the spectacle of this intensely private experience.

Light is again asserted as the medium of a spiritual unity, but obliquely here in that it is their eyes which mingle deeply. No longer is it a case of 'Il fait clair. Je vois clair' (EC I2), of perceiving the phenomenal world in its clarity and limpid vision, limpid because it is separate and distant. For in this instant the poet is confident, with the confidence only a man who has gone beyond the habit of hope can have.

This period of identity and contact - which seems paradoxically to continue for ever - is, of course, identical in essence with the moment of poetic inspiration, the building of 'le château'. Like the girl the castle may appear at any unlikely moment;

as he searches for her, so the poet searches constantly for the castle in desolation; just as she does, the castle becomes the whole world, uniting contradictions of interior and exterior :

> Il n'y avait pas de place pour le monde dans cet embrasement parce que, en réalité, elle et moi nous étions le monde à ce moment-là, bien au-delà de tout amour et de nos deux personnes, elle et moi sans doute, mais l'être même à coup sûr, éclatant enfin dans son énergie louche et la connivence qu'établit sa réalité unique entre les sujets par lesquels il s'oppose et se joue.
>
> (LSF 26)

They are the play of being in its oppositions, in a supremely universal movement. The poem is shot through with the contradiction of their unity whilst maintaining the idea of separation. It permits the poet himself to become the agent through whom the vibrating dynamic of being takes place. The two beings who are alone and vulnerable find themselves at the heart of 'Une énergie louche'. Something which is not themselves, yet which they seem to have unleashed, takes them up in a swift movement, raising them above the contingency and separation of the world through which the poet normally roams.

The text leaps from the moment of their meeting or of the narrator-poet's discovery of the girl's presence, to that of total absorption, since it is 'à ce moment-là', with a sudden alteration they find themselves beyond brotherhood and love or sex.

At its most exciting point the poem asserts: 'il s'oppose et se joue'. But how? What is the sense of this movement and can we apprehend it? Certainly we cannot formulate it. However the poet alludes to its nature. It is the two bodies coming together in a touch, a contact, which is light and heat, but without tabous or barriers of fatherhood or non-fatherhood. It is in the sudden contact with something beyond the self that reveals itself as part of you.

The fire of their contact, destroying separation and setting up a word-play 'embrasement' - 'embrassement', is nullified in its action. Ironically, it does not represent or reach totality since they are already within being and unity themselves. It becomes meaningless ornament: 'Il n'y avait pas de place pour le monde dans cet embrasement'.

The ambivalent relationship between man and girl or child in a workers' dormitory reaches into the zone of contact with the trinity we discovered above: unity, being and negation. The situation has pathos. Despite the contact and intermingling of two beings, it takes place against a background of solitude and despair. Only in the light of this can it be fully understood. That being should come upon him in such a gentle and unassuming form whilst it is in fact an immense power, for an instant resolving the contradictions of Man's nature, is this not strange? Equally strange is the

way they remain intensely conscious individuals ('j'étais son père et elle le savait') whilst losing themselves in a dynamic movement.

Of a less gentle and emotional tenor is the tensed interaction of two cosmic birds. Their separation, a state which potentially precedes the instant the poem reveals, would be that of two fundamental elements in the human psyche: sun and moon. They may be construed as representing animus and anima or Yin and Yang,a fundamental difference within the universe, and a split which marks Man's existence. A source of power, of life and of madness, changing men's lives and altering their patterns, they are usually conceived as being apart, if not in eternal conflict.

In this sequence they are two birds: 'l'oiseau lune et l'oiseau soleil' (LSF I75) mythological creatures with the alien power of flight, yet locked in love, qualified by love from the outset: 'Deux oiseau s'aimaient'. As with most other representations of love in Frénaud's poems, the affectionate relationship shifts to different levels. The birds are depicted extending into one another, negating the ever possible state of separation :

> Chacun devenu l'autre, en travail de nouveau,
> ils échangeaient des regards, ils chantaient.
>
> (LSF I75)

'Le regard' resurfaces as a

mode of overcoming the distance between 'le même et l'autre'. It is a centre of exchange, of interpenetration, intangible movements of energy from one being to another.

Emphasis is laid on the positive dynamic of unity through being, 'en travail' as it is. A determined, directed energy in the service of pure being. At the centre of this is the word, the poem or 'le chant': the word is also consciousness at the heart of the event, formulating its movements. The actual process of unification is unfolded in its light. Each aspect of the bird's speech describes the other's evolution towards unity :

> Comme la vie s'accroît, disait l'oiseau lune...
> La vie renfle tes merveilleuses lombes, ma chérie.
>
> (LSF I75)

The force of life, swelling the bird's form until it becomes uncertain, melted into the contours of the other. Their descriptions are separated, however this only enhances the sense of a concerted movement towards visceral contact. Language, in its physical quality implied in what may be called the overall impression of close contact does this :

> De l'énorme bousine, des prolongements poussent.
> Torsions, Tétons, Succion.
>
> (LSF I75)

The last three substantives

emphasised with capitals, in their almost onamatapoeic sounds: '-ions', 'suc-', create the sensation of contact within the mouth which is generated when you say the line. The outward movement in its violent tension is coupled with that of an arc into which the two birds seem to disappear :

> Violemment, lentement j'émerge de moi. Désormais je me tiens sur mon arc et je n'ai plus peur... O Grande Mère, quand les extrémités anxieuses de tes cornes s'élèveront dans le geste où tout s'anéantit, je suis avec toi parmi la clameur.
>
> (LSF I75)

Barrier to the outside world and the other, as well as to the movement of being, the self is broken open: 'j'émerge de moi'. The arc on which the sun runs becomes closely identified, to the point of confusion, with the horns of the moon's crescent, its anxious points meeting in total annihilation where 'le chant' gives way to 'la clameur', an undefinable and ecstatic sound suggestive of a violent birth or of orgasm.

Surely the central idea is this; that in the movement of nothingness and being that realises itself in the universe as limits are slowly transgressed, there is a necessary tension: 'dans la bouche ou sous les doigts du poète, les éléments se tendent, se rassemblent' (Ibid). The poet then is mediator for these

I/ This reference to the mouth highlights perhaps the importance of pronunciation here.

tensions and interfaces, whilst negating them in the act of expression which develops towards some kinds of barmony or which may also separate elements as can be seen in the distinct statements of 'l'oiseau lune' and 'l'oiseau soleil', even to the extent that they are of different tone and length. It is almost a commonplace to point out that in Frénaud there is not one voice, but multiple voices, coming together and divorcing in the articulation of a single poem and whole collections of poems.

Brotherhood & Unity

There are points when unity, or terms which imply unity, are evoked in desperation. In this case the thrust to overcome the fundamental kind of separation we are discussing fails. The reader finds himself in the terrifying zone of 'l'échec', where human endeavour to communicate, to go beyond the self,proves useless.

Krivitsky, in the instant before he dies that is also the very point when his poem emerges, or whan his consciousness bursts into poetic expression: at this crucial moment he calls upon an image of brotherhood and community which reveals the ontological nature of his situation, separated from Russia his homeland, but also estranged from the Revolution, in effect from his single ideal :

Quand l'ouvrier est tombé dans la neige à Nico-
(laïev,
c'est mon sang qui hurlait sous le fouet du co-
(ntremaître,
c'est moi qui fut battu pour toujours.
C'est vous, c'est moi que je délivrerai frères.

(LSF I08)

Krivitsky the renegade KGB general, identifies so closely with the beaten worker, the oppressed who is also beyond hope, that he experiences their pain in his blood, interiorises their situation and assumes it. Yet there is hesitation in the phrase 'C'est vous, c'est moi'. The coming together is not total, and his final 'frères' reaches out in desperation rather than confident assertion. His dying words echo this call to brotherhood of a universal kind, but are in a violent tension with the desire to die at the hands of his former comrades :

O mes frères, je suis encore avec vous.
Sur moi, camarades... En joue! Feu!

(LSF I28)

There is a conflict of emotions in this deep sense of brotherhood felt with his executors. There is ambiguity of relationship, identification with the order that will destroy him, victim and executioner bound together in the words 'frères', 'camarades'. Krivitsky does not overcome separation in his death, and his assertions 'avec vous' etc rather bear the stamp of a pathetic failure, rendering that much sharper the overall impression of a rift within

himself.

It should also be recalled that Krivitsky's case can be parallelled with that of Frénaud, of many French intellectuals, and the situation of Man in general. Frénaud was attracted by the ideal of brotherhood in Communism, its genuine attempt to provide a solution to the conflict inhabiting Man's situation in the world only later to distance himself from it as much as possible.

The attraction of a uniting ideal constantly haunts men, and their separation from it, alternating with movements towards it, gives a picture of the dialectic between the quest and separation. The quest is qualified by a desire hidden within Man, an incredible tension towards some reconciliation. Yet he is constantly separated from this.

In Frénaud's writing the only redemption possible is in the movement the poem operates between contradictions. Otherwise, the word 'frères' has a strange bitterness about it, containing as it does the dual movement of contact and distance :

> Absurde ardeur de la vie, frères,
> dans ce grand désert de sable et de sang caillé.
>
> (LSF I38)

Perhaps it is only the bare, pared notion of brotherhood, intercalated between 'absurde adour of life' and 'desert of blood', that survives. It would seem to be a continual pushing outwards

to overcome the terror of isolation and a reality which inevitably reveals itself inimical. It is 'l'ardeur de la vie', the force of life itself, which seems to produce the hot desert where blood is almost indistinguishable from sand.

The energy which moves us, then, in excessive 'embrasement', may effect a separation which it normally overcomes, this is not to say the force of life, of blood and energy, are being. They allude to it. Like 'L'Agonie du général Krivitsky' the poem this quotation comes from involves an ideal undermined. The notion of international brotherhood, of closeness between two nations, is destroyed when the French permit the Nazi annexing of Czechoslovakia. Frénaud attempts to overcome this in the poem's closing lines :

> Il faut nous pardonner, frères...
> FRÈRES...
>
> (LSF I40)

There is a tone of frustration in the capitals used to enforce the ultimate 'FRÈRES'. A possible unity is impaired by guilt and anger at that which one feels to be part of oneself, ie 'la patrie'. As was said earlier, it is the contents of the self, as much as the external world that prevents unity, and this does not apply solely to the individual. Frénaud's enemy is often within. The ramparts and stockades are uncertain, ambiguous demarcations. Do they prevent communication? Do they keep back the

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enemy?

The last two expressions of solidarity in this poem echo as though they were in a desert, as if they should remain eternally without reply, trailing off without a successful conclusion to the poem's rifts and disturbances. There is an ironic stance towards himself and especially his own country. The brothers are not his compatriots, but a people he once visited as a foreigner, again separated from them by language and culture. His own country is denigrated, the emotional force of the poem thrusts out towards the other, away from his home which is 'injuste'.

Unity haunts the poem then, and the call of brotherhood is language thrusting outwards in an attempt to communicate the need to enter into 'le même et l'autre'. It is a call to those who also experience the need for unity and for whom it is an ideal, to those who also wish to go beyond the self in a 'lente effraction de soi', a kind of breaking-and-entering of the human condition, which suggests that some eternal law is transgressed in this movement, a slow process involving the deliberate work of the poet, 'le labeur du soi'. Isn't there a need constantly expressed in Frénaud's poetry which he formulates as a kind of recognition 'se reconnaître au miroir de l'autre' (LSF I93)?

'Le miroir de l'homme par les bêtes' (LSF 207)

suggests a similar kind of unity. It is that of a consciousness going beyond its boundaries to otherness and finding itself there. Frénaud's wanderings through European towns bear this idea out, in places that are least familiar to us lurks the unexpected meeting - in a sudden moment of elevated consciousness - with something part of oneself, part of common human experience. Our total experience of it on the other hand is its absence, being is illusory, we are brothers in this negative world :

> Frères qui vivez ici et dont le rêve épelle
> une absence mal lisible et qui nous leurre,
> s'il ne peut y avoir connaissance ni résolution...
>
> (LSF I93)

Brothers then, living out the 'ici', the present from which escape into non-contingency is impossible. Their life is a dream and one that is closely tied up with language, spelling out an absence it is difficult to read and become conscious of. This absence lures and deceives, within the poem it cannot always be read, and may be taken for meaning and presence, the phonetic similarity 'lisible'-'leurre' enforces this notion. There is no knowledge, no certainty. Conscious experience itself is lacking in unity. Contact of brotherhood remains a possibility. However it is always within this context of an anxious quest for more profound meeting with 'le miroir de l'étranger' (LSF I93). The unity of 'les frères' a

consanguinity which points towards the internally based rapport between men, hovers above the poems. It is always one of the possible poles to which the poet's imagination may tend. Apart from this it is also a fundamental aspect of unity in Frénaud's poetry. A man calling out to his brothers attempts to deny the barriers within and without himself.

Through this push beyond the self, and finally towards being, the poet paradoxically manages to find himself :

> Mais il lui arrive aussi d'imaginer, à travers le déroulement du livre comme à travers celui du poème, qu'il s'approche d'une lointaine figure voilée dans laquelle il va se reconnaître et se confondre...
>
> (LSF 26I)

The act of articulating the book of poems involves a potential instant when the contradictions of the work and of the poet's self will be resolved. Otherness occurs to him as a veiled figure into which he is mixed. Uncertain, and because it is not completely visible, it is full of potential. Being is almost always hidden and mysterious. It gives the impression of penetration into a new order, that of the power behind the thin screen of reality. Unity is crucial in the production of the text. It is towards this, as towards some aim, that he imagines his work moves. Poems are the mediators of this 'figure voilée', since he must pass 'à travers',

through their opacity, their confusion, towards the 'faîte' of unity and recognition they suggest. In the end it is a form of self-discovery he achieves, a oneness between the self and the other, but at what cost? :

> Ce serait le temps retrouvé avec le temps dépassé. L'autre et le même ensemble. Ce serait l'unité désirée, recouvrée, la plénitude. Ou la mort, peut-être.
>
> (Ibid)

He tentatively raises the possibility that what is attained in such an instant of poetic contact is a glimpse of death, of 'l'heureux anéantissement'. Time is transcended and overcome in a movement similar to the forcing together of the same and the other. An idea of unity regained is introduced, and with it a possible similarity to the notion of 'la vie antérieure', the '<u>dream time</u>' or Eden before the fall.

Death emerges, however, as a possible alternative, a synonym for unity experienced in the poem. That life is continuing contradictions and estrangement of beings is clear. But are the moments of unity beyond conflict? Is there not also a 'violence des contradictions dans l'unité' ? Death, then, must be linked to unity in some other way, for example, in that it transcends time, destroys consciousness, and leads Man back into totality. This point of view may appear as negative. Death is posited

as an alternative to 'plénitude'. It is believed by Frénaud to be an empty vacuity. The reverse argument would be equally true however, that 'la mort' is rendered more positive by identification with 'l'unité' and with the supreme moment of poetic creation.

The comment is equivocal then, and almost as uncertain as the form behind the veil, eluding our grasp. The two conditional tenses of 'être', 'ce serait', throw the image of unity into doubt. Its nature is only guessed at, though in all his conjectures there is a surmounting of separation.

Negative, then, to an extent, due to its identification with death. In Frénaud's lyrical disquisition on poetic creation it has moved from the level of human relations and emotional involvement, to that of large abstractions which affect Man deeply: death, time, creation. In this pared down world unity itself is disintegrating :

> Une fête sans personne et le monde qui s'efface.
> Tout vibre et se confond, la mer brûle les bruits.
> Et déjà l'Unité se défait. Léger, nouveau le vent
> a murmuré du soleil parmi l'ombre;
>
> (EC 35)

The lines of the poem conflict, they counter one another. Fusion ('se confondre') is a central image again in the play of sound, sea and heat, with a vibrating universe. But any unity obtained is immediately undone. The strangely paradoxical effect

the sea has on sounds, altering their nature, consuming them with its energy as though they were solid objects. The sea is suddenly fire. Barriers of the physical world break down. The festival is a vacant outburst of joy in a disappearing world.

Strangely, though, the destruction of unity does not provoke a calming of the phenomenal world's disruption, of its sudden fusion in a strange festival of interactions. For the wind murmurs out sunshine.

This can be explained as metaphor, a trope in which the murmuring of the wind, is confused with the fact that from the forest floor the wind-blown branches as they part appear to reveal the sun.

But the compactness of the language used and the picture described continues the idea of fusion. The sun is amongst shadow, the barriers have been crossed so that one element is in another.

At a different level, 'le vent' almost speaks, and is a personification of the poem. Yet it half expresses intense light, one of the main signifiers of unity and being. Unity which is undone continues to leave its trace in the world the poet experiences. The wind murmuring is a clearer, more specific form of vibration in the external environment. The festival becomes one of sunlight. The world is emerging from unity, and asserts its variousness. The ass appears: 'plus tard par le ciel rouge un âne' (EC 36). Its

humble, resigned nature, and its elevated position as it passes on a hilltop in silhouette,we presume, imply the poet's own situation as a humble creature before whatever experience he has had, and in view of the separation and 'malheur' he must continue to undergo. It may also be a toy, a naïve image.

In fact, the unity or the glimpse of unity which the poem may afford us, is a loss of self. But it is only from the basis of yourself that you can understand something, let alone anything so extraordinary:

> Singulière patrimoine le poème... Si le bien qu'il constitue, c'est le pouvoir qu'il a, saisissant tel ou tel, par le travers de ses contradictions, du malheur, de le faire participer, dans une condensation-illumination soudaine, à l'être qui n'est pas une personne, autrement dit d'opérer une dépossession de soi dans l'unité.
>
> (H I6)

The individual is overcome in an instant of 'saisissement', grasped and taken up by 'le pouvoir' that the poem exercises. Dispossession of the self is tendentious. Something possessed is already separate. It is 'l'avoir et non pas l'être' (H I5). Nevertheless, to exist and be conscious of the poem he must be in possession of himself, although it may be argued that being oneself differs greatly from possessing it, in that the latter implies cool and unemotional control.

Textually there is an ambiguous oscillation between the negative notion of dispossession (almost rob-

bery) and the positivity of 'l'heureux anéantissement'. This is explicable because unity figures a 'condensation-illumination soudaine', the forcing together of contradictions which provokes 'illumination' or, within a single moment of condensed energy, the light of something too intense, beyond the disparity and dispersal of the universe.

Within poems, as within reality, things, emotions, beings, are separate and their energies tend in various directions. But suddenly, through this, arises the possibility of a 'condensation' (a concentration, a coming-together) which also overcomes the opacity of the world. It is a positive illumination, and not a blinding intensity. For it emanates from the interior of the object world instead of being a light falling upon it from some external source.

The world itself in this case, and Man with it, are illumination. The opacity of the self, which constantly imagines being in terms of a person or personality, an anthropomorphic deity, is broken down in this unity.

Frénaud's conception of unity may have multiple applications. It involves a physical fusion of bodies or forms, an integration of matter in a mystical movement that points beyond itself into the area of being. It may take place on the mythological and psy-

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chological planes, joining together mythical forms, resolving the contradictions within the self, or it may occur between self and totality.

It arises with the greatest force and clarity in poetry. Conceptions of the world of forms suddenly become fused. The poem brings Man towards an unnamable which raises him above himself and above time. These instants often occur with a sudden illumination, an expansion of consciousness reconciled with the multiple reflections of which it is capable upon itself and the world. Consciousness becomes concentrated in this moment.

Within the overall opus, these different types of expression are parallelled by unity in physical contact between human bodies that act (or are acted upon) as mediators of being. Unity, and negation, the flesh and material are not corrupt. They rather operate as a metaphor for a more profound contact.

Yet they <u>are</u> that contact. For the primal way in which we come to know unity is through the most physical touching. This is highlighted in the meeting of little girl and worker. The touch which they enjoy is ambiguous, however it destroys all barriers and transports them to an extreme limit where they are nullified.

This notion of unity, being, and nothingness, is difficult to adhere to. It is uncertain that it is a

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clearly worked out idea. The reader can only stumble upon it, or work towards it as it appears in all its immediacy within the poem. In doing this he retraces the poet's steps.

2/ Love & Separation

The discussion on unity so far, has provided the background against which separation may be examined as a fundamental aspect of Frénaud's poetry. For the latter predominates in that it is one of the most agonising aspects of the world and of Man's 'being-in-the-world' as Frénaud calls our existential situation. There is no forseeable possibility of changing this. But the poet feels he must continue to work in the dark against an inimical force within reality that estranges him from himself and from others.

As we have seen, the trinity: 'l'unité','l'être', 'le néant', constitutes a pole to which the poet may refer. But not a fixed pole as would be God in his heaven. Being is an uncertain, ever elusive force that leaves the world a-tremble and is hidden from the poet, drawing him ever on.

Unity and the striving for contact which often induces it are on several occasions conceived in terms of brotherhood, as was seen above. On the level of intense emotions also Separation and unity are in a state of tension. Love is characterised by a fertile unity, although in a more complex inspection of its categories, conflict and separation are equally promi-

nent. For Frénaud this most important of human emotions seems to be understood as a unity. However, the coming-together it entails is by no means simplistic or totally positive :

> Un homme qui avait un savon à la place du cœur
> rencontra une femme où poussaient des vermicelles
> (sur le ventre)
> et que ce fussent ou non des serpents crotales,
> il la nettoya, ma parole, il la nettoya
> tant qu'à la fin ils ne furent bientôt plus
> qu'un oiseau bleu à eux deux.
>
> (LSF 84)

The contact which results in unity is strange and ambiguous. It involves a washing or scrubbing action, the filthy remains of 'vermicelles', or the poisonous threat and obscure sexuality of 'des sepents crotales'. The heart, traditionally the seat of the emotions and a clichéd synonym for love, is replaced by a bar of soap, which induces the appropriateness of the presence of food remains on the woman's sex.

However, this may also be an estrangement. The man washes her and (in a sense) attempts not to get beyond himself into the other, but to neutralise that which is other and menacing in the woman, that which he finds 'dirty' or equivocal ('que ce fussent ou non') a unity occurs, or is it a reduction, a loss in that 'ils ne furent bientôt plus que... '. Consequently the reconciliation through love Frénaud desires fails.

In the bird image is light and a possibility of

flight. The image of two people joined as two wings. The couple have gone beyond their disparate natures into a single and superior form: the bird which in its blueness refers back to the symbolist poet's representation of 'l'azur' as an ideal. Their area of absorption is not only into quaint signs for unity and elevation, but also into a wider poetic tradition, the terms of reference permeating twentieth century French poetry.

This six line story is also comic and ironic. Domesticity, implied in 'vermicelles' and 'savon', is suddenly transcended in the 'blue bird' which contrasts violently and is perhaps intended to poke fun at a common idea of spiritualised love hovering above the contingencies of the real world. The simplistic leap from one phase to their final unity corroborates that view: 'il la nettoya, ma parole, il la nettoya/ tant qu'à la fin...'. 'L'amour profond' as a conceived notion is ridiculed as is its single-sided image of fusion of beings. That which appears as a possible image of amorous unity then, betrays our expectations. Whereas separation and disparity between passionate beings seem to prevail.

Frénaud's conception of love and its relation to unity in sexual contact in many cases has a strongly chivalrous aspect, linking it with a kind of medieval heroism. The fact of separation is import-

ant in this sphere. It is the background against which the heroic search-in-spite-of-all-odds takes place.

The one significant unity for the desperate hero is missing, and the world is in a state of disruption. From other people the wanderer is alienated. There is no longer a possible choice between this or that woman or man in the world; all other relationships are devoid of significance so long as the unity of love is lacking :

Une femme parle

> Ni lui ni l'autre... Je te chercherai
> parmi les tapisseries déchirés de la nuit.

(LSF I9)

A strong sense of exclusion arises here from the double denial of contact in the opening phrase. It is a categorical denial, without verbal referents by which to situate the 'he' and 'other' in relation to 'femme (qui) parle'. At the point in the poet's emotional wandering this piece describes, as he enters into the conjectured sensations and reactions of a woman, poetry can be said to open directly onto a scene dominated by separation from the other ('lui ni l'autre') and from love.

Illumination is one of the possibilities of love. Contact with the other, resolving the contradictions of the self and its reflective, and therefore distantiated consciousness, produces a flow of light: 'De toi, de moi, d'où sortait la lumière?' (LSF I8I).

There is a fertile uncertainty of source. The boundaries of self and other tremble and evoke a momentary illumination. For she who is separated, however, only the darkness of night, strangely materialised in 'les tapisseries déchirées', remains. The tapestry was a medieval form of partition,and acts as the physical manifestation of separation in the heart.

Ambiguously, though, they are torn, as if to permit free passage and a degree of contact. On the other hand this dilapidated condition also evokes the notion of a reality in a state of decay. Itself full of rifts and separation, the environment is a dark night without a clear pattern to follow towards the other or the loved one, the 'tu' whose certainty and positiveness is in tension with 'Ni lui ni l'autre'.

In the unity of a poem, which transcends contradictions whilst containing them, the word and light seem to generate one another. The stones of 'le château', which the poem builds, give off an intense light an'embrasement' which is conceivable as the 'ardeur' of love. The creation and offering of the poem is an act of love potentially.

In her solitude the woman wears a protective silence. Stones are not articulated into a structure which produces brilliant light, but are in love with and tending towards the deflected light of the moon, and the world is full of <u>traps</u> similar to rags of tapestry :

Seule avec mon silence profond comme un heaume.
Seule avec les pierres amoureuses de la lune.
Des chaînes au cou, un lasso dans les cheveux.
Les mines du remords éclairent un soleil froid.

(LSF I9)

Chains hold her back, attaching her to a disturbed reality, as does also the lasso, which has the form of a noose and prefigures the morbid associations in 'mines' and 'soleil froid'. Ambiguous in the extreme, are 'les mines du remords' the outward appearances and affectations of remorse illuminating a dead 'foyer', a heart without 'embrasement'? Or are they the deep chambers and pit-shafts of remorse driving into the soul, into a night so cold even a 'soleil froid' is bright by comparison?

The words of a poem, of love, or of simple communication with 'les frères' are held back in the depth of a knightly helm, a sign of force and of the quest; ironically also a separating form. This silence is deep like a mine. It closes in and intensifies solitude. Within it there may be the strange stones, separated and singular, but animated by love of a star too distant from them, untouchable and massive.

Love exists not in the real sense of fertile contact between two beings, but between incidental stones and a cold star, a 'soleil froid'. Light is disrupted and separated from its normal source. It is an uncertain 'éclairement' coming from a dark mine and illuminating the sun which has lost its life-giving

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force. The search takes place in this desperately conflicting and separating reality.

Reality appears to qualify the heroine's solitude which she declaims in the repeated 'seule' beginning the third and fourth lines. Such a use of anaphora in the middle of a poem increases our awareness of the woman's predicament in absurdity. She is 'seule avec', alone yet linked to something. But in what way does she relate to this dark and frozen world? Is it via the chains and lassos which imply her subjection to death?

The poem reverberates (sounding out the fact at different levels and in conflicting ways) with the loss of unity in love, and the absence of a personalised 'tu'. Such a contact is possible nevertheless,and even in the most desperate, uninviting landscape such as that of 'L'étape dans la clairière'. Yet it is revealed as a failure from the start, a still-born notion in the minds of the wandering riders:

> Si l'autre était présent dans les corps confondus.
> Si la voix savait recouvrer
> ce que l'amour n'atteint pas.
>
> (EC 14)

Fusion of bodies remains at the level of pure possibility, an imagined situation, or an occurrence referred to but not actual. Significantly, however, it is one of the riders' main preoccupations in deciphering the forest about them and

through which they normally travel (a forest strangely similar in its disjunction and dangers to 'les tapisseries déchirées'). In this alien environment the fire which gives light and warmth: 'Comme si la passion faisait un feu durable' (EC 15) has a peculiar intimacy, and is centred on passion, an emotion going beyond the self into the other, into the elusive 'château'.

Yet their view of love is extremely sublimated. Wild passion is a threat, a danger like the forest snake or the primeval serpent-demon: 'C'est l'amour éperdu le serpent, nous le savons' (EC 10). A firm article of knowledge naively held then is their sole yardstick with relation to love.

Paradoxically, it is through the contact of sexuality that they hope to obtain the elevated and more intense presence of 'l'autre', an otherness which could resolve the contradictions of the world of disappointments and deceptions in which they move. The voice, and through it poetry, is posited as an alternative to the uniting powers of love which fail them.

Love is separated from the other in this terrifying wasteland. It is a luring possibility that fails the riders' aspirations. Most significantly its usual identification with 'la voix' or 'la parole'—'la poésie' is not made. Unless the leap from physical contact to verbal and spiritual contact occurs, the concept of amorous unity would appear to flounder. 'L'échec'

is the lot of 'la voix' also:

> Mais toujours le grondement où se perdent les (traces
> dans la contrée énorme, une gravitation indé- (cise

(EC 14)

What they hear and believe to be more powerful than love is not an articulated voice, but a continuous and obscure 'grondement' where the traces of being, the pathways to real contact are lost separating them forever.

This way to unity is illusory and perhaps more dangerously so than corporal contact, since at least in the latter there is a simulation of unity, an allusion to it. However, there is no single pole of gravitation by which to direct one's search, and the land is enormous, too large to allow a facile contact. Love also becomes lost in the expanse and movement of the poem. Phenomena crowd in and do not permit a concentrated view of love beyond the fusion of bodies devoid of all real meaning and presence. Like the impatient riders they are intended to be, the 'cavaliers dans la clairière', move on from their quick dissatisfaction with 'les corps confondus' to the possibility of unity in the voice.

There are positive descriptions of love's power, however, revealing its unifying strength. For the desperation and ascetic irony of 'le parti de cavaliers dans la clairière' is not the only point of view from

which the poet approaches the sense of 'l'amour' in relation to unity. Their desperation is not more impressive than the exclusion experienced in 'Noël interdit' (IP 207). The festival which brings men together is forbidden to the poet.

Yet from within this absurd condition of someone who is denied the joy given to all, where he must 'porter un cœur vide', an ecstatic idea of love's integrating capacities emerges:

> Pourtant l'amour est le berceau.
> Il nous appelle, il nous dépouille.
> De l'un par l'autre, il nous fait naître.
>
> (IP 210)

The birth of Christ is replaced by, or echoed in, the thrust of love which sparks off a kind of unity between partners in bringing forth. Each is born from the other, separation is broken down, the individual reduced, 'dépouillé'.

A heat is generated which contradicts the bleak picture that seems to predominate: 'Il nous embrase' (Ibid). There is an impression of real resolution of conflicts and contradictions in this part of the poem. Anaphora seem to pulsate through the stanza, repeating the causal 'il... nous' relationship, and the confident 'toujours': 'Toujours avance, toujours au centre'(Ibid).

Love is possibly the unifying pole at the centre

of the poet's universe, the hearth from where all heat and energy emanates, the essential festival when man and man can join in a unifying movement of the most intimate kind. In this they are born from each other, of each other's flesh. This possible dual birth adumbrates the inordinate potency of love in the poet's conception.

If this fixed pole, centre of radiation and vibration, should come to be absent? In that case reality is thrown into question. The world is profoundly disjoined. Detachment prevails.

The attitude of 'les cavaliers' is explained by the pain and despair, or the undermining movement which follows. For they are too far beyond hope and already roam the barren regions of 'l'absurde' combating illusions and temptations which draw them from the path towards being, meeting on their way the multiform and uncontrollable reality that constantly threatens to engulf them. Separated from the unity of love, the poet enters a similar arena:

> De tout sans lui suis détaché.
> Le combat n'a plus de visage,
> plus d'emblème ni de raison.
>
> (IP 210)

The emphatic relationship 'Il - nous', noted above breaks down. The poet no longer feels himself to be in a community. His voice has changed, and the dialectic of the poem is more obvious.

There is no personal pronoun in the opening lines of this stanza. Its syntax is distorted into an inversion which calculatingly gives weight to the word 'détaché'.

'De tout', from the whole universe, including himself, he is separated. Ecstatic notions fall away in the sudden movement of 'je'. There is no transition into a separate feeling, it is immediate. Fundamentally separated, detached and excluded, the poet must continue his combat in favour of being.

But reality is separate and disjoined. It is unclear, without force, without face. Like the riders in the forest he is uncertain as to his enemy. All points of reference, even those of a negative stamp such as emnity, have been drained from his life. He is agonisingly caught in a separating vacuum :

> Dans le vide où mal je respire,
> sous l'énergie désaccordée,
>
> (Ibid)

Beyond this frontier then, separation denotes a total absence, a lack of the most basic substance for life. Things are unconnected, there is no ambiant atmosphere, and disrupted energy remains like a pall which stifles. The ideal, in its multiple forms: love, being, unity, 'le poème', 'le château', has died in a very physical sense :

> Le château qui brillait,obscur,
> s'est arrêté de battre interdit.
>
> (Ibid)

The castle refers internally,

within the poet's overall production, to the various forms of the ideal as they may be experienced at their most concrete, that is to say in their uniting of contradictions and their reconciliation. It shines in a sense difficult to understand, obscurely, without blinding light, as is expressed in the rather obvious oxymoron. It was alive in the most physical manner, pulsing as if with the poet's own blood.

The castle too has been excluded from the single uniting flow. The universe winds down until 'plus rien ne fait foi' (Ibid). Absence of love increases the poet's separation from reality and the ideal to an incredible pitch. For a love relationship often orientates and concentrates one's perception of reality onto the loved one in question, who is not only a centre of attention, but effectively the centre of the poet's affective universe, of his reality. Consequently, he is thrust, unwillingly, onto 'les chemins du vain espoir' (Ibid).

The struggle towards unity through the poem's dark labyrinths begins anew. But how can he orient himself when that which has brought about his plight is unknown, a pure negative, an absence?

The poem attempts to move beyond itself in describing the unity of love. It reaches for an ecstasy it can perhaps evoke, though only within the limits of language. But it wants an ecstasy that is certain,

solid like the well structured'château'. Yet in its failure also, and the consequent return to a distraught reality, it crosses a certain limit beyond which you normally do not venture.

These enormous movements between extremes reveal the true nature of separation, its dialectical counterpart in unity, and the precarious balance between the two within the poet's mind and his world.

Within love itself there is a rift. The wanderer in his vain hope turns love in upon himself as a consequence of separation. This is signalled by yet another split at a point when reconciliation might have been expected :

> La face est lourde, elle est fermée.
> Je me suis reconnu séparé, qu'importe.
> Je n'espère pas, je m'efforce.
>
> (EC I7)

Unity may emanate from 'le regard' from the face's general aspect, and the way it relates to the poet. The face is not only a sign of human emotion expressed in terms of the external world, it is also possibly the nature of reality, here suddenly closed off and weighted, forbidding all contact in its excessive gravity. This gravity is countered by the knight's apparent indifference to his situation: 'qu'-mporte'. The position of absurdity is reiterated. Knowledge of separation does not entail feverish bemoaning of his dilemma, but a dispassionate assertion of his continuation without hope.

60

The step beyond hope, an effort without clear goal, is the most difficult. It is immediately interpreted by the knight in his clearing as a movement towards love. For he must constantly interpret his own actions, rent as he is from himself.

This is the poem's dialectic, where an action or a description of a situation evokes a further qualification that in turn negates it. The wild passion of love would seem to nullify the poet's effort to maintain a hold on himself :

> O fou d'amour,
> pour qui? Pour moi peut-être
> dans l'inimitié.
>
> (EC I7)

This piece of poem swings around; opening on the madness and self-loss of love, it passes via uncertainty onto self-conscious irony and the contrary of love, exacerbated rationality.

From stoic and cool awareness of separation, he is tempted by the insanity of love. Passion's wound is not mitigated. It is met head on. However, the problem of identity which fills the poems resurfaces and corrects the soar towards love and mental unbalance, inducing the bitterly ironic observation that his undirected love is really for himself, solipsism generated by the rift of self-emnity.

Love emerges as a destructive counterpart of hatred within the knight's self. He is caught in their

subversive duality and the temptation of their wildness. The absurd world of someone continuing to struggle when he believes it to be without significance ('qu'importe') is closest to the un-reason of passion. Separation, in its dialectic with love, brings reason and the normal order of the world into question. The ideal is undermined. Love does not tend outwards to the other and unity, it thrusts inwards and into the divided self.

A conflicting dynamic then, and an irremediable emotional rift is the outcome of separation from 'l'amour'. The face remains closed, and there can be no possible accession to being.

A more frustrating degree of separation,and a further negation of love is the void of boredom in which hatred arises. In their quest for the virgin bride, the grooms of 'Noce Noire', are dogged by separating forms and an uneventful course :

> Et rien n'arrive, même par fausse manœuvre et
> (malencontre,
> rien que les larves entre leurs dents et leurs
> (maisons.

(LSF 57)

Searching for the event of love, the festival which will bring them all together, they fail even to stumble upon misadventure. Their search is qualified by the deepest negativity; the sole presence of annoying insect larvæ , insinuated between things, separating, irritating. They seem to act as

metaphors for hatred and pointless subversion. They destroy the secure structure of a home: 'Dans leur pierraille frileuse la larve file son petit corps hivernal' (RM I3I). Separation and disintegration are exploited by the small animal. Reality is undermined by its secret, hateful presence. It enters wall and mouth; these two may operate as points of contact or separation.[I] For the bridegrooms the wall is shared hatred, common boundaries are points of conflict: 'Et le mur mitoyen de la haine entre toi et l'autre,' (LSF 57).

The wall of hatred is ambiguous. It at once separates and joins the familiar 'toi' and unfamiliar 'autre'. It is an extreme emotion they share, but mainly perceived as holding them apart during the dark night of the search.

The common quest for love and contact with the virgin who is 'l'autre' in its deepest sense, does not induce brotherhood or a negation of separation. It takes place amongst the separating walls of hatred and in blinding darkness where 'ses frères' cannot even be seen 'la noce (est) noire'. The conditions of this relationship with the ideal resemble those by which Krivitsky is crushed. Although men are searching for the same thing in their actions, they remain blind to

I/ Why does Frénaud repeatedly use the image of 'la larve'? Could it be that its small, formless presence is an emotional signifier? As a derisory form of the animal it can infiltrate like the menacing liquid of the poem, 'l'eau noire'.

their community of purpose, and are separated by hatred. It is associated with a cold land of separation where nothing appears possible.

Yet it does not create separation, but is rather a by-product of it. Like the auto-inimicality of the self, it ironically points to Man's struggle towards love and unity when he is unable to control or break down these emotional enemies which prevent him reaching it. By this his own ability to radiate, to enter into contact with the other is vitiated. His heart, clichéd centre of passion, can only spew out 'le débagoulage des eaux grasses du cœur' (LSF 57). An extremely ironised form of outpouring is this which results from a terrible failure 'après l'échec' (LSF 58). No chivalrous continuation of the quest here. Mistrust and violence predominate. The universe is filled with illusory glimpses of the possible 'fête' :

> Est-ce le ressac ou la rouille ou déjà
> la rumeur du foirail /... /
> ou combat de nuées dans le ciel noir?
>
> (LSF 59)

Hate then, is at the core of a world in distraction, a world that offers no fixed points of reference and only confusing sounds in the black sky.

A fierce irony fills the poems when the subject of separation in love enters the poetic vision. The myth of love is distorted in a macabre fashion as the

poet issues a morbid 'Invitation galante' from beyond the grave. The bed (often specifically associated with love and warm physical contact)has changed its associations. The heat of passion, and the act of mutual birth that was seen above, are also altered. From the position of foreknowledge that the physical contact in love is devoid of being and of the true uplifting union which they seek as a pair, the poet sneeringly calls his mistress to bed :

> Viens dans mon lit couver la cendre froide.
> Nous vêlerons à l'aube de la mort.
>
> (IP 24)

'Viens', 'couver', 'aube', depend for their semantic effectiveness in this context on our understanding their positive dynamic. The structures of unity and completion they represent. 'Couver' suggests, of course, the attention given to an egg, the brooding of an egg and a warming process; similarly, one may tender a spark amongst cinders. 'Aube' is a beginning, but also in a sense completion of the sun's cycle in a movement of new possibilities.

These interpretations are disrupted, their positive senses are repressed. Birth here is cruel and derisory bringing-forth of animals. It takes place at a lightless daybreak of death. The heat of 'l'âtre', the consuming flame of passion, is reduced to 'la cendre froide', which must be looked after, cherished. Yet it is a thing devoid of all meaning in relation to

the act which the lovers would carry out, emptied of its essence as are bed and dawn.

Their mutual birth draws them into death. It is a pulsation of energy leading nowhere, immediately negated, and the word 'vêler' has an ominous phonetic echo in 'veiller les morts', as though their insane sexual contact was at the same moment their wake and birth. Death and sexuality are coupled in the erotic consciousness. The act of making love involves a self-loss and disappointment which resembles the void.

Pain and the moment of contact are followed by denial of contact and hostility. The poem explores this area in a bizzare enactment of sex beyond death :

> Quand la potence des sexes
> s'est abattue en oiseaux pétrifiés,
> l'être glorieux qui nous avait anéantis
> n'est plus que nous deux, cadavres hostiles.
>
> (IP 24)

Death subtends sexual contact, and the amorous thrust in the flight of a bird is countered by the landing of death-ridden sex organs in the form of two stone birds , their weightlessness and power of flight denied as is also the lyrical flight of the poem and language.

The sex organs, hard as stone, and cold as cinders, figure the absence of being and its momentary'anéantissement'. Only 'nous deux , cadavres hostile' are left. They are returned to their usual position of essentially separated bodies, not merely apart, but

actively opposed and hating one another.

Death within sexuality is not simply the end of life and coldness of a grave. For above all it is an absence of 'l'être' and consequently of unity, which generates the sarcastic images of mortality and cold love. The intimate point of contact in the sex organs is not the mediator of a glorious unity or transcendental contact, but the deliberate and calculated means of death: the scaffold, cynically reverberating with the double meaning of 'potence' arising from its Latin etymology in 'potere' - 'puissante'.

The sex organs are impotent, no longer capable of producing love, heat or birth, and fundamentally unable to mediate with being. Such coldness of death in the absence of unity or of 'l'anéantissement' produces hostility, a scaling up of separation. Corpses are normally indifferent, without animation. Yet in their cold existence beyond contact, in the despair of separation, they react against one another.

Their sexual flight of ecstasy is crushed by time, 'depuis toujours déjà', even before it can reach the readers sensitivity it is altered, no temporal space or development is permitted for our gaze to develop; two situations overlap. A frightening structural rigour takes hold of the event: 'Quand X, A n'est que B'.

The lover is 'Sans nom maintenant', separated

even from the means of self-identification through language. He is now only a 'je' pronoun and a series of attributes.

Has the woman stolen his name? This would imply the primitive notion of depriving somebody of their soul by taking their name; the word acts as a totem. The name may also be the mistress' which she has taken away with her, symbolically forbidding him the act of evoking her presence through her name. The lover it is who occupies the poem's centre, in the description of how he is torn away from his woman :

> Dénoué de l'assaut de mon désir
> dans ton égarante image,
> dénué par les faux aveux du tamps,
> par les fausses pièces de l'amour racheté,
> par tous ces gains perdu,
> libéré de toi maintenant,
> libre comme un mort,
> vivant de seule vie moite,
> enjoué avec les pierres et les feuillages.
>
> ('Je ne t'ai jamais oubliée' IP 23)

Catalogued here are the effects separation may have on a lover, but each one contains conflicting notions and images making his emotional tenor and attitude uncertain. Conscious of the ambivalence of his own existence, he tries to express it in relation to the factors which have provoked its imbalance. Falsehood, liberty and death predominate in his description. What had attracted him and impressed him as the aim of his desire, as his ideal, is revealed as false in the moment he is separated from it.

The attack of his desire, the concerted movement towards a man's single wish, is detached from him in the misleading image of his mistress. However, this is also the 'image' within the text, and it is the fact of writing, as much as anything else, which undoes and is undone.[I]

He is untied from this virile activity. He has become contingent, no longer linked to the necessity of the act which gives meaning to existence. This he suffers for the sake of an image, and one which is uncertain, almost dangerous because 'égarante'.

She then is not desire, not the object of desire, not the object of desire, but an abstract distraction from the real push of desire. Has she become like this following their separation or prior to it? The poem has the appearance of a bitter reflection following her departure.

The certitude which he thought love to be is destroyed, and loss of love, like the realisation of our own death, in its sudden rupture of one state which we had thought to be continuous, throwing us into another, puts existence and its values into question. Stripped naked 'dénué', he is totally dispossed by the false confessions of time, its profoundly duplicitous nature. Time personified, allows one thing and its contrary to

I/ In relation to this cf Mary Ann Caws: The Eye in the Text (PUP I98I) especially 'At the Threshold of the Text'.

occur. Its statements are multivalent; for a being who lives via intense emotional desire they are false.

Liberated like a dead man , he continues to exist in dampness, without the exess and contact with the beyond that love permits. He is reduced to a creature living ironically well('enjoué')with inanimate, disparate and numerous objects in the world: 'les pierres et les feuillages'.

Love is a counterfeiter. Those gains which his relationship represents ironically lose him: a profound imbalance undoes the structuring relationship betwen desire and self, it is in the conjunction of time and love which unsettles language, produces the word-associations 'dénoué'-'dénué'-'libéré'-'libre'-'enjoué'.

Profit is loss for him, but also loss of him. 'Les comptes sont faux', and the 'pure zero' which permits 'l'anéantissement' in 'Epitaphe'(RM I3) is not possible. He is bought with love's counterfeit money, like an object determined by the illegitemacy of its possession. All the connections he has with love and the woman are vitiated. The memory of his woman is distorted, lost in his various experiences of dissociation from the truth and reality.

This poem, like those discussed above, is bitter and ironic. Scathingly listing his negative attributes, the distorting effects amorous contact has wrought on his personality, it asserts that he is 'libéré de toi

maintenant', as though it were a positive separation desired. The poem's words are 'chantourné', distorted beyond the simplest expressions of dissatisfaction and disappointment. Each phrase has the appearance of turning in upon itself. Thus 'libéré de toi maintenant' seems to contradict the drift of the poem which is supposedly a vow never to forget.

Liberation has a positive connotation, and the adverb 'maintenant' implies that it has occured following a long wait. He is free not positively, but as a dead person is free from the world. Language would appear to be underpinned by a conflicting movement it can barely control: the centre is dispersed, what language puts out pulls away from clear structure. Words are under the woman's power which is experienced as an inimical agent turned against the lover :

> par ton pouvoir ordonné à me perdre
> jusqu'au bout de mon silence.
>
> (Ibid)

For the sensitivity deprived of a direct relationship between self - desire - object, and untied from any development towards the end of love, there arises the possibility of progress directed at something, some target, a 'bout'. Conflicting images and associations which are held back, derive from this obligation he has to lose himself in silence. He must take the silence of a repressed verb to its conclusion: 'jusqu'au bout', as though this region of mind or heart

where language stops could possibly have an end.

Condemned to interminable wandering in this zone without the poem's vibration, he must continue to search for the absent woman within it. Her memory does not help overcome separation, but orders him to continue in the most agonising void where the word can no longer penetrate. The reader's encounter with the poem is surrounded by another gap or silence, we are left uncertain as to the cause of her absence, whether death, infidelity, or a pure abstraction. This fact is drained from the poem. She is characterised only by the negative power which destroys her lover.

The memory of love is associated with loss and distortion of sentiment. There is no possible life or contact beyond separation. Frénaud does not have the mentality of Nerval, whose Amélie and Sylvie seem to exist at their most satisfying in the imagination. Lack of presence induces a bitter conflict between lover and mistress, and a rift in the perception of her absence. Consequently love becomes counterfeit. Confessions made within the distorting element of time become false. The poet's window on the world is altered by emotion, and so too is the artefact which expresses it.

The poem seems to deny a static interpretation such as the one attempted above. There are shifting

equilibriums that make it diffucult to 'pin down' the text's meanings. The possible misreading which appeared above concerining 'sans nom' and its referent, illustrates one single aspect of the poem's ambiguity. But further than that, is it not equally possible that an expression such as 'dénoué' has another, more important signification beyond that which so neatly correlates with the structure under discussion 'separation' - 'unity'?

Untied has its positive sense in looseness, a lack of tensions and twists in the human mind (in its figurative use) and in the body (cf 'décontracté'). A knot is a possible centre however, 'le nœud' where aspects of the world are brought together in a fertile interchange. It is the point of tension between two chords, forming a whole with a rigorous structure, although its negative counterpart is the accidental knot which hinders the chord's free flow.

Untied then, it becomes a positive or negative dispersal. But do these structures of value have any real bearing? Is it at all certain he is untied in the sense that has been presupposed above, or that he is untied by love? For that matter, is there any possible certainty it is about himself he speaks at this point in the poem? The voice is continually disrupted, divided between levels. Only '<u>mon</u> désir' points clearly to the subject. Who is the subject though, beyond an

uncertain 'je' to whom characteristics may be attributed.[I]

The poem is profoundly uncertain. Its stages of description could easily be separated off from one another. The links between 'dénoué','dénué', 'libéré' etc depend not upon intrinsic factors of sense and context, but phonetic similarity, and imagistic association.

Frénaud's poems, and the organic wholes which his books represent, do not lend themselves easily to an approach which begins on the basis of a preconceived point of view. They tend to deny all attempts to fit them into structured patterns of meaning, as they place words and phrases in relationships which bring their meanings into question in a disconcerting manner.

Besides this, the general notion of separation as field of study has been abstracted from his work, ie. it is not explicitly stated or present, but is inferred. Yet in each poem it is not the same separation, but a new and individual factor evoked in the living organism of language. The progression from unity in love to separation in the same emotion is new and different at each iteration.

Furthermore it is misleading to claim, as was

I/ There is a temporal ambiguity here also. Do the various descriptions: 'dénoué...dénué...racheté...perdu' represent different moments in the development of his relationship with the elusive she, or are they describing his present state as it already is in the various manifestations? In other words, do they follow a developmental scheme, or have they already happened?

suggested in previous pages, that love-relationships are merely another avatar of the quest for being. Without doubt they have this possible association, but they are also individual representations in language of a kind of contact a reader or poet can only truly relate to his personal experience. The context of a sense of separation in love then is all important. It is the poet's aim, perhaps, via uncompromising disruption of words, to communicate this peculiarity.

The poems repeatedly return to a moment of contact between the hero and his lover. For he seems to fit this traditional persona of hero in a disturbed sense which calls into question habitual notions of heroism. He tells the story from a subjective point of view in the mysterious first person, developing the ways in which being has touched his personality through love. He is both narrator and narrated. His personality, however, is not stable. It passes through a myriad phases. Language has no certainty. It is a ponderous hesitation. At several moments the poems reveal him to us in contact with the loved one or describing contact with her. Why does he associate this conjuncture with language? :

> Nous nous sommes reconnus. Le monde s'est ouvert
> dans un grand balbutiement où se débattait
> tout l'ancien malheur aboli sous les regards
> (neufs.
>
> (IP I28)

A mutual recognition has taken place in time somewhere. In the past with relation to the poem's narration. It is now anterior yet somehow present, not so much in memory, but in the particular level of language past tense represents. The picture is 'estompé' by this manœuvre. Present tense is too full. Its harsheness would make the event excessively energetic, the mind cannot hold it back as easily as is the case with past perfect tense, which affords the illusion of memory and a clear temporal relation. The present tense is almost infinite. It is always here, now, happening before our eyes, or it is thought of in that way.

In what way does this temporally situated recognition take place? Is it following upon loss or a search? For the faculty of recognising in this single moment seems to suggest something already potentially present in each of the recognisers. For each there occurs an immaterial contact which has the peculiar quality of an unexpected likeness between what is inside the recognising mind, and what is outside. Suddenly you are before something which has its place in you. There is a breakdown of the indifference of the world that usually faces us.

The words 'Nous nous' stand as a sign of the internalised movement, here, in language. Plurality of person may recede into increasing ambiguity, so that the number of persons involved is uncertain. The des-

cription becomes a nucleus of excessive possibility, and you could say the poem begins to open up into an intense and potentially immense exchange of personality.

The pronouns 'nous nous' involve a repetition and a reciprocation of something intangible. The relationship between the two pronouns is oblique. They also sound like a stammering, a 'balbutiement', sudden hesitation in the poem.

Paradoxically then, what may be considered as the poem's aperture and out-flowing is accompanied by a restriction of language's flow. Recognition involves a moment of change in Man's mode of being. He begins to link up with the other, with something out there. It is also a recurrence, however, expressed in the prefix 're'. The traditional Romantic view would be of something like Baudelaire's 'correspondance' or 'vie antérieure', a psychological or metaphysical characteristic of Man which aspects of the world, met accidentally, revitalise in him momentarily. In this notion is an attempt to transcend time, see it abolished rather than assume it in its profundity. Time is at the centre of Frénaud's world.

The Opening

Tortuously our discussion has arrived at the image of 'le monde qui s'ouvre'.[I] It is tempting to contrast this opening, in its possible dispersal, with recognition which putatively implies integration. This may also be compared with the various levels of 'dénoué' along a certain spectrum of contact, since openness is in opposition to closing and the knot. However this avoids the specific perameters and ambiguities of opening in the poem.

Openness is a state of things almost vacuuous. It may contain space, and it certainly creates one, which may be filled or remain available. Possibly it can be said to generate a form of 'néant', pertaining to the gulf which for the other, earlier poets, such as Mallarmé or Baudelaire, both attracts and repels with its terrifying message of contingent reality and unending probability.

A primal opening is that of the mouth, contorting the face, and preceding the issue of the word. At this point an articulation may be perceived in the text's subsurface. If one considers the catachresis

I/ cf the extract from IP I82 above: 'le monde s'est ouvert' and commentary.

which produces 'langue' as a signifier of articulated oral and written communication at an advanced cultural level, a tenuous link appears between this degree of openness, the appearance of language, and intimate contact in love, characterised at its most sensory in the words fellatio and cunnilingus, with their references to the tongue.

Love and language, intertwine in the complex movements of poetic meaning. In Frénaud's verse it is a probable contention that this meaning never settles on any one area, but moves through them all in a different way according to each individual poem. Openness is almost shocking. It involves an exposure, giving on to the interior where there is an uncertain otherness.

Uncertainty seems to draw us obliquely towards the central point of 'La lumière de l'amour' quoted above: 'balbutiement'. The sound of lips attempting to articulate and struggling towards some sense. Is this linguistic frustration and the pushing up of communication from within not akin to the strange sensation of recognition? Things suddenly meet in a barely tangible or articulated way.

Stammering cannot be understood. It is a beginning, suggesting a first attempt at something. Also it betrays an embarassment, almost a form of nudity. But at the same time a hindrance, 'balbutiement' obscures sense, holds it back, makes it mysterious.

These descriptions may not be true. They too are contingent and evoke the poem's profoundly ambivalent nature in the attempt, through language, to come to terms with unity which is intended as a fixed pole :

> Dans l'éclat de l'unité que lui composent
> couleurs et taches tout à coup s'harmonisant
> chacun se dresse nu, il s'avance vers l'autre.
>
> ('La lumière de l'amour' IP I82)

Unity, surprising as the assertion may seem, is not the central issue. The words and structures we have noted so far have lured us into a belief that its apparition in the text, the word 'l'unité' recurring fairly frequently, is the sign of its axial function. This is a mistake. Things are happening all about in these lines, and are not necessarily linked with the lexical unit 'unité'.

Working out from the centre it appears there is a sudden conjunction[I] of factors which each has a strong individual nature. But each is liable to isolation; the sense units can be broken up and still make sense. The only part which seems to lend itself to the deepest ambivalence is 'tout à coup'.

The lexical sense of each verbal or prepositional part of the description is in their connection with the adverbial 'tout à coup': 'Dans l'éclat de l'uni-

I/ Though this is not necessarily a unity. If it does image forth a sudden union within the language of the poem, this is not immediately recognisable, and is not the most important aspect of the whole poem.

té... tout à coup'; 'lui composent couleurs etc... tout à coup'; 's'harmonisant... tout à coup'; 'chacun se dresse nu... tout à coup'; 'il s'avance vers l'autre... tout à coup'. This expression is almost a representation, in linguistic form, of being's sudden intensity. The latter is also expressed in images and key terms: 'l'éclat', 'les couleurs', 'l'avancement'. It may be that the adverb 'tout à coup' is the fulcrum for the poetic expression of unity in loving contact.

If the expression fulfils the role set out for it above it denies its centrality, for it is completely neutral, there is no notion of love, ecstasy, physical or spiritual contact in 'tout à coup'. It is a simple adverbial expression of immediacy. A rhetorical device.

It is difficult to go into a deep analysis of the phrase 'tout à coup' due to its peculiarly literary usage. It emphasises a suddenness and, paradoxically, holds back the description. As though an image or network of images had arisen from nowhere, it intensifies the impression of speed and unexpected appearance. Yet here it is almost redundant in its reproduction of the acuity and short duration of 'l'éclat'.[I] In this sense, because it is redundant, is it not reasonable to claim that it does not simply point to the way 's'harmoniser' occurs, but illuminates the whole

I/ The significance of 'l'éclat' as image will be studied in a later chapter.

phrase? Is this not also the way unity and being occur? Within that which is separated, 'de trop' (as a work of art may be said to be 'inutile'). It is paradoxically also 'disponible', liable to link with all the other images and movements of the sentence.

This point in the poem oscillates with a well nigh incomprehensible uncertainty. Significantly, it is not a particularly noticeable aspect of the text. Its importance is almost hidden. Is this perception on the level of purely linguistic possibilities - ie. the rearrangement of aspects of the text, or is it at a deeper level? The element of time may contain a solution. For, the two quotations discussed above (p) though sequential one on the other in the text, and perceptibly treating the same event, do not view it from the same position in time. Alternatively, the event invokes different linguistic time-forms at its various stages. The unity described is not a simple transcendence of time then. Firmly and clearly, it is situated in time, within its disturbing contradictions. Language, in its tense structures, attempts to force time into containers. But the poem, evoking a moment difficult to describe simply as unity, mutilates this. Unity takes place in time and alters its formal structures.

Are the light of love and the moment of contact in unity positive and true? Are they unchanging and

pure when at their highest point? They are underpinned by this distorting temporal condition. They take place in language and may revitalise its forms. Yet the poet senses their failure to communicate the ideal 'C'est un leurre'. In poetry and love there is a constant danger of deception. Reality is profoundly ambivalent. The meeting is again thrust further away in time :

> Non, ce ne fut pas une mauvaise rencontre
> par un vent d'automne indécis,
>
> (IP I83)

Another turn is made by the poem, and the deceptive quality of the meeting is denied. An attempt to return to its moment is oulined. However, the structure of time in language reverts it to a static instant in the past via the preterite tense 'fut' delimiting a period of definable length. It does not have the negative characteristic, which the decline of an 'automne indécis' implies. Autumn is the end of a whole series of activities and gives a sense of completion. But it is uncertain, 'indécis', hesitating perhaps between one season and the next. What has wrought destruction is the striving for positive union and its failure, the attempt perhaps to consacrate their meeting in an extra-temporal 'vœu d'impérissable amour' :

> mais le vœu d'impérissable amour après l'exal-
> (tation,

les délices, l'égarement, la lenteur morose des
(juornées,
à la fin s'est brisé contre notre différence
et nous sommes séparés désormais,
sinon déjà exclus.

(IP I83-I84)

The poem is a locus of indecision. Tentatively moving around various possibilities it attempts to reach some central fact upon which to base and come to terms with what could be called the 'agony' which actuates it. Paradoxically, the agony of separation and exclusion, to which the poem tends, seems to originate in the wish for 'l'impérissable amour'. Following certain stages: 'l'exaltation/, les délices, l'égarement, la lenteur morose des journées,' which either qualify its uncertain contents or point to factors which erode its resolve; following these, it fails and is destroyed. Their impetus, possibly towards some ideal of which there can be no certainty, brings 'l'amour' to its own destruction against the irremediable 'différence'. It is subjugated and halted by limits of time within the poem's language: 'après...', 'à la fin...', 'désormais, sinon déjà'.

What is the meaning and extent of 'l'impérissable amour', here expressed in an almost 'chivalrous' manner with an inversion of the usual noun—adjective order when the latter is longer than its referent?

In its essence it is a contradiction. Love is never stable. It constantly changes its object. As a

single 'love', it must necessarily perish to give way to others within the human heart. Since it exists in time, it is subject to the laws of mutability. Its nature would be denied by this need to make it 'impérissable', to force it out of its human sphere, basically out of this world.

There is an important tendency to transport love beyond the given instant in which it is something humanly appreciable, to make of it an eternal truth rather than leaving its living contradictions. Ecstasy implies this trans-portation. However, it is temporal and uniquely experienced, a momentary 'transport' which only alludes at the extra-mundane.

Love is destroyed in this very movement to avoid its destruction. It wants to cease to exist in the contingent, agonised world of objects. Counter to this wish, it is broken, as an object of the material world might be, in collision with another object which is in fact a state of things: 'différence'; a state of the external environment rather than an emotional dimension.

These features crowd perception of the poem and distract from the force of 'l'impérissable amour'. For we must argue it is embedded in the context of Frénaud's poetry and the movements and realities it develops. Unity and time are the principal referents in this case, and 'impérissable amour' is an attempt to

make a peculiarly human and worldly love exist in the same way as 'l'unité', with the force of 'un éclat', which is within time, yet seems to continue infinitely 'cela n'en finissait pas' (LSF 25); here it is strangely put in the past tense which implicitly says 'cela est fini'.

On the other hand the laws of living in the world the exigencies of the poem, which flows as time does, deny this possibility. The words 'd'impérissable amour' themselves burst into language from an uncertain region. Who says them? and to whom? When are they said? Where? They flicker with incertitude in time. In fact they relate to something difficult, if not impossible, to articulate: excessive emotion which outstrips love.

This, then, is the context of an agonised separation. It is only just beyond our grasp unless we are at the same time experiencing the thrust towards 'l'impérissable amour'. How many people can be said to actually sense this? They must be very few. The poem, nevertheless, turns on this concept and its multiple contradictions, its definitely ungraspable nature.

Standing almost as something distinct from the lovers, the vow, 'le vœu ' has a special power. 'Le vœu' is also morphically close to 'la voix'; a call for imperishable love, a voice breaking silence. The voice, in the poem, attempts to preserve this intangible emotion from the rigours of time and death. Time's presence runs through the whole stanza, breaking up and ar-

ticulating expressions in the same movement: 'après', 'lenteur', 'journées', 'à la fin', 'désormais', 'déjà'.

'Différence' negates 'l'unité'. Yet without it 'l'unité' cannot occur and can have no logical sense, there can be no conquest without the need to conquer. Each of these concepts seems to contain the notion of the other.But, for human emotions in love, 'différence' destroys the vow (and the voice) which would restore and eternalise the moment of meeting in time.

Time is an element which, as we have seen above in its entropy fosters unity and destroys difference. Time and difference seem to coexist in tension within the poem's lines, rending the voice (le vœu - la voix) emphasising the emotional and ontological importance of the lovers being 'séparés désormais sinon déjà exclus'.

They are separated certainly from each other, but excluded from what? Possibly they strive for some greater unity of inclusion in 'la fête', in the 'danse folle that is the temporality of the universe. These are only conjectures. Their exclusion itself remains undefined, without an aim. It is a nameless exclusion. Uncertainty qualifies it 'sinon'. Uncertain, yet immediate 'déjà'. Implied here,it would seem, is a rushing-in of terms which negate 'le vœu' : 'différence/et nous sommes séparés.../ ...déjà exclus.' They crowd one's immediate view of the poem especially when the

shift to present tense is taken into account and the possible concatenation of defining adjectives 'séparés exclus'.

The poem is the voice, a vow strongly expressed, and in a sense contains and exposits its own breakdown. Its inner tensions, which are many, seem to converge towards 's'est brisé' which occurs 'après' and 'à la fin', then produces certain effects 'et...'. The vow may be broken or break itself almost passively. The instant is essentially destructive.

In an ambiguous manner it is associated with an attempt to reach into something superior. Coming against an element it wants to pass through, the vow breaks. A violence is present, perhaps echoed in the anagramatical word-play 'contre notre', its mocking irony.

Reality as experienced begins to lose its foundation, undermined by an ontological failure whose importance goes beyond sentiment and has deeper consequences for the world and the individual. His self begins to dissipate 'je vais en me défaisant'. The break, 'la brisure' of separation is not instantaneous, situated clearly in time, nor is it spatially situated between two or more lovers. It continues into the poet's being from the external world to internal.

Persisting in an action which undoes his existence, reduces it, the poet loses his capacity for

expression, the power of love which is also the faculty of clear communication with the other. He is merely outward and without intelligible meaning 'telle figure obscurcie, je n'ai plus de pouvoir' (Ibid I84). His power of forming the world into words, into communicative moments, is no more, he is an 'obscure figure' and this may be taken on multiple levels, but mainly on the level of a linguistic form. He is also image without clarity, whose function is distorted.

As he undergoes this decanting of energy and the power to 'mean' (cf Hussers's 'bedeutung' and 'bedeuten' which together are the vital force of being) so too does the world, the how[I] of things, their mode of existence: 'le monde n'a plus de sens' (Ibid). Weakness and obscurity prevail. The coruscating instant of unity in love, 'l'éclat', has drained the poem of its force. Separation, in an essentially different form which this poem reveals it to possess, predominates. The word, the poem, 'l'impérissable amour', the poet, the lovers, are fundamentally marked by separation.

The poem responds to the problem of amorous separation and, as a parallel enterprise, to difference in levels of language. It attempts to overcome or allay the force of these phenomena by an imbrication of meanings, where contact, separation and inimicality are

I/ 'The how of things' is another term borrowed from Husserl. An essential idea in his philosophy, it reveals the need to rethink our perception of things.

held at the poem's centre and tend to form its foci.

Rather than heuristically manœuvering towards a sense of integration or balance though, the poem lends the impression of a continually shifting centre. In 'Amande double amère', for example, (LSF I5) the almond appears as dominant visual image in the title then disappears. It is important, yet from its zero-grade of definition it proposes linkages with the text extending and distorting its sense. There is never that point of stability which integrated equilibrium would require :

> Amants mauvais aimants,
> l'amiante de nos deux corps
> nous préservera-t-il toujours
> de la pénétration de la flamme?
>
> (LSF I5)

Although short and concentrated, this poem's form could be characterised by the word 'basculer'. It seems to tip in different directions at the same time. For example, 'pénétration' is an exceptionally loaded term with a forcefully sexual connotation, a potential danger of contact via intrusion which lets in that which destroys and gives energy in the same action.

They are 'mauvais aimants', on the other hand, magnets which fail to attract and overcome the separation to which objects in the world are subject. Only the 'amande' is accessible, and offers the possiblity of deeper contact in its eating. But its flavour is

'double amère', doubly repulsive.

'L'amour' then is not the quiet centre of the world or of the human 'heart', but a nucleus of tensions and conflict, with the bitterness of eternal separation and hatred ever possible.

Although double halves of the same event which is 'l'amour', the bodies, 'nos deux corps' are committed to solitude implied within 'l'amiante' that resists heat and seals you in from the flame's penetration.

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Separation is an essential aspect of 'l'amour' as percieved through Frénaud's poems. The ideals of love, unity and recuperation of a lost order (or the world as centre and a locus of responsive contact for Man) are shattered, debunked, in the dialectic of the Frénaldian love poem.

This is effected using irony and the 'visible truth' of word-play. It follows on from the Romantic tradition of a love relationship involving confused hatred and violent contact (cf Baudelaire's 'Causerie') where this unhinged the previous tradition of idealised emotion, throwing poetry into a new dimension of truth which revitalised the word.

However it also extends the form by formulating love and separation in terms of a fundamental mode of the world. Separation becomes part of the necessary order of things. Whilst at the same time it is characterised by its resultant contingency and disorder.

Love is not distinguishable as a clear pole in relation to which the poem may develop, although this is always a temptation. It is too closely linked with hatred, love of the self, and a profound disruption of the real world and of language.

At the core of love is separation. The two bodies are separate and deny penetration into the other. Yet they are supposed to mediate a fusion which is on the universal plane. Through their intimate contact a

hope arises for some firm basis in the universe, which overcomes the disturbing inevitability of death within life, of being a 'vivant mortel'.

If the instant of intense emotion, the fire, has passed love may resemble death and generate morbid antagonism. Yet it also acts as a separator, pulling two lovers apart, distracting them from the all important quest for being, dividing bodies which previously had existed in indifference to one another, at the very point of contact the poem tentatively approaches.

Time, which is always so ambiguous in the work of art, and to a greater extent in the poem which concentrates its moments, plays an important role in the undermining dynamic by which amorous union becomes aggressive dissociation. The poem (always a 'machine inutile', a 'conquête dérisoire') and the instant which overcomes human separation, are constantly deteriorating.

The construction which appears - 'le château' of poetic unity or the image of united lovers - begins to dissolve at the moment it emerges within the contradictions of existence. Unity of love occurs within time, and as such is blighted by it. At its centre is the future of its separation.

Complex relationships of time, love and separation are uncovered by the poem in the tryst which should act as unifying nexus, but has conflicting temp-

oral elements within its strands. The lover-hero is thrown from his ecstasy in the encounter, and into a disjointed reality where he must continue to live uncomfortably 'vivant de seule vie moite'.

Meaning is drained from existence. Life and his contingency are compounded with death. The amorous encounter which precedes this does not, however, transcend death, but contains it, as it contains temporality within its contradictions.

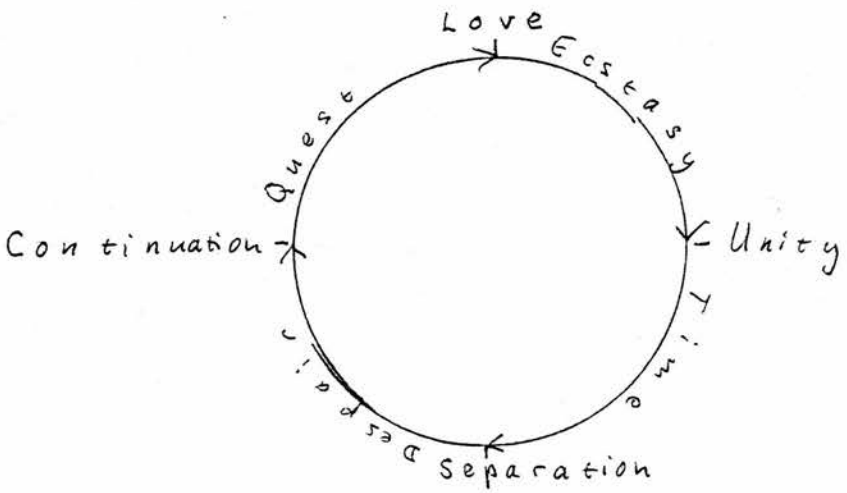
It is not possible to conclude with a clear picture of the relationship between 'l'amour' and 'la séparation'. Love would appear to cancel separation out, especially in the epiphany which is unity, during a fusion either of bodies or of 'les regards'. Yet they are present within one another, a fact which can only properly be perceived through the complexities of a poem.

Habitual uses of language, such as the fixed concept of 'l'amour impérissable', are opened up in the poetic disruption which separation in love creates, their contents are exposed. It may be compared to 'le passage de l'être' or 'le passage de la visitation', which leaves its trace on the poem, imparts a vibration to it. This is one of temporality's ambiguities: being, in its presence, is at the same time separate from contingent existence, it has already passed, and the movement to grasp it is 'inutile' (cf the poem 'Ma-

chine inutile' IP 85)

From the above discussion may be inferred a cyclic movement already mentioned above, and which would seem to dominate those poems where love and separation are at stake.

This cycle begins with inchoate love or the instant of meeting, a tryst, followed by 'l'unité' - 'la lumière', culminating in 'séparation'-'désespoir', and 'la continuation' which replaces any suicidal notions literary tradition may generate :



The value of this model must be critically questioned. In many poems only one aspect of this dynamic ensemble occurs: the desperate continuation in reality and separation, or the bitterness of separated love. In only one of the poems studied above does the whole model come into force. In this case also the model would seem to be disturbed by the element of time. In the quotation from 'La lumière de l'amour' the shifts of tense refute the chronological precedence of 'l'amour' over other aspects which the above diagram may

imply, but it does not depend on chronology so much as the development of these given themes within the text. Its value is in the overall picture it affords of Frénaud's poetry and the jolts and pirouettes it performs.

Those poems which plunge directly into the area of separation from love and without hope, must be putatively preceded by the contrary movement towards exalting unity if they are to have their full sense. The words 'je te chercherai' (above p) only have sense if the 'tu' to whom they refer was once a familiar person to whom the hero related with all the force of idealism and exaltation such identification presupposes. Yet this is not uniformly true. Spiritual love may search for an unknown partner. But it is never characterised by an agony of separation equivalent to that which follows union.

Separation has cataclysmic consequences on the couple and on structures of language, throwing them into question, revealing the fundamental absurdity of existence. What are the consequences of separation for the individual who has not so deeply experienced unity in fusion with another human being at this intensely emotional level? How does the poem situate his experiences of separation? Perhaps the most immediate perception of this is in 'la solitude' as poetic theme. This forms the subject of the following pages.

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La solitude

The most exacerbated form of separation is in total solitude. 'Les frères', the loved one, the companions in despair, disappear from the scene. The self alone remains in a concentrated and agonising form. It is no longer dissipated and diverted amongst social activities. Nor does it show itself sensitive to the aspects of reality which had previously intimated the possible attainment of being. The need for a multiple world is constantly present in Frénaud's poetry. Tensions and conflicts which run through the poem and sustain its claim to meaning, are dependent upon a multiplicity of elements. The question therefore arises: is meaning lost when this multiplicity is missing?

Solitude must break down this interrelatedness. There is no longer antagonism, a memory, or impulsion towards another being who is absent. In this case separation ceases to have any dialectical perspective. As a consequence one would assume that the centrality of the self may come to the surface. But this can only be in a peculiarly agonising way since it is in relation to nothing, topographically difficult to situate.

Solitude is the ultimate absurdity in which the relationship between self and external world is no longer to be considered in terms of habitual concepti-

ions; for example, in terms of an internal-external polarity, or of emotional values. Love is meaningless in total solitude. The loved one can only be imagined. There is no context for evocation of his or her presence. There is a potential breakdown in the structure of consciousness. All those problems inherent in the notion of solipsism prevail.

Language is one of the main points of contention in this new area of separation. How can a basically communicative act be maintained beyond all possible communication?

But solitude is not only the indeterminate area of the self. It is also the clearly defined group 'les solitaires' who are paradoxically united on their uncertain quest. Even in this, however, there is ambiguity for the riders of 'l'Ētape', as the narration moves without apparent explanation between the pronouns 'nous' and 'je'. The self is multiple, but in total isolation it must be conscious of its status as it asserts 'je suis seul'.

La route

Involvement with the voyage, 'la route', 'le chemin', is a peculiarity of those who are thrust into solitude. The quest is a journey into the depths of the self as well as being a search for that which is other. So that the road is an image of embarcation not

only into the regions of the poet's imaginary world, but also into the depths of his self, or the poetic psyche. It implies a voyage undertaken which profoundly differentiates one from all else.

It also involves a passage through areas of the world and the mind which are deserted. What remains there serves only to heighten any impression of loneliness. The'auberge' which is a festive place in itself is never a possibility in this movement, and any repose which is offered, has a negative aspect ('mais toujours s'effaçaient à mesure de l'approche/ l'auberge et le jardin... ' EC I3).

Paradoxically, in 'La noce noire' the solitary men are involved in a communal celebration which is aimless and desperate in its movement towards 'la vierge' who is never seen, never experienced, and appears not to exist :

> Sur quelle roue vers la hauteur s'engrenera la
> (route étoilée
> où la foule des solitaires saute comme on se pend?
>
> (LSF 56)

Solitary men are already marked by death. Their movement on the road resembles that of a corpse that has hung itself. Their road is equivocal. The aim, which appears repeatedly as an important element, has been vitiated into an uncertain wheel. It has a cosmic significance in that it is 'vers la hauteur' and is at the end of 'la route étoilée'.

The road, like a piece of machinery, will mesh with the teeth of the wheel. The solitary men, suspended in the same way as the road is - since it has yet to mesh, and its destination is unknown - move in a wild, uncontrolled way on a road which is as yet uncontrolled.

The twin poles of control in machinery and ataxia in the solitary men, are an exacerbation of normal situations. The poem takes its images into excess. Possibly it is the contemplation of extreme solitude, a condition which sets all the faculties on edge and forces them into disruption, which produces this effect. Certainly it is a phenomenon which motivates the images of these two lines.

'La foule' involves a large number perceived as a mass, without clear distinction. 'Les étoiles' may be considered in a similar way, but they are separated by vacuum and, in the reality of their own existence, as distinct from our perception of them, they are millenia apart. 'Les solitaires' who form the crowd, have a similar nature to 'les étoiles'. For they too are ineluctably separated, distantiated from one another. Yet, in the perspective from which they become visible to the poem, they appear as a single group.

Stars also interact with death. They appear to be suspended, hung, as do also the 'noceurs', held in a black void, and beyond our world. The stars, in one

sense, are already on a wheel as they revolve about the firmament.

Is this then the full sense of 'les solitaires' and their crowd? Indeed, the sense of the wheel is also suspended 'sur quelle roue', conflicting with the neat, mechanical idea that it should be 'engrenée'. Counter to this, is not 'la route étoilée' one of 'la noce's' more positive descriptions? The adjectival force of 'étoilée' suggests that the route is elevated, scintillating, and of cosmic significance. It is also large, distant, and barren.

The status of 'la route' itself is in suspension. The perception which the poem opens onto involves a distortion of its object. For it is not 'les solitaires' who are seen to move, but the 'machine-route' inevitably advancing towards some wheel, which again is uncertain, and consequently distantiated, thereby re-ordering the poem's perceptions. They have no control over this movement. They are held by death and produce only a distracted jerking.

'La roue' as symbol of unity does not fulfil its usual role. The ultimate separation and breakdown which solitude causes seem to prevail. The poem does not highlight the solitary and mortally separate existence of those engaged on the strange quest for a virgin-bride. Yet such existence runs through most of its descriptions. The above quotation would occupy an

important point in a discussion of the whole of 'La noce noire' since it seems to expand on the line from Jean Lescure's poem placed as an epigraph: 'Noce noire du ciel avec le voyageur'(LSF 53).

The star, in its positive and negative possibilities, is an image of the lost voyager, radiating forth a message, that of his presence,but unable to communicate. The festivity is black, and denies all radiation. Vibrations, which are produced by the festival's energy, are closed off. Death and precluded action set the mood.

The poem is a continuation of this effect, a solitary voice spilling onto the page. Its staccato jolts advance towards an ontological certainty which constantly eludes it and leaves only vacuum, 'le néant'. Being is essentially void and absence, as Roger Munier explains :

> L'être diffère pour le poète, n'est rien de ce qui est, montant des choses-qui-sont comme leur 'silence' (IP 89) leur 'secret vide' (EC 20) parce qu'il est essentiellement ce qui se diffère.
>
> ('Revue de métaphysique et de morale' 438)

The poem hangs on an expected parousia which will finally resolve solitude. The detached wanderers magnetise the poem's energy, draw it towards themselves in the strange, inimical world: 'Ils approchent, ils vont la voir'. What was uncertain, distorted movement,is transformed into a definite

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aim, the parousia, will immediately take place.

They possess the gift of sight, and are able to overcome the road's darkness with this magical power: 'avec leurs pommades/ pour que les yeux voient'(LSF 56). In 'La noce' being has become feminised, which produces one of two possibilities: I/ It is eminently possible in the world through sexual contact; its presence is therefore likely and it can be experienced as a spectacle, not only in direct physical contact which has the drawback of inducing 'dépossession de soi', but also as a visual show which leaves the solitaire in full control. 2/ Because it is woman, its absence is a fundamental blight on the world. There is no longer a possible return to warmth of contact, because the feminine aspect is missing from the world. Brotherhood is no longer possible as a positive concept, since it is allied with marriage: this being so no relationships appear possible. The world is unbalanced due to the absence of anima.

With gross images of the banal world the parousia is perceived as being held in suspense, constantly expected: 'Pourtant les affiches avaient annoncé sa présence'(Ibid). Poetic lurches occur such as the latter one which bring the silitary men and oblique poem within reach of something that will make it a centre of clear communication and vibration. The absence of the thing the word indicates will suddenly become

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presence. Indication will be replaced by expression.

The poster is a large and often incongruous sign, a loud shout, and an assertion within the world. The dual meaning of presence here which also connotes the poster's words 'elle est là', and the notion of fundamental parousia, ironically unfolds the poem's multiple nature as surface and depth. This can be seen in that the poem produces both kinds of presence, at the surface of its statements it can say being is close at hand. Yet when one looks deeply at the same statement, it is possible to ascertain that the poem is evoking the absence of being. This may also highlight the essential difference between direct statement and complex metaphor, where the latter introduces one to something of the ungraspableness of experience.

Ironically,presence is conjectured in banal circumstances: 'près du canal ils avaient cru la reconnaître'(LSF 57) a second route is imagined, this time of water. An industrial landscape which intensifies solitude is the possible context for being's revelation and its deferment; for the canal separates. What appears on its other bank, though close, is unverifiable. But it is the words 'ils avaient cru' rather than the canal, which separates them from her.

The canal figures the stasis and preclusion mentioned above. Its medium is liquid connoting flow and

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directed movement. Yet canal water appears as static, stagnating, incapable of mediation. Its environs are usually deserted, and one wonders what the virgin fiancee could be doing in such a place,'près de' close to the water. Being still, canal water produces reflections, indistinct forms which have an elusive nature similar to the fleeting presence of being.

In solitude, perceptions become distorted and unsure. The slow movements of the natural world are alone audible and emanate from a hidden depth which has a special dual nature: 'Des crissements parmi l'aubier nocturne de la vallée' (Ibid). 'L'aubier', the new wood under a tree's bark is the very substance of the valley's night. It is white wood, yet at the depth where it exists, it is dark, both 'aube' and 'nuit' therefore, an unstable duality, mobile, producing uncertain noises. The poem tends towards the hidden aspect of material.

For the solitary man, there is something hidden all about him in the darkness. A 'crissement' may give away somebody's presence, their approach or their signal, as for example the creaking of boards. Thus it reveals a secret and is linked to a notion of depth at multiple levels. It is an ambivalent sound, and this emphasises the fact it is nocturnal, yet at the same time growing within the tree's depth. The 'vallée' implies an enclosed space, and enclosed nothingness where

the untoward sound vibrates like a threat.

It is within the passageways or 'les routes' of just such a depth that the 'solitaires' attempt to force the appearance of a feminine presence. 'Des mines explorées... Ils la feront apparaître.' From the darkness of the interior they attempt to bring about a vision, an appearance. The mine, dark and cold, like 'l'aubier' may represent the hidden 'profondeurs' of a solitary self.

The mine is a dark penetration into matter. It is a hard labour of the most resistant form of material reality, the rock. Yet, like the valley, it forms a negative space. A mine does not make something appear, it extracts, leaves behind a shaft leading nowhere. The labour of the mine is possibly equivalent to 'le labeur du néant'.

'Les solitaires', then, also experience this negative penetration in search of the precious ore which gives exploration of the negative darkness its 'raison d'être'. The word, however, which also penetrates this depth, resembles the negativity of the mine shaft in that it seems it will offer something in its opening-up. But it reveals only a negative hollow, 'le creux' :

> Et déjà frémissent de puissantes paroles,
> aussitôt creuses.
>
> (LSF 58)

The trembling dynamic of a power-

full communication, auguring a positive change is caught in prepositions of time. It is not allowed to develop;'Et déjà... aussitôt'. Similarly, that which is taken from the mine in order to force through the appearance, leaves only an empty space into which the solitary crowd can wander. The word, in its powerful leap for the original disclosure which is being, over-reaches itself and reveals only its inner void, the 'néant' at the heart of 'les choses' and 'la parole'.

Sleep is also a darkness, a penetration into depth. It may be into the self, into the sub-conscious or, alternatively, into the unconscious, that is to say the state of matter, without clear sensation or meaning, similar to penetration into the mine.

For Frénaud though, this exposition is bound up with the mirror and light: 'Tant de sommeil profond à la fin les illuminera'. The deep darkness of sleep, by its continuation, bears the possibility of light, a dissipation of the self's (of solitude's) opacity in its existence beyond consciousness.[I]

I/ Rimbaud searches for a similar experience. In'Délires II' he reaches a point where self destruction and loss are the only possibility. Like Frénaud,the backdrop for his dream-wandering is a barren landscape :

> J'aimai le désert, les vergers brûlés, les boutiques fanées, les boissons tièdes.Je me traînais dans les ruelles puantes et, les yeux fermés, je m'offrais au soleil, dieu de feu...Oh! le moucheron enivré à la pissotière de l'auberge,amoureux de la bourrace, et que dissout un rayon!
>
> (Rimbaud: Œuvres Poétiques I32-I33)

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This darkness is also a mirror, throwing back sight or the image in a paradoxical way, trapping solitary man in time and in his faulty perceptions: 'Souvenir ou avenir, le seul miroir nocturne...' (LSF 58). Darkness, sleep, the mine, are not simply loss and penetration on the search through nothingness. They are further exacerbated in their negativity by this reflective aspect which is also a trap, a lure.

What Man searches for in these zones may always be a projection from within. The light he seeks may be deflected, and its ultimate consequence is destruction by time or static existence within its twin walls of 'souvenir ou avenir', two words which play on the suffix 'venir', and return the poem, by a subtle trick, to the notion of parousia and arrival. The coming then,like the unveiling which the poem attempts at every moment, is firmly situated in a negative context which implies a violence perpetrated on Man. In his solitude he is trapped, disconnected. Beyond the two word-plays on 'venir', there is no possible motion to be undertaken either towards retrieval in the past via memory, or discovery in the future.

The poet impresses upon us that language contains within its forms this aspect of negation. The poem makes a negative discovery.The road,metaphor (int al) for the poem which penetrates such a night of reflections, reveals only the desperation of 'le seul

miroir'. Within the all too human form of expression that is language, epiphany is not an unfolding of the world and the sense of a new order. It paradoxically enforces itself upon the poet as a sense of separation and solitude.

The body of the virgin itself, when they contact it, is locked in sleep. Like a reptile, it is beyond our order of comprehension, it belongs to sleep, a deep, fluid world which cannot be known in clarity: 'son grand corps poissonneux qui sommeille.' (LSF 59). Her appearance, it is conjectured, will be 'dans les débarras de la nuit, à la faveur du supplice.' (LSF 57). It is within things which connote 'le néant', the store room filled with useless objects that have been abandoned there, and hidden within:'à la faveur de...' under the cover of unnecessary pain inflicted, reinforcing the secrecy and hidden nature of the poem's subjects.

Both of these are instances of profound negativity. Torture is an excuse, it seems, for the search in contingent night, in that which is irrational. Normally, we might have expected this observation to run: 'à la faveur de la nuit' and 'dans le supplice'. Possibly then, the pain inflicted in torture is identified with the darkness of night where vision cannot penetrate. Torture is certainly a forcing of appearance in the sense that it endeavours to extract something: information, confession, submission; and this

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from the secret area ('débarras') of the human consciousness. It associates the virgin's appearance with the 'miroir de l'oiseleur' and the searching man as captive.

Do these lines assert then that only within the torture of a blind and enclosed route can the appearance of this fantastic bride take place? Apart from being 'solitaires' and 'malheureux', they are also 'ces voyeurs, voyants aux yeux de blason louche' (LSF 59). Their perception has a dual nature, of interference and suspect sexual practise, and of prophetic force. That which it gives out, the sign, appearance 'blason' of their eyes is 'louche', equivocal.

The'voyant'must see clearly into history where others fail. This function is undermined, they are trapped in the circularity of the solitary quest: 'La dernière épreuve, ils la tentaient depuis l'origine.' (LSF 58). The origin is on the solitude of the road, in the depths of the mine, or amongst the 'débarras', in the desperate movement towards something not yet seen. It is continually a test within regions of separation such as sleep, the mine, the canal, and even the mirror.

The 'trois jeunes filles qui essaient de sourire' (EC 33) experience a similar solitude and separation on their road towards 'la plus haute flamme'. Their search is also for 'l'embrasement' and 'l'illumination' or as

the poem's title has it, 'La plus haute flamme par le défi'.

Yet the piercing vision verse is supposed to possess, is unable to follow them beyond a certain point. The description of their adventure becomes pure conjecture :

> Par quelles contrées seront-elles passées,
> (quelles étapes?
> Approchent-elles? Mais chacune qu'espère-t-elle?
> Palpitent d'obscures lueurs les lointains
> (violents
> et partout leur désert.
> L'étranger qui les aurait comblées
> s'il les a croisées n'aura rien aperçu...
> Et peut-être se sont-elles quittées, chacune
> (seule
> quêtant sa voie. Comment saurais-je,
> témoin sans nouvelles,
> ce demain qu'elles ignorent?
>
> (EC 35)

In their solitude, they each search for their own way or 'route'.However,'La voie' is phonetically identical to 'la voix', the voice for which the poet is constantly searching, and through which the poem comes into being.

Both 'voie' and 'voix' are areas of intense solitude which are paradoxically directed towards its negation in an essential contact. This assertion unbalances the poet's perspective.He is no longer able to maintain a distantiated,impersonal form, and allows his uncertainty, with regard to a subject-matter which has now become almost autonomous, to come to the fore.

He is 'témoin sans nouvelles', himself separated

from what takes place for the young girls. There are countercurrents and currents within this stanza which disclose its axis as the effect of solitude. The opening idea of the lands through which they pass ('par quelles contrées') although it appears to keep them together as a group, introduces a notion of vastness which later lines develop.

'Les lointains' expands on the poem's horizon and the vagueness of the road they are on since it uncentres it by concentrating, however momentarily, on something distant from it, which fundamentally puts it into question. Things that are distant always have the feel of the other and the unobtainable. They draw the solitary wanderer on her quest.

'La voie' works on similar spatial conceptions. It suggests distance, but a clear path in the expanse as opposed to the indeterminate 'lointain' or 'les contrées'. It is possessed by the girls individually: 'sa voie', and becomes almost an extension of themselves into space. It narrows down the perspective of solitude to the single route, whereas 'leur désert' stands as an opening and as an emotive description of their situation in space. It also is possessed by them and emotionally connotes the strongest facets of solitude and desolation.

Not only is there distance, a vague land, also there is an unlivable environment which verges on no-

thingness. The desert is almost a void, a place without reference-points or directions, negating the possibility of 'une voie'. Since it belongs to the girls, it is almost within them, the void and inimical space of their own being which is 'partout', unpositionable and at the same time denying them any position. Similar to this is the vague 'demain', a part of time which swallows the lone individual in a similar manner to the swallowing of the desert. Time also has its 'voies' and the girls become separated within it too. 'Contrées', 'lointains', 'désert', 'sa voie', 'ce demain'; the girls are embarked into a world which absorbs them as a vacuum might do.

'Lointains' and 'désert' also connote a state of separation and differentiation. This aspect of the poem is taken up in other images, obscurity 'd'obscures lueurs', implies an opacity and density which separates them from a vision. In effect it qualifies and distorts 'les lueurs', the light or flame for which they search.

The notion of violence in 'lointains violents' has a similar effect, alluding to some way in which the distance disrupts the girl's world. For it personifies the distance, has it acting or posturing autonomously and in a negative way. The idea that 'les lointains' are in some way inviting, is tempered by this uncontrolled force.

'L'étranger' appears from nowhere in this evocation of barren landscape. The term implies an estranged and partly separate personality, having had no previous contact with those he meets. 'L'étranger' is also 'l'autre' or 'le tout autre', that which is furthest from us, and which often repels. Yet, in this word is the poem's point of imbalance, for 'L'étranger... les aurait comblées/ s'il les a croisées.' Not only is it possible that he meets them, but, in a denial of separation and of the void which prevails, he fulfils them in some arcane way.

At this point in the stanza a tension occurs between the dialectically opposed notions of meeting in 'croisées', and separation in 'quittées'. In the most separate and distantiated being 'l'étranger' there is a point of essential and fulfilling contact, expressed in terms of the chance meeting on a road: 'croiser', juxtaposed with possibility of separation: 'elles se sont quittées'.

The poem explores these tensions in the image of wandering young girls who are delicate and exposed to the world's ambivalence. Their solitary and separated state is enforced by the repetition of 'chacune' within the stanza, and the concatenation 'quittées, chacune seule'. Differentiation is intensified in language. Their very solitude as a group is extended further.

This new, exacerbated solitude seems also to be

an alternative possibility to the fulfilment in meeting with 'l'étranger'. It conflicts with the tentative question 'Approchent elles?' where the possibility of communication arises and is echoed in the stanza; for example, light, though it is 'lueurs obscures' and consequently subject to laws of separation and ambivalence, is yet able to palpitate, to produce a movement against a vacuuous background which implies some kind of communication, however obscure. 'Palpiter' is an expression usually used of animals or the human heart. The light, by a metaphorical transposition, takes on a warm, animated quality. It is almost something living which leaves its trace on the distance, and contrasts with 'lointains violents'.

The stranger, who seems to enter into contact is, on the other hand, deprived of vision, of any visual perception of how the girls are '(il) n'aura rien aperçu'. His character is further thrust into ambivalence, for the stanza and its relation to solitude, also rests on this ability to communicate and perceive. Because he fails to perceive them the fulfilment he might have given remains conditional. The poet is also deprived of a communicating vision 'témoin sans nouvelles', and his description of himself is conflicting and ironic.

Although all his attributes deny that function, he remains the witness in an obscure way perceiving

and revealing the conditions of the girls' existence. Finally, 'la voie' is at once a way of communication: 'une voie de communication', a way towards contact with something, similar to'la voix', but also to the present tense of 'voir', 'il voit'. This word brings together several of the strands laid out so far: sight, light, the witness, communication. In the solitude of the young girls, possibly separated, possibly meeting the stranger, these factors play an important role. They interact within the single image of 'chacune seule quêtant sa voie', a development in solitude which attempts to deny solitude.

La route & enclosure

The knights in the clearing experience the distance which separates them from the rest of humanity, not only in terms of the forest and the lost clearing. It is also potentially linked with their desire to create new roads and passageways. The 'passage' or 'la trace', it must be recalled, are metaphors for the development of the poem. The word 'tramer' may be compared with the way 'ma vie morte' becomes 'mon entrave ardemment ourdie' (RM I48). This word implies a more definable end 'la trame' :

> Nous nous tenons à l'écart du gros de la troupe.
> Des seigneurs,si nous le sommes, sur les confins.
> Volontaires à tramer des chemins.
> (EC 27)

The road is a conscious creation, it does not fit into the single aim of consciousness, however, which is contact with the Other. Its development occurs in separation: 'à l'écart','sur les confins'. Once again, the road figures not, as is usually the case, a sign of communication and direction. Its sense is suspended. The riders produce their roads in proud isolation and solitude, willfully weaving them like an abstract work of art held in suspense. Their state appears voluntary, yet they are caught within its circular path. Their quest is nothing but :

> le cheminement, comme d'une armée assiégée,
> dans les cercles d'un parcours sans mémoire.
>
> (Ibid)

Movement, the road, and their perceptions, are eliptical and enclosed, despite the fundamentally outward nature of 'un cheminement'. Isolation and solitude are not only factors enforced by the notion of siege, they are necessitated by it. As 'assiégés' they must maintain the barrier between themselves and contact for self-protection, actively defeating the purpose of their quest and their will.

However, the pathway, 'le chemin' should procure meeting. Here 'le chemin' is reduced to a 'parcours sans mémoire'. No part of the pathway can be remembered. Its circularity is not even perceived in a memory of previous experience. It is a violent and stultifying enclosure of 'la route', similar in its stagnancy to

the canal or 'l'entrave'. The perspective is ironic in these lines, since, although he is 'sans mémoire' on his 'parcours' (imperative of poetic production) and therefore unconscious of its circularity, the poet is able to conjecture that it is so 'Non sans un sourire peut-être' (EC 26).

Beyond all possibility of contact, there remains only the barren, ironic knowledge of one's own subjection to the dictates of 'la route' and its enclosure. Solitude and separation force the poem into an ironic mood; like the human psyche it contains multiple personalities which may surface. It may distantiate itself from these although they are aspects of the poet himself, and address them in the 'tu' form. Consequently, in the multiplications of the poem's personæ, the poet addresses himself in an ironic tone during a moment of exaltation :

> — Ah! Tu t'es vu faire, tu te vois venir.
> Cette fois tu t'es souri sans feintise.
> Tu ne demanderais pas mieux. Tu as dit oui.
> Tu la remercies d'être là parce que tu l'aimes.
> Tu le croyais.
>
> (LSF IOO)

The poem's field is fairly restricted here, suggesting it is an interior kind of castigation. This effect is achieved by a rhythmic repetition of reflexive verbs using 'tu' and the predominance of that pronoun in these lines. Also implying interiority is the way lines such as 'Tu ne dema-

nderais pas mieux'seem to only half fit the given context, and may therefore be considered as expressions of some personal sentiment whose comprehension is taken for granted.

The poet destroys his own belief in the possibility of communication, revealing a self-deception: 'tu te vois venir'. All is undermined by the final 'tu le croyais'. In the following stanza, the poem broadens its perspective to include 'eux deux' in a similar unificatory movement of contact and passion to that noted earlier (above) the poem seems to move away from enclosure within the reflexive 'tu' :

> A eux deux ils baisent la terre maternelle.
> A eux deux l'unique les remplace et les émerveille.
> / ... /
> A eux deux l'unique toison blanchit.
>
> (Ibid)

The two lovers, potentially separated, are brought together in an exalted movement based on 'l'unique', and an intensifying repetition. In the second and third of the lines quoted, the adverbial force of 'A eux deux' is lost. It enters into a less rigorously grammatical and logical relation with the verb action.

The phrase may be taken in two ways: I/ focusing on the juxtaposition of 'à eux deux' and 'l'unique', the compression which brings two separated beings together is emphasised. 2/ The alternative approach,

accepting the whole sentence as a continuation of the model: adverb/ subject/ verb-object, means that the perception is disturbed by language.

There is a breach of syntax between 'à eux deux' and 'l'unique'. The adverb seems to float in uneasy suspension. In each of the lines this development is exacerbated. In the second 'à eux deux' is a doubling of the subject pronoun 'les' with adverbial force. In the last line, it is almost totally divorced from the sense and grammatical structure of the words: 'l'unique toison blanchit'. i.e. It is impossible to 'blanchir à quelqu'un' or 'à quelque chose'.

The reader's mind struggles to place the adverb-phrase 'à eux deux' in some clear relation to the action, but cannot. Language begins to immitate the intangible, and the fleece is experienced via the poem as unobtainable unity.

The notion of exalted unity is already ambiguous then, difficult to situate within normal language or ideas. The poem responds with notions of solitude and stifling enclosure :

> — Mais tu es seul. Ta barbe à l'intérieur,
> elle t'étouffe, elle t'inonde.
>
> (LSF IOI)

The beard, physical excressence of the self, is inverted. It almost figures as an ironic image of 'la toison'. No longer the joining of two

into uniqueness, it has become an inimical, strangling force. The stanza's following lines emphasise its mocking nature in the statement 'tu ricanes', and 'va donc bien rire avec les rats' (LSF IOI) for the beard is'intérieur', a stifling laughter and not the free flow of liberal hilarity. Solitude produces this internicine growth. The ironic view of the self and mocking laughter. In 'L'étape' there is a similar false exaltation, which evokes an oasis of positive images amongst the desperate forms emerging from the forest :

> Je m'ouvre dans le flux, je m'exhausse dans le (chant:
> Je délie et je ploie. Au rythme triomphal
> je suis libre.
>
> (EC I6)

Language, 'le chant', opening, flow, ascension, freedom; these lines contain a strong element of directed energy. 'Je délie et je ploie': these are the movements of the natural world, creating and manipulating the substance of reality. The poet declares himself a manipulating force. The song integrates him into the flood of universal power without bounds or restrictions. There are no siege-walls no limit to the clearing. Unity is possible in the drive towards universal liberty.

Yet this all-embracing dynamic results in a cool appraisal of the situation in the stark light of consciousness when the intoxicating possibilities of open-

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ness abruptly cease :

> Rien de moins que tout j'étreignis. O délire!
> Mais c'était bien moi seul à la fin, en allée
> cette sphère fauve si lointaine
> où le monde avec moi s'émietta, gémit.
> Je ne suis pas si fort à étinceler suspendu.
> Par l'oblique sentier me voici à nouveau
> hostilement soumis.
>
> (EC I6)

Sober recognition of his delirious effort is followed by the notion of solitude 'moi seul à la fin'. The self remains in the sort of solipsistic agony described at the beginning of this section. Disintegration of the self signifies a total disintegration of the world, and of the word into inarticulate sound 'le monde avec moi s'émietta, gémit'.

The intense contact of the embrace is replaced by a perceptual impression of great distance and dissociation. The road's rôle as 'voie de communication' is again reversed. Although 'en allée' does not directly refer to the words road, path or track, the poetic evocation of a keenly experienced relapse into solitude has drawn from the poet's stock of language an expression which contains a word which in certain circumstances may refer to a particular kind of pathway, and recalls the visual image or form of a route.

The star again appears in relation to a road-image, and induces notions of death in the word 'suspendre'. The poem begins to revolve, once again, about images of enclosure and directed movement generated

by an acute consciousness of solitude and separation from an all-embracing energy.

The poet has overreached himself. 'Le chant' has become 'le gémissement', barely audible through the throat's restricted passage, and a sign of torture. The path ('le passage') does not permit free movement, but is a 'sentier', which forces the poet into submission.

Separated from all else, perceiving only his own existence in a concentrated perspective, the poet's desperation and intuition of death is repeatedly expressed in terms of path, road or route, circular movement and restriction, a star which is unobtainable and which intimated the possibility of suicide in the resemblance 'se pendre' - 'suspendre'.

Within the poem the road undeniably goes through a process of alteration. It is no longer indifferent within the cosmos set up by the poem. It cleaves to certain ideas. For the poem itself is 'la trace', 'le passage', the laying out of a way towards something, through fierce struggle; the production of a way which others may follow. Yet its failure is the failure of this road peculiar to the poem.

Between the two halves of the metaphor: poem - road, there is friction, distance, difference. Consequently, the road is not in a clear relationship with the poem: 'par l'oblique sentier me voici'. The path

conjures up the poet and his desperation. In fact it leads him to this hopeless condition and, by its very circularity produces it.

The self is also involved with routes, roads, and senses the road as something within. As with the poem, the self follows its own traces, discovers its own hinterland. These traces, this roadway towards something which seems to figure an escape, are, however, marked by enclosure and an incapacity to reach beyond, which intuitively presents the poetic force of separation and solitude as powerful sentiments often holding back the word or the thrust of the poem.

Solitude & Enclosure

It has already been discussed how the road and the poem are subject to a solipsistic nightmare due to the solitude which governs the poet's perception. In such cases a tension arises between the potential expansiveness of the road and an enclosing, restricting power. The notion of a limited space is one which haunts poets like a general theme drawn from the collective subconscious. The fact that through poetry men attempt to penetrate a veil of habitual appearances may be a conditioning factor in this. Even a positive space is subject to distortion and a negative habituation which make it the worthless land of solitude :

Des pays inconnus et bientôt

rien de plus que l'ordinaire train des renco-
(ntres,
des gestes déjà clos. De nouveau
tables quittées, départs confondus, tout se
(mêle.
S'il n'est d'autre patrie que sous les nuages
quel mérite à porter au compte
de la solitude en avant.

(EC I9)

The homeland, 'la patrie', in its limitation to a certain dimension 'sous' is negative , and renders the negativity of solitude more perceptible. Although the syntax in the last two lines would probably read: 'quel mérite à porter en avant au compte de la solitude', the final statement: 'en avant', almost works as an imperative, expressing the necessary continuation of poetic effort in spite of the lack of positive values to solitude.

The lands from which he would escape are those of ambivalent enclosure, where the opening and expansive renewal impied in meeting becomes forced habit and nothing more[I] 'rien de plus que l'ordinaire train des rencontres'.

'Le train' suggests repetition and a near circular form. This pattern is reinforced by the vision of 'des gestes déjà clos', which it is difficult to analyse adequately. Gestures are forms of communication on a certain level. Because they are action and

I/ The words 'rien de plus que...' operate a further restriction on a grammatical level.

physical appearance in the human body, their closure is experienced more intensely. The gesture is not finished. Like the road it is half way to its end, tantalisingly held in suspension for both the poet and 'les cavaliers'. It is closed already even before interpretation. In this fashion, the feeling one gets of interminable suspension in the image of 'la clairière'; the clearing which is an opening in vegetation, a spilling out of the poem into language, but also an enclosure; all these aspects are reproduced and intensified in relation to the dominant notion of solitude and separation.

In 'L'étape' you constantly have the idea that Frénaud is describing something else whilst at the same time the poem remains focused on the journey and quest of atemporal or anachronistic knights. The enclosure and solitude of a homeland emptied of all significance acts as a cynosure for metaphorical possibilities, 'le pays inconnu ' or 'la patrie sous les nuages' may point allusively to the relationship the poet (or 'les cavaliers') has with woman. In the same poem there is a clear linking of land and woman:'Blond sur blond, oh! la femme, tous les champs moissonnées.' (Ibid). In this case the agony of solitude and enclosure would be a poetic expression of sexual anguish.

With a poet like Frénaud, large themes such as enclosure and solitude give onto several levels of in-

terpretation. The poet's area of experience is narrowed down dramatically, as one would expect in a case of extreme separation. Within the ultimate solitude of the self, only the poet's own physical form and intensely negative forces are experienced.

Arguably this can also be seen in 'L'étape' when the clearing is considered as a metaphor of the self , and the multiple characters as manifestations of a multi-levelled psyche, in a crushing realisation of the self's presence akin to that in 'Une saison en enfer' by Rimbaud, where escape from the all-enclosing sensation of one's own form is found to be impossible.

Enclosure, in this sense, is closely associated with the desire for 'un heureux anéantissement'. Enclosed within the solitary boundaries of himself, the poet is unable to enter into a unity which is self-loss :

> Je suis là dans la même peau,
> poitrine sans poitrine jointe,
> seul en moi-même divisé,
> sans accès à l'unité bleue.
>
> (IP 210)

The realisation of solitude which permits only contact with the divided layers of the poet's ego, spans both the physical and abstract: the desire for contact with 'une poitrine jointe', or to enter into 'une autre peau', and the need to penetrate some uncertain blue unity.

There is something bizarre about the statement 'je suis là' as if at other times, the status of the poet's presence within what he says can be brought into doubt. It suggests a sudden, instantaneous concentration on his own dilemma apart from that of 'l'amour', 'le Noël interdit', or other external factors. The poem's field is perceptibly narrowed in this moment when 'plus rien ne fait foi' (Ibid) when the world and its values become insecure and cease to offer a firm footing. Given this desperate solitude which verges on the philosophical notion of 'l'absurde', the cyclic form which we saw the poem assume earlier reasserts itself: 'Il faut s'efforcer/ sur les chemins du vain espoir.' (Ibid).

The poet is enclosed within his physical form, his own being or within a given space whose connotations are extremely negative. The flow of poetic energy or of mystical force implied in 'l'être' or 'l'unité' is denied.

Solitude and the separation it implies, revert the poem to its cyclic and enclosed form in a more obvious way than did the route-image. The sudden reappraisal 'Je suis là' brings us back to the initial moment of writing, or of realisation that one is a single individual marking down messages which one hopes come from some transcendental source unifying all men in the same message.

In 'Je suis là' as readers we recognise our initial perception that we are reading somebody else. This area of solitude paradoxically sensitises the reader to the act of communication within the poem. The poet is there. We are reading him and not some anonymous text which writes itself.

Enclosure & Voice

From within the solipsistic confines of solitude the poet attempts to communicate with something beyond the perception of himself and his environs. In terms of the images and situations evoked in poems allusions to language are placed in conjunction with enclosure and separation.

'La femme qui parle', who appears repeatedly in Frénaud's poetry, when she is in a situation of loneliness and agrophobia, forces into proximity the image of a besieged town and of the lips of men, as though both implied areas of perilous contact. She is obsessed with the acquisition of 'un chez moi', a private place, similar to the homeland in the Burgundy countryside which Frénaud views with nostalgia. Yet this is parallelled by the negative town-under-siege which she conceives of as her own solitude :

La solitude garde la ville avec son fusil.

/...

Prenez les lèvres, n'approchez pas du cœur des
(hommes.

(RM 62)

The lips, sign of speech and language, are preferred to the deeper contact with 'le cœur ' which implies a more disruptive, less restrained penetration into the other and a breakdown of separation and solitude. The taking of men's lips appears to maintain the siege situation of total separateness. The lip is a threshold, one may compare it with the poetic impact in images of 'le seuil' which often occur in Frénaud's poetry and in that of contemporaries.

At this threshold there is an accumulation of potential energy and a feeling of possible accession to something transcendental. Yet in this realm of solitude these connotations break down and the lip, edge of the human interior, the point at which language itself is produced, equally signifies that one is holding back, wary of any joining together.

The point of communication then breaks down. Solitude is consolidated, and the poem takes on a tone of resignation 'On prend goût à ces profits et pertes' (Ibid) and most crushingly: 'Tant pis, j'aime ça', which suggests an annihilation occurs not through clear or inspired insight, but in a sulky denial.

On the enormous quest of 'le Roi Mage' a similar perception of the nexus 'voix'-'clôture'-'foule'-'sol-

itude' is brought forward. The straining for ultimate communion has as consequence only the agonising continuation on a violent road. There is a progressive enclosure which envelops the communicative capacity of the crowd and seems to neutralise it, moving ever closer towards the ultimate poetic statement of personal solitude. The magus advances :

> dans les champs clos déserts où bruissent mes
> (faux pas,
> parmi les foules perdues dans les transports de
> (mes songes.

(RM I38)

The locative adverbs 'dans' and 'parmi' which predominate here, and give to the verse a strong cadence, tend to be containing in their connotation, compressing one perception into another. Due to this structure there is a telescoping effect whereby the more concrete 'champs clos' is almost slotted into the abstract 'transports de mes songes'. This suggests a weakening as the verse progresses; not directional movement, but sliding from one level to another.

The fields in which he wanders, are not simply closed, restricted in terms of extent, they are emphatically 'désert', restricted in content, and the most audible sound ('bruissement') of his fumbling acts has no hearer. By pinpointing his inability to act without 'faux pas' he demeans his attempts to reach the ideal by progression.

The very crowds of the second line are lost within his daydreams, 'les songes' that seem to reiterate the self-abasement of 'faux pas'. The daydream is a solitary and totally subjective activity, difficult to communicate, and enforcing the interdiction of any passage from the interior subject into the external world of others.

Time forms another line that brings home to the wanderer the picture of this barrier which mocks him. It is an ultimate restricting factor for the artist, prevents his communication in poetry from reaching the great transcendence (or dispersal) he inevitably hopes for. This perception of the work's limitation is concomitant with recognition of one's own personal limitation in mortality :

> Quel ange me vainc encore où je saurais confondre
> ma plus haute stature?
> C'est l'écho de mon cri dans le futur qui m'appelle.
> Je ne suis que de cette heure d'ici. Je suis seul.
> Mes fanaux sont trop courts.
> La grande nature ne frémit guère dans mon rêve.
>
> (RM I38)

The poet's effort is reduced to the contours of a futile dream in which no communication is drawn from the all-embracing nature which he would adopt as the panorama his view audaciously attempts to encompass. Within this version of 'la nature', self-loss is sought 'confondre ma...', a form of

self-annihilation, or mingling of self and other,which is ultimately communication and destruction of the isolating barriers of solitude.

The artist searches for ever higher beings (i.e. 'l'ange') into whom this communicative aspect can be immersed. Yet there is no angel, no elevation,only the illusion of self agrandisement in the future: 'l'écho de mon cri dans le futur'.

The poem resuscitates an image from Baudelaire's 'Les phares'; the illumination from past great artists piercing through time into the spiritual life of the present. Solitude — the separation of self from other which dogs the poem in all its manifestations — it is which seems to hold back the light, thereby stultifying nature into unresponsiveness, 'Je ne suis que de cette heure d'ici'. But enclosure within a specific temporal line is totally inescapable. The poem, in its cry, would be a challenge to this law of nature as much as to any other.

The structure of these lines is equally revelatory. The apperception of solitude and incommunication is flanked on either side by possessive phrases placed in relief: 'ma plus haute stature' and 'Mes fanaux sont trop courts'. The changes made from the I966 edition to the latest one perhaps illustrate how a specific effect is intended, since in the earlier, 'ma plus haute stature' constitutes a line of the stanza

beginning at the far left of the page; the change in the fourth line: 'Je suis seul. Nos fanaux sont trop courts' (I966) where a first person plural possessive is used instead of the singular. In altering towards the singular Frénaud develops these lines in the direction of greater personal rstriction. The I977 version also makes evident play on the contrast between 'plus haute' and 'trop courts', the disparity and tension between the extent of the undertaking and its failure.

It is not improbable to surmise that another deep perception of limitation and solitude in 'Je suis seul', through its proximity alters the second possessive phrase from the exalted 'haute stature' to frustrating realisation of the poet's waxing strength.

The desire that nature should 'frémir' expressed in the culminating line, alters the tone again to a more modest aspiration. Contrasting with 'vaincre', 'confondre', 'écho', 'cri', 'appelle', it implies a delicate and barely perceptible message emanating from an enormous source. The connotations of 'frémir' place it in the same category as 'bruissement de mes faux pas', the latter is oriented more clearly towards the audible nature of a weak rubbing movement, the former focuses acutely on physical shivering. Their verb form is also parallel. This suggests a dialectic between all embracing communication ('les transports' — 'mon

cri') and the weaker, barely audible message of the poem. Although he continues to advance within enclosure: 'Au fracas des étapes croulantes de l'espérance' (RM I38) the message of the poem is 'diminuendo', fading at each of the stages in this stanza.

The enclosure of solitude induces a kind of strangulation. The poet's own voice is weakened,if not completely silenced, by this state of isolation. But, strangely, the world is also rendered dumb by the poet's internal sensing of his predicament. Paradoxically, the poem which continues to explore such areas of the poetic psyche, is a communication and strains towards some vibration of the natural world. The poet's perception of his agonising predicament in extreme separation is predominantly linked with the problem of language and communication. The word of the poem is either too strong or too weak, 'bruissement' or 'cri'. It is subject to imprisonment within time and the process of decay, incomprehension. Possibly no 'juste mesure' between near-silence and violent exclamation is seen as possible precisely because the poem strains to overreach itself in this way in its attempt to deny time and enclosure. Finally, enclosure and solitude are necessary for the poem's existence on the purely pragmatic level: there can only ever be one voice, despite clever tricks with pronouns. In his creation the poet is alone and haunted by the fear

that in the act of communication this loneliness may continue. Thus he attempts to open up the arena by including 'la nature', 'l'automne', 'les arbres', 'les foules', a panoramic multiplicity which, when he realises the futility of his move, serves only to intensify the original perception; hence, perhaps, the many references Frénaud makes to 'l'écho' and 'la réverbération.'

The problem of poem as communication runs as a thread through the discussion on solitude. The poet repeatedly attempts to force his creation towards the limits of expression. Yet the epiphany through language which is expected rarely occurs within the context of solitude and separation. The image of 'la route' is a prime example of this.

The road, 'la trace', 'le sentier', is often used as an image for the poem's progress and articulation. It is on the quest along a given road that some dazzling revelation is expected which always fails to materialise.

The road is also important in the expression 'bonne continuation, bonne route', which remains elusive. Equally this highlights for us the circular nature of the poetic impulse briefly discussed in the last chapter.

Our discussion, in outlining this single aspect of Frénaud's poetry, moves from almost objective, external observation of 'les solitaires' through 'nous seuls' where the speaker is directly involved in solitude paradoxically through the group, and finally to recognition of the isolated self 'Je suis seul', which is perhaps the most emotionally powerful of expressions, poetically closest to the open wound which is poetic separation.

Certainly, it is striking to note how the short sketch of this emotionally distressing state affects the perceptions which precede it or come in its wake. It seems to dictate the main themes which have so far been discussed: enclosure, which is exacerbated by the solitary state and is a corollary of a loss of contact or of vitiated contact as in 'prenez les lèvres n'approchez pas du cœur'; lack of communication, a theme which reflects directly on the poem, and, like the poet turning his attention to his own self, reveals its multiple layers, and more acutely renders its crises.

Time also forms barriers which can be compared with enclosure on a spatial level. Temporal restriction has more menacing overtones, since it forms the ultimate trap for the poet who would go beyond into an all-embracing form of Nirvana, which he knows does not exist, but which he desires.

Time is linked with the stultifying forms of habituation and perseverence which are the lot of solitary man. It denies language the transcendence and multi-temporal communication I which he tries to impart to the poem.

Death is continually associated with descriptions where solitude prevails. It is a temptation for the poet in the desperation his loneliness causes. Barrenness and mortality are metaphorically present in the road image which includes a movement in the direction of some ultimate light of communion and self transcendence. Yet it only makes the reader aware of death's prevalence (especially in 'La noce noire').

The problem of meaning within solitude outlined in our introduction is attacked at several points in the discussion. Accepting vocal expression, or sound, as metaphors for meaningful communication with the external world, the perception of personal solitude within the poem brings on images of disrupted sound:'gémissement', 'grondement', 'frémissement', 'bruissement'.

In these cases of unbearable separation there is rarely mention of the harmony implied in 'la voix','ma voix' etc. Although 'la voix fêlée' is a negative and absurdist orientation of the poet's ability to

I/ Which would consist in being always valid, constantly able to communicate the epiphany of poetic unity.

communicate, it is not relevant to the solipsistic area into which the poet's concepts seem to be plunged when solitude is the dominant condition. Also noticeable is an accompanying disruption of the world : 'le monde avec moi s'émietta, gémit' (EC I6), which seems to widen the consequences of individual solitary agony onto a total scale. This, we assume, arises under a solipsistic point of view.

Le don

The act, or the poetic image of giving is on a different level from that of excruciating solitude which haunts the poet. The simplicity of the gift is always a possibility despite the absence of true contact with 'l'autre', and it remains unhampered by the never ending agony of separation.

The poetic word may be considered in Frénaud's poems as ultimately incapable of the step towards that which is hidden, towards spiritual communion or loss of self within 'l'être'. Yet it continues to operate as 'un don' in the sense that it is expressed with the intention of communicating itself to others, and of revealing the massive potential within language which everyday usage may obscure.

The act of giving, in terms of the poetic universe, is equally a way of coming to terms with the self. In a phrase, or should we say a syllogism, which is almost a parody of the Cartesian tenet, Frénaud lays down the conditions for his own existence : 'Je donne et je reçois, je donne; ainsi je suis.' (IP I82). Why does the poem 'La lumière de l'amour' at this point lapse into an almost mathematical statement of relationships, as though its subject could be covered in the manner of solid equations? In terms of the poem's development it may be that Frénaud searches for a more satisfying point of orientation; as would seem

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to be the case at several points where Roman type is replaced by italic, thereby marking a clearer separation of a certain body of poetic material which is differentiated, selected, laid apart from the 'amorphous mass' that the words of the rest of the poems would in that case represent. However, the equation: giving = a firm basis for existence, remains almost solely at the level of a paradigm, within the oasis of italic print.

I

The flux which is developed by the whole poem, although it remains without clear orientation, presents repeated denials of the 'theory for life' that giving may represent. What from one point of view was a mathematical certainty, from another (yet always within the same poem) dissolves into pessimistic questioning :

> Qu'avais-je su prendre? Qu'ai je donné à qui
> Que pouvais-tu recevoir, qui avait voie différente,
> formée pour t'avancer
> par les feuillages d'un jardin enorgueilli?
>
> (IP I83)

In this quotation all the force of the act of giving is intentional. The object which is given must be known, equally important is that the act be reciprocal.

On the general level, the act of giving may be

I/ ie Between the fixed point of orientation such as the formula for existence, and a denial that any such point can exist; or between italic and Roman type.

considered as something wholly superfluous in that it often has a ritual side to it. Giving bestows upon the objects given a new meaning which is again superfluous. They are suddenly suffused with affective intentions. Consequently it is possible to say that giving has the added power of alteration. In the extract from the poem dominated by the theme of love as light, however, this superfluous nature of the gift is suppressed. The question is of knowing precisely what has been given, if anything at all.

Yet at the same time in this concentration on the object in and for itself, the thing given has potentially assumed greater importance than it might otherwise have had. The extract develops towards focus not on the object but aspects of its putative relationship with the poet. So that the object ceases to be the gift and becomes the way in which the poet is affected. The notion of affective exchange, while it is only just present in 'Qu'avais-je su prendre' etc, is totally vitiated in the final image of 'un jardin enorgueilli', with its implications of impairing pride.

The act, or potential act, of giving, then, is another polarisation of the poetic disaster of separation and the attempt to overcome this fundamental of the human condition.

Not only is it that the act of giving is marked by a sort of internalised questioning, so that it

becomes a question in itself, but it is also shot through with negativity. The time of Christmas, an outstanding sign which bears the image of giving for the poet, is negated in an intensely personal sense in the poem 'Noël interdit'.

Festivity, besides enabling the poet, when he is permitted the joy of taking part in it, to accede to areas of experience otherwise unattainable, tantalisingly presents the possibility of a communion between Men and the quasi-sacred expressed in the superfluity of their actions, along with the act of multiple giving. The initial act of the Rois Mages, so superfluous in that it bestows riches unfitting to the immediate needs of the threatened infant, is re-enacted in a personalised form.

For the poet, the experience of Christmas is essentially that of exchange. Without this the festivity is not only prohibited, it is effectively impossible :

> A soi seul, il n'est pas de fête.
> Nuit enfantine, feu enfantin,
> donateur de rien à moi-même.
>
> (IP 209)

The possible act of giving is caught within a cross-web of negative references : 'Nuit', 'feu', 'rien', the circularity of giving to oneself. The word 'feu' is somewhat ambiguous in that it can signify either the fact of being dead or the

positive denotation of a festive fire, potentially the fire of youth. In its parallel with 'Nuit enfantine', this double sense is encouraged. Night time is predominantly that of the festival, but it is equally strong in its associations with death.

Childhood innocence and energy then, are confused in the way the poet expresses them. In the concepts language implies childhood and death are intermingled. One might almost be tempted to state that the act of giving was at the centre of a cosmic picture in this poem.

For Frénaud childhood often has this myth-founding quality. For example, the original experience of something existing beneath the ground in Montceau-les-Mines, the negative native mining town, may be seen to activate a series of questions and aesthetic perceptions in the poet's later life. Consequently, the act of giving is transformed in the poem into one of the basic myths of childhood.

The infant-poet fails in his attempt to break down with the gift what is perceived as a responseless world. Usually the child receives gifts at Christmas, yet here the whole custom of giving to children is disrupted and points to the central problem of Frénaud's poetry, that of separation.

Love too may be treated in the poem under the guise of a 'fête', a moment of common joy when ex-

change and communication seem possible.

La fête et le don

'Revenu du désert', the poet senses a fulness and openness in the world at the sudden possibility of love. The images evoked by this return, suggestive of virginity and opening, also link with the festival 'Noël' and the giving of both self and gifts :

> Revenu du désert,
> me tenant agrippé
> au bord du renouveau
> et voici, tout à coup
> du repos qui console
> à ma joie débordée,
> que scintille frileux,
> ô matin, ô bonté,
> la dentelle et les fleurs,
> Noël aubépine blancheur,
> mon amour.
>
> (RM 24)

The sudden appearance of something, a sparkling, the strange linking together of phenomena; these suggest a re-ordering of experience via the potency of the gift of love.

'Débordée' connotes an almost intuitive experience of fulness, a sudden receiving on the part of the poet which corresponds to an equally excessive giving. This intuition is intensified by juxtaposition of various strangely related things and sensations : 'scintille frileux', 'Noël aubépine blancheur,/ mon amour'. The overall impression of light, blossoming (which, of course, implies opening) sensitivity, both

adduces the notion of festival, and creates the sensation of giving, not via obvious rational associations such as the hand image ('la main') or the inheritor ('hæres') which will be discussed later, but by means of things that can be emotionally linked with giving or outpouring if the poet wishes this to happen. And it seems he does, since the poem continues to develop this idea of an excessive abundance :

> Le sourire de la plénitude
> secrète comme la colombe,
> seules les caresses furtives
> avec les mains de la neige.
>
> (RM 24)

Images of giving, contact and sensitivity are placed together in an uncertain relationship where aspects of their 'extra meanings' or connotations are set-off and highlighted by their relationship to other words; the whiteness of 'colombe' reacts with that of 'la neige' so that its latent 'fulness' is mitigated by an impression of coolness and purity.

Snow clothes things rather than revealing them, the 'hands of snow', almost a visual description of the dove are, then, somehow holding back whilst at the same time they are potential givers.

The smile suggests contact and a signal which is given of an expansive emotional state, yet plenitude is here qualified as secret and therefore more valuable; above all, however, it is withheld.

The 'caresse', like the smile, is contact, giving of the self, and a signal. It also is restraint since it is 'furtive'. It is a possible plenitude which resists the poetic outburst one might expect. The ways in which these images are able to interact is almost representative of the tension between an expansiveness which would rip the poem apart, and restraint.

These lines may be characterised by the presence of positive and negative values:'sourire','plénitude', 'colombe', 'caresses', 'mains'. These certainly manage to evoke the festive intuition of the first stanza in its 'Noël aubépine blancheur'; and 'secrète','seules', 'furtives', 'neige', tend to figure as a toning down of the previous group.

Nevertheless, no such polarisation is made obvious in the lines quoted, so that the impression of tension is increased. This is probably due to the reading through of certain key connotations or classemes (cf Greimas) such as whiteness, sensitivity, delicacy, Christmas, which prevents one's perception of the polarised structure.

The poem does not resolve this tension,but offers an alternative to it in the internalisation of a state of separateness and the return to an all separating 'désert' :

> Mais toujours à merci
> du néant qui m'entraîne
> à chercher sous l'écaille

/...

ce qu'il faut pour nourrir
à l'étal de ma vie
cette angoisse,
je retourne au désert,
emportant avec moi
le sel noir de tes larmes,
la tendresse entrouverte,
Noël, aubépine, blancheur.

(RM 25)

The essential nourrishment is here in the negative form of 'cette angoisse', that which gives strength and therefore gives the poem, is caught in a cross-web of negative images: 'le sel noir de tes larmes' is given, the tears are a pouring forth of the self and its emotional sensitivity taken to an extreme. Salt is not alimentary, it is a seasoning, an additive which decorates food in a sense. Consequently, salt may be seen as a superfluous gift in the same sense as 'la fête' and 'le don' are superfluous. Yet, as childhood was associated with malevolent and morbid night, so salt is characterised by , not its savour or usual whiteness (associating it with snow) but strange blackness which seems to emanate from the fact it is 'sel de tes larmes'.

In 'emporter' the act of taking is sensed as an opposite to the act of giving, and its connotations are set off against the sexual and yielding aspects of 'la tendresse entrouverte'. This latter image in turn points up the interpretive possibilities of 'Noël aubépine blancheur', their orientation towards the theme of giving. It must be stressed, however, that

'entrouverte' is again a retention of the fully sensual image that would have been: 'la tendresse ouverte'. Separation cannot be overcome in this poem and remains its dominant orienting form.

Celebration itself does not give a clear direction for the poem's development. 'Noël aubépine blancheur' and the images of whiteness, softness etc undergo radical transformation from being the setting for a possible epiphany and bestowal of love, to being emmeshed within images of ascetic self-questioning. 'La fête' is not allowed its full release. The poem does not succeed in becoming a festival, only in producing an intuitive perception of the festival's force and the force of giving, within the ultimately negative idea of a return to the desert of the self.

The poet as separated, unable to accept any clear and comforting vision of the world, always immersed within an agonising flux which precludes stasis, experiences this state of differentiation in the form of a refusal of a certain type of festival :

> Regards qui m'accueillez en vain,
> je ne suis pas des vôtres, assis à votre table,
> partageant le pain et le vin.
>
> (RM 32)

The almost religious gift of shared bread and wine is not a possibility for the poet, whose lucidity and devotion to a certain desperate picture of life keeps him locked within an

almost solipsistic state. Wine and bread in Frénaud's panoply of images and symbols are strongly significative of the act of giving, of exchange, the festival, and of essential nourishment. In this case, however, their preclusion is total and the act of giving or of taking is impossible. The poet is capable of a final gesture of bestowal :

> Je vais ouvrir mon secret, hommes assis:
> Je me suis inacceptable.
>
> (Ibid)

The process of opening can often be read as a potential act of giving in Frénaud's poetry. What the poet opens is not only his secret, but himself, his internalised inacceptability which he gives out in a final attempt to break down the state of separation and communicate with the ultimately anti-poetic characters since Rimbaud: 'les assis'. Evidently, Frénaud rearranges Rimbaud's image so that the meal, fundamental act of nourishment, is the focal point for its existence in the poem.

At certain points, Frénaud's poetry reaches a phase where contact and communion or communication seem imminent. The language at these points is paradoxically both exalted and subdued, resisting the temptation of excessive lyricism. The prose poems seem to figure as approaches towards whatever is driving the poem and the poet.

In 'L'auberge dans le sanctuaire' (IP I03) this point is reached, and the theme of nourishment and of 'le don' is reworked in its most mystical form. The hostelry figures as a kind of elected space for giving and exchange. There, of course, the nourishment discussed above is available. 'L'auberge' is also an orienting space within the amorphous expanse which 'la route' and 'le paysage' (the forms of 'la quête') are for the poet.

In this case there is a metaphorical relationship(one might almost say metaphorical vision) where the religious sanctuary becomes the profane 'l'auberge...' (Ibid). It is the place of physical refreshment and repose, however, which assumes the positive and most mystically powerful role. The words: 'et c'était une auberge...' imply a sudden and revelatory alteration of the way things are, this almost hallucinatory change is produced in language, and the fact actual experience does not corroborate this has no bearing for the poet, since the perception of a place of giving is what drives the poem :

> et si n'apparaissaient pas les tables rondes,
> il n'importait, c'était bien là l'étape et
> le repos gagné, la promesse.
>
> (IP I03)

The given promise is at the centre of the poet's initial experience of his elected

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place of repose, consequently the sanctuary is invested with a special power. However, the points where expectancy of nourishment and the reality of an initial experience do not coincide, are carefully described :

> Et c'est là dessous que se trouvait la crypte plus épaissement garnie par l'ombre, mais ce n'était pas la resserre d'où viendraient les vins et les mets attendus.
>
> (IP I03)

Within 'l'auberge', beneath its external appearance of abundance and repose, is the form of death in the crypt. It is hidden almost in the way a secret might be, so that the prose passage seems to progress towards its description, introduced by the intensive 'Et'. This conjunction almost suggests that this stage in the evocation is a matter of course, whilst it can also be read as the introduction to something revelatory and new.

Indeed, the place of death, of ultimate repose, is 'épaissement garnie' and consequently takes part in the same decorative play as the rest of 'le sanctuaire'. 'Garnie', the fact of being adorned, again introduces the notion of superfluity and that which is given unnecessarily.

The word 'resserre' also connotes a kind of secrecy or hidden quality to what is about to be given, so that this aura of the burried object hangs over the

description of the sanctuary, even when the poetic focus is on that which will be given in the fullest and most self-evident sense: ie 'les vins et les mets attendus .'

The most obvious and externalised symbols of nourishment and giving, namely food and wine, are to be kept in 'la resserre', a secret place, strikingly similar to a crypt, but they are not available within the intimacy of that place.

The 'sanctuaire' involves carefully divided areas where nourishment and death do not communicate, contrary to the case in many of Frénaud's other poems (eg 'La sainte face entre les baquets'). The giving of wine and food in this case, it may be possible to say is in a more affective, rather than rigorously lucid, relationship with the poet.

A contrast to this hidden meal is found in the almost orgiastic depiction of some of the war poems. Here also 'l'auberge' and its possibilities as a place of giving predominate. However, the meal is coupled with an unleashing of a flow of wine as well as of multiple connotations :

> La jeune fille a bouché les trous, le soldat
> (entre.
> Encore quelques bouteilles de vin mousseux,
> mais les bruits sont plus lourds,
> sur la crête embrumée où la neige —oh! la neige!
> que le bouchon qui part pendant qu'elle est qui
> (tremble,
> sous mon corps ou bien où? Oh! la neige et la
> (mousse
> et la mer en l'auberge! / ...

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Tonneaux débondés, vin coule et les argents, et
(la fille.
Il faut rire, et il n'est pas demain.

(RM 9I)

The inn acts not only as a place of giving, but also of interconnected meanings, there is an obvious connection between 'vin mousseux', 'la neige', the implied sexual rapport with 'la fille',and 'la mer'. There is a wild fertility and release of relationships which continues in the burst barrels and laughter, forms of outpouring at different levels.

The inn seems to take on an all-emracing character as the poet's perception of it combines these disparate things which are given: 'Oh! la neige et la mousse/ et la mer en l'auberge'. The sexual aspect of 'la fille' who gives herself in the same way a bottle is uncorked, who flows like wine, is highlighted in these lines.

In 'le sanctuaire', however, there is a more reserved tone. This experience of giving tends towards the spiritual :

> ... Je sais pourquoi j'ai toujours aimé m'asseoir aux tables. C'est le répit et le délassement enchanté du repas, le réconfort de la veillée avant de repartir. On va nous offrir ce que nous attendons. Nous demandons peu. /.../ La rumeur dont nous cherchions l'origine depuis le départ, voici qu'il nous arrive d'en surprendre un écho qui nous comble...

(IP I04)

As in the previous poem discussed

'Le départ de Dämeringen', there is a great deal of emphasis on the departure here, as though to bring to the fore the fact that any positive moment of contact obtained, when the poet ceases to feel himself'séparé' is merely a stage, 'une étape'.

It is not entirely pointless to repeat that the inn or the festival, as places or events where giving has a special significance, can only operate truly in a dialectic sense, ie in relation to a constant state of departure and quest, or of privation.

In this world, there is a clear order of responses: 'On va nous offrir ce que nous attendons', as with 'vins et mets attendus', the gift is expected, almost as though it were predetermined, given to them according to a pre-set order. The pleasure of sitting down at table is 'toujours aimé', and the causes of this are known. They revolve around a sort of mystery of repose: 'répit', 'réconfort', 'délassement enchanté du repas'. There is almost something magical about the anticipated instant of giving. The near alchemical idea of the little which replaces the whole is also introduced to characterise the gift's potency:'un écho qui nous comble' opposed to 'la rumeur', and 'Nous demandons peu'. This theme is carried over into the notion of reciprocation :

> ... Nous ne portons pas de présents.
> nous n'aurons rien à acquitter. C'est
> nous, notre richesse et notre château

/...

> fort. Nos blessures se sont mises à brûler comme des lampes et nous ont revêtus de manteaux de couleur.
>
> (IP 104)

Unlike 'les rois Mages', the poet does not need to reciprocate the gift of spiritual epiphany with his own act of donation. That which is given in 'l'auberge' is given freely, a fact accentuated by the strength of 'acquitter' with its meaning: 'to discharge a debt'. It is also significant here that the act of giving, the wealth to be given and which is the self, is also 'le château fort', one of Frénaud's primary images for the exaltation which the poem strives to build.

Gift of light and heat, the gift of the many coloured coats, also emanate from within the self via the hypersensitive opening that is 'une blessure'. The myth of the magi carrying presents is rearranged by the poet's perception of his own position and that of modern Man before an epiphany. It is internal pain, expressed in 'les blessures', which now operates as the gift, and 'l'auberge' - 'sanctuaire' is transformed into the self as 'château'.

The act of mythical creation or the foundation of the world in relation to 'donation', which we saw acted out in the above extract, is one of the fundamental themes of Frénaud's poetry, especially well evinced in his reworking of traditional mythological

material and codes.[I]

It is remarkable, however, that Frénaud does not fit neatly into this myth-making role. At times the myth becomes something frivolous, a childlike production, almost satirising the other poetic attempts to rework this area of poetic experience. It is treated in a comic way by Frénaud in 'La création du monde par Miléna'. There one finds the theme of nourishment and an opened natural order :

> Ich bin die Milch, dit Milena,
> mit dem Onkel Biberone
> und mit Onkel André.
>
> Le monde est entraînant,
> dit Milena.
> Je suis le lait, j'aspire.
> Le monde aussi c'est moi
> et la grosse maison,
> le lac et la forêt,
> la voile et le plein vent,
> le cerf volant, l'oiseau,
> l'air bleu et les sourires.

(DTD II3-II4)

The world is here characterised by its flowing nature which seems to be a corollary of its nourishing potential in 'le lait'. The child's relationship with milk is not only formal, in the sense that kids like milk; it also seems to be linked up

I/ It seems that the historian of religions Mircea Eliade (cf Le sacré et le profane) sees the role of the modern poet/artist in just such a light; that he is a producer of artefacts which rise above temporality, and permit Man to have a more generalised response to his situation.

with the poet-child's view of how the world is founded.

In a sort of enclosed picture of self and environment: 'le monde c'est moi' (that opens out to the lake and forest, then returns from these exterior places to an image of intimate communication with others in 'les sourires') there is a flow — possibly parallel to that of milk — from an intimate centre of the animal towards the Other. The epigram which precedes the poem corroborates this, and also points to its relationship with a generalised view of the universe :

> Tout s'écoule...
> Le temps est un enfant qui joue... H.
>
> (Ibid)

This quotation from Heidegger not only gives some idea of the 'direction' in which the poem should be read, but also contrasts with the poem's innocence, and increases the comic distance between the subject and the way it is treated. Joseph campbell sees such a parodying of mythological forms as an essential part of myth-creation and of the Chaman's role :

> a primitive wizard is perfectly capable not only of uttering as profound a statement concerning the relationship of man to the mystery of his being as any that will be found in the annals of higher religions, but also of wantonly producing parodies of his own mythology.
>
> (Joseph Campbell: Primitive Mythology 'The Masks of God' 54-55)

The point here is not that Frénaud the poet is also a chaman, or that he creates popular myths,but to illustrate the general nature of the tension between the comic and the grave which prevails in relation to things which approach the spiritual plane, what Campbell correctly calls 'the ineffable' (Ibid 55).

The culmination of the child Milena's outward-flowing world is in her declaration of the supreme donation, which is equally possibly a reference to the infantile game of giving things repeatedly :

> Tout joue, dit Milena.
> Et tout, je vous le donne.
>
> (DTD II4)

The act of playing, in that it is an essential part of the festival, is closely associated with the act of giving. For the child,the entire world is a game, and this aspect of play suggests the 'jeu de mots' which seems to generate a good deal of the poem on the basis of the child's name. Thus: 'die Milch', 'dit Milena', reveals an aspect of the child's world that is consacrated in language.

Giving, the nourishment which is the centre of a child's world, and the game, the name which reveals the self, are forced together in the refrain-like repetition of 'dit Milena'. The adoption of the child's voice implies a certain irony in the poem where 'la donation' is uncomplex, and the status of a donating

self is expressed without reserve or qualification : 'Ich bin die Milch', 'Je suis le lait, j'aspire'. The viewpoint of the poet's numerous and conflicting personalities produces a much less confident image of the power of 'la donation' even in 'la fête' or 'l'auberge'.

The childhood experience is of a world totally possessed by the self and which can, as a consequence, be totally given in the sense of a game, that is to say in an almost superfluous way, without direct effects of disaster or horror. In this manner, the child potentially overcomes separation or allays her experience of it.

For the adult poet, however, separation is an integral part of existence in the world. The act of giving is overshadowed by the fact that Man is unsure of what he possesses in his status of worldly living. How can the poet give when he is uncertain as to what he captures in the words of the poem.

At the heart of the most extreme and keenly experienced separation, that of being a prisoner of war, Frénaud evokes the notion of 'la fête' and 'l'offrande' as sentimental compartments annexed to a dream of escape :

> Suivrai-je ces lourds chalands par les pins et le sable,
> sur les rivières à pas lents,
> prisonnier à travers la profonde Allemagne,
> évadé.

/...

C'est la paix, c'est la joie, le vieil Empire
(s'éveille.
Les enfants jouent dans la marguerite des près.
A Havelberg, le docteur Faust j'ai rencontré,
qui chantait
dans la taverne où l'on offre à tous
le vin du Rhin sans sortilège.

(RM I02)

The experience of escape and of the festivity appear to be parallelled. The desire to escape from Germany is replaced by an image of Germany as a place where the festival and the donation can occur. The events in Havelberg, and involving Faust are a continuation of the oneiric level upon which the escape was contemplated. In that they appear in italic print they would seem also to represent a fundamentally different view of the world.

The picture of the festive scene, again unfolding in the tavern, which may continue the theme of quest and escape, involves the mitigation of certain values which operate against the offering and the idyllic moment: Faust, the tormented quester after knowledge, becomes the singer, the Rhine wine is given 'sans sortilège', a suggestion that at other moments it may have a malevolent aspect. The adult experience of a world of festivity and donation is characterised by its duality, and it is inserted within a terrible dream of escape.

Giving, and the instant of peace and joy in

which it occurs, do not remain at the simplest level of a state of the world. They are not absolute states within this poem, and even within the italicised verses they are altered, the festival changes :

> C'est la paix, c'est la joie.
> J'acquitterai les péages.
> Je n'accoterai pas les vaisseaux de haute mer.
> A Hambourg, j'ai vendu pour rien ma cargaison
> et dans la foule je danse pour les amis jusqu'à
> (l'aurore.
>
> (RM I03)

Repetition of 'c'est la paix, c'est la joie', implies an evocation of the same experience, yet here it is a question of repayment for tolls, and not of freely given wine. Ships cannot be approached on the high seas; this introduces a state of separateness into the poem. Cargo is not 'donné', but 'vendu pour rien'. The danse alone has the form of a gift. Like the attempt to escape, it is directed energy and movement, but above all it is decorative and superfluous.

The presence of crowd and of friends at the danse firmly places it in this context of an attempt to overcome separation via a festive giving of self, and one which is expressed in the present tense, suddenly altering the view one has of the poet-escapee. The closing line of the poem denies the dynamic of escape - giving - danse : 'pourquoi suis-je arrêté sur les bords froids de l'Elbe?' (RM I03). 'L'auberge' too

is a place of stasis, yet one in which an event is expected, and where separation appears to be momentarily palliated by certain affective associations which it arouses. In this way, 'l'auberge' within its complex and inwards-pointing forms such as arches and 'la remise', can contain 'le secret',the unsayable element which the wanderers believe can introduce them to 'l'anéantissement' and 'being' or 'l'unité', in which separation no longer obtains.

At times the balance between this spiritual secret, and the simplest material event is very fine, and almost reaches the level of Biblical significance:

> L'auberge était tendue comme un ventre, la voûte adossée au rocher, la patronne allait accoucher d'un enfant, cette nuit-là, — qui s'affairait, énorme et gaie, à distribuer les nourritures aux tablées hasardeuses, parmi l'insignifiant brouhaha...
>
> (H I99)

Giving of nourishment and parturition, are brought together in the character of 'la patronne', so that the giving of food becomes closely associated with the giving of life and birth, a coming into the world that is always a possible epiphany, as is strongly implied in the words: 'cette nuit-là', and it operates as a kind of secret amongst 'l'insignifiant brouhaha'.

Yet the whole poem is fraught with the notion of that which is offered. The inn ceases to be neutral

and is affectively charged via its metaphorical identification with the pregnant woman.

'La patronne', who controls the place of festival and repose, at the same time bearer of a child, controlling the infant's destiny, is equally identified with 'l'auberge' and its role as providor and giver of shelter. She is 'énorme et gaie', and is by that description herself almost a festival in which all will be fed. Her personality is expansive and implies the emotional state of 'gaieté' in her presence before the poet.

The poem homes in on an important duality in that the woman continues to give whilst she is about to enter into the pain and drama of labour. The inn, then, is invested with a double nature by which it is both a place of nourishment and of childbirth; two fundamental forms of donation which, in the undeniable demonstration of a material act, attempt to deny Man's continued existence in separation. The stretching belly which 'l'auberge' resembles, both gives itself, and brings forth its contents which are the childs life. It further confuses the distinction between <u>out</u> and <u>in</u> by metaphorical hinting at the woman's belly-so those who are in the hostel are in a womb.

At moments the poem concentrates on this duality between birth and giving within the festival in a more forceful way. Frénaud's poems repeatedly approach the

fact of a cyclic natural order of nourishment, decay, birth (in its most material manifestations) and death, which although trite in itself, becomes a flux which also points to a possible spiritual level where such a movement amongst matter in the universe can be experienced.

There is a cosmic aspect to the description in 'Pour fêter saint Blaise et le retour du printemps', which tends to make this image of flow and material exchange universal :

> L'œuf s'ouvre, que le pet s'accomplisse,
> il inaugure un nouveau flux.
> Il l'annonce et va l'assurer:
> Croissance aux végétaux, aux bêtes, érection
> du mât de cocagne sur tous marchés et les parvis,
> la déposition du vieil homme, la promotion,
> les proclamations et les acclamations, de nouve-
> (lles propositions.
>
> (H I25)

The opening of the egg is a special mythological image of fairly obvious significance. Here, though, it is comically associated with 'le pet', and the idea of parturition, which had positive connotations in the previous poem, is here part of a universe which is in an uncontrolled and almost ridiculous state of generosity. For example, in a well known series of associations the fertility of the erect phallus is juxtaposed with growth of vegetables, the maypole, and an ancient stamp placed upon the race.At the centre of this rather cool evocation of what is basically wild development is a proclamation

of bestowal :

> — Rien n'est impossible, dit l'enfant-roi. Cette année ne sera pas comme les autres. Je vous promets tout, je le donne.
>
> (H I26)

The child-king is a well defined element in mythology, and is often present in ceremonies relevant to the renewal of the year. Yet in this poem he plays the role of an overreaching benefactor. The act of offering is solely possible in language in this case, like the promise that can be spoken but not kept. The simplicity of the statement recalls the world of Milena and the naïve belief in a universe where all is possible.

'L'enfant-roi' is representative of 'le printemps', and a certain attitude of mind aroused by the season. The theme of fertility and unleashed possibilities of donation are in that sense further linked to material considerations, and they dive into the comic:

> ... Et Blaise songe qu'il n'en a pas assez fait aujourd'hui
> Qu'il est un plaisir qui leur manque.
> Et qui lui manque de ne leur avoir pas donné,
> il est temps de rattraper ça.
>
> (H I26)

The pagan child-king and the Christian saint are contrasted, yet what emerges is the common desire to give and enjoy giving in mutual exchange which fits into the unstoppable cycle of

decay and fertility.

Blaise is considered reinventing myth and releasing its potential for a different and more intensely human kind of donation :

> — Il n'est que de réinventer des fables
> pour que le monde tourne rond.
>
> pour frapper le rocher et en faire affluer
> l'inépuisable sèvée libératrice,
> songe-t-il à d'autre moments,
> il est de drôles de venelles par où l'on doit (passer
> aux alentours de la rue Saint-Martin.
>
> (H I27)

The saint firmly situates all notions of renewal, liberality, and release within sexuality. In this way the festival brings Man closer to 'le secret', which he searches for in a liberal festival, so that Blaise's final advice in a fraternal gesture links the material nourishment,associated with the unleashing of desire, and the oneiric aspect of all human activity: 'Frères, buvons et rêvons'(H I30).

An alternative form of intoxication and transformation is offered in the poem. When the festival and the religious rite become warped into intensely negative forms, the possibility of communication and fraternity takes on a kind of duality within the uncertain and menacing flux of 'l'eau noire'. That which is nourishment has a menacing origin:'Paroles et festins fraternels, banquet eucharistique.' (RM 30). The word and festival have a similar power of inducing a

fraternal situation. The food which is given in thanks has a double sense, and is ritual: 'eucharistique'.Like the giving in the festival, it aims to transport Man onto another level where separation is overcome. Ultimately, the word as gift, the poem as donation to other men, aims to do this also.

Le poème et le don

Perhaps the most important metaphorical identification in Frénaud's poetic is that of the poem or the poem's production and the architectural structure, or the act of constructing a building.

The central dynamic in 'Cette nuit-là à Florence', where the poem and architecture are equated, is of contribution. Although the force which the poet experiences is beyond his comprehension, he is certain of its status as donator: 'Pour devenir quoi,je ne savais, mais, à coup sûr, pour m'apporter quelque chose' (H 64).

What the poet considers under the category of the gift implies a preference for town over country, and for unknown towns :

> Et les villes trop connues perdent leur prestige, étalées dans une beauté agréablement nourricière,amies trop habituelles pour être bouleversantes.
>
> (H 63)

The architectural structure, such as town, or Palazzo Vecchio, is designed, according to

Frénaud, to communicate something mysterious and which is latent in men, the hidden zone (as in 'La Sorcière de Rome') or 'le secret'.

The approach towards the Palazzo in 'Cette nuit-là à Florence' is reminiscent of the tentative movements the poet himself makes towards the ineffable which is at the foundation of his poems. Yet the thing he seeks can only be felt to the full, and used within the poem or to change Man's life, if it is not given in too obvious a manner: 'étalées dans une beauté agréablement nourricière'. We find, as one of the key modes of Frénaud's poetry, a retention of that which is to be accorded.

The poet should construct his poem, or book of poems, in such a way that the approach to the ineffable entity does not reveal or give it freely. Construction of 'Le château et la quête du poème' takes place 'tout au long de la route obscure'(IP 233); that which is captured or conceded there articulates a movement inwards, a depth, contrasting and contradicting the outward openness that is suggestive of giving: 'panorama et racines, abîmes et ciel bleu,recoins avec ce qu'il faut de vertigineux...'(IP 234).

This internal aspect of what is offered, along with the dialectic of 'la joie' and 'le désespoir' is the poet's main residue of sensation which subsists following the cataclysmic experience of the architec-

tural structures: 'Une joie m'inondait comme d'un sang qui m'aurait recouvert... charnelle, volumineuse'(H65) and because of this very internal aspect to the experience of 'prise de possession' Frénaud undergoes no 'dépossession totale', as is usually implied in the mystical sensation of 'ravissement'.

It is equally true that the poem is approached as its own subject in the form of a gift that permits access to an intimate interior. In this case or at this stage in the development in our argument, the metaphorical relationship between poem as conferment and the building is altered; the construction itself and its progressive erection, are no longer the main focal points in the description of the poetic act :

> Le poète peine, éclairé par sa recherche,
> et l'objet qu'il a su faire, qu'il te confie,
> étranger,
> c'est la clé pour entrer dans ta maison.
>
> (H 2I8)

Our attention is immediately drawn to the presence of 'l'étranger', the other with whom communication may be difficult, and who is yet transformed by presentation of the key to his own house.

It is important the imparting of the poem be seen as of great value, consequently the poet is described toiling ('peiner') and thereby produces an object that has a specific and easily recognisable

purpose. The poem is no longer the building, but is necessary in order to gain access to it and, metaphorically, to the self.

The metaphor of the poem as key, of course, is closely related to the theme of opening and revelation which is current in Frénaud's work. It may also be useful, in passing, to mention the importance, within the collection Hæres and others, of 'les portes' as image, for example, in the poem 'Les portes bleues'. By entrusting the stranger with the poem, we can say that Frénaud reveals the potential of the stranger's own interior states, and seems to assert the possibility of overcoming separation.

What has happened to Frénaud's integrity of dialectical denial? Does this confidence uncover a lapsus in the stoic attitude which the latter often implies? One plausible answer is in the attention drawn to the presence of 'l'étranger'. For at the centre of this poem the Other always remains 'étranger', and is not permitted the status of 'un frère'.

The poem that, in donating itself proposes the transformation of separating 'étrangeté' maintains that noun at its centre,and in the vocative form. This manner of address suddenly distantiates the poetic voice from the familiarity of the preceding 'tu'. On the other hand it must be borne in mind that the opposite may be true;the 'tu' may tone down the alienating

strength of 'l'étranger'. To this extent the balance through tension whereby openness in donation is never total gets reaffirmed.

There is possibly some connection in the above example between the status of the bestowal and the alteration in the emphasis laid on the building. That person who is never anything but <u>other</u> 'étranger', is at the poem's centre; however, in the development of the poetic works, the animal, animate and potentially capable of communion with Man, yet always other, may assume 'le don du poème', and its presence seems to validate an evocation of the building structure in its most basic and evident form, 'Maçonnerie' :

> Ce n'est pas mortier d'hirondelle
> mais le langage des oiseaux.
> A l'appel de l'édifice,
> transporté par ce qu'il donne,
> à l'Œuvre avec nous,
> compagnon.

(<u>H</u> I86)

Metaphorical link between language, the building, and giving reaches a stage of greater clarity in this short poem at the centre of the collection 'Le parcours et la lumière, la question' which reiterates the slow 'cheminement' towards an unknown force.

Whilst denying the identification 'langage' = 'le mortier du poème', this relationship nevertheless subsists, if only in the ambiguity of the phrase 'à

l'Œuvre avec nous' which, put with the word 'compagnon' would appear to signify : working with us, since 'compagnonage' was a form of artisanal apprenticeship; on the other hand the capitalised form of 'Œuvre' probably indicates the opus or work of art.

Subsequent lines, in their continuation within ideas such as 'l'édifice' and the swallow's flight as image of the act of creation or of the act of building, maintain the potential for making such a link within the reader's mind. From the perspective of the overall poetic production the term 'compagnon' marks a movement away from the concept of 'l'étranger' and a revitalisation of the means to communication. The sense of community between 'hirondelle' and poet is taken to such a degree that the bird is apparently invested with the same capacity for 'le transport' as is the creator in language; and the importance of the dynamic catallactic notion of 'transport' or 'transformation' will be seen later in this chapter.

The theme of poetry as flight is a banal one. However, Frénaud reworks it in a mesh of other themes more vital to his own personal view of poetic creation.

'Maçonnerie' is, of course, the very basic substance of the building, but it is also, via the metaphorical reference to 'le langage des oiseaux', the essential substance of the poem. The dynamic tension

of opening and closing might be considered as having been replaced in this context by that of movement which connotes an act of production.

It is uncertain whether the poet is refering uniquely to 'le langage des oiseaux' as bird-song or if there is implied also the bird's flight and its relationship to the building, as a language in semaphore.

The words of the poem, since they are not surreal in reference, but seem to have fairly evident situations as their referents are dependent on our consideration of a visual metaphor which is almost a conceit; that is, the swallow, in the convolutions of its flight, appears to be building the 'édifice' which is the pole for its acrobatics. The building itself is also involved in this cross-referentiality, since the bird's aerodynamics are 'A l'appel de l'édifice'.

The optimism of this, and the reference to a building-structure in the context of giving and of poetic production, are contrasted by the alternative status of the edifice as 'ce château vide où nous tâtonâmes' (H I87) where the sensitivity of the hand which reaches out in search for some orienting sign is implied in the verb 'tâtonner'.

Lines three to six include a breach of syntax in the absence of any main verb, only the subordinate clause 'par ce qu'il donne' clarifies the subject of the sentence. Such a breach in the poem possibly

indicates a very sudden and immediate perception which either forces the writer to falter in his linguistic clarity, or to force his style to suit the material. However, it is an ironic occurence, and possibly with some intention, within a poem whose subject appears to be poetic production.

Another key metaphor for the instant of poetic enlightenment is 'Le passage de la Visitation',closely related to the building structure in its intimation of a secret and enclosed interior within which the poetic event may be favoured.

The 'passage' is both an actual site existing in Paris, and a metaphor for the inspiration which produces the poem; it further implies a gradual fulness, and possibly an allied notion of giving: 'chemin d'une plénitude peut-être' (IP 97); although in this case the energy or opportunity that is given: 'la plénitude' does not originate in a known donator such as the poet or 'l'être'. It is once again the privilege of a secret area, appearing 'quelque-fois et sans bruit' (Ibid).

The choice of an enclosed space as propitious to a generalised state of dispensation and of poetic flow is once again made. This is coupled with the 'entrebaîllé' theme :

> Soudain le feuillage, derrière la haute porte, le long de la maison en retrait, ainsi qu'une promesse ancienne avec des aperçus incertains. (IP 96)

The suddenness of the appearance of foliage, and its rendition in a broken kind of syntax: 'Soudain le feuillage', which implies the absence of any act of perception or cognisance, that the phenomenon is merely glimpsed: 'derrière la haute porte', where 'haute' draws attention momentarily away from what is seen and onto the quality of the door.

Thus Frénaud places the poem-as-gift in two different contexts, both related more or less, and in several cases, to the building or architectural structure. The first and most frequent is (as we have seen) that of enclosure, which implies a tension and retention in giving of the poetic word or afflatus. The second, we could say, is that of an open association between poetic 'don' and building, where the dual act of donation and of linguistic creation is externalised and dynamic, rather than being held in a static balance as implied in the 'entrebaîllement' motif.

Why is this so important in terms of the general metaphor of separation? One might speculate that the holding back and externalisation of the gift/poem in various poetic instants figures the playing-out of a drama which can be considered in Jungian terms as the poet's changing relationship to the controllable or uncontrollable energy of libido.

Yet, it is even more the tragic relationship of both the poet and his language to the object which

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they approach tentatively and that they would re-produce in and through the poem.

The Inheritance

In Frénaud's own theory of poetic validation, the poem is also given as an inheritance in much the same way as a piece of land (cf 'la patrie') may be given. The metaphor here is one which situates the poem almost within a kind of peasant tradition as a possessable commodity. But it also has the powerful emotional overtones that the possessed land has for the peasant mind. The poem is, above all things, an inheritance :

> HAERES — le poème — et le tableau aussi bien, l'œuvre musicale — c'est même, pour l'auteur, le seul valable héritage. Et d'abord transmissible de soi à soi.
>
> (H I6)

Evidently, what is most important about the poem is the fact it can be bequeathed transmitted, as can the general perceptions of art. Yet, it is also an opening. For the poem only works and has its full inheritable value if both writer and readers: 'éprouvent comme un desserrement, une ouverture'(H I6). In this instance, then, the poem as gift or as an act of giving ('seul véritable héritage') is also the instigator of a state of spiritual openness

in those who come into contact with it.

The metaphor of the inheritance, however, tends to close-off certain connotations that may originally have been possible, the inheritance implies familial associations, and the restriction of what is given to a specific family group.

Thus, it is not possible for the gift of the poem with regard to hæres to be totally open and given universally. One may almost detect the implication of artistic brotherhood in this.

Other powerful connotations are favoured: the attachment to family also brings into focus notions of belonging and of homeland or the elected place where the poet feels himself to truly exist. It is also the home, 'la maison', for which a key is needed, and, by extension, it can connote the self as an entity which may be given, acquired, and passed on.

Hæres is what remains; in some ways it is a monument, implying all the absurdity that a monument can: 'ces paroles qui me sortent, des statues de vent' (IP I96) whilst at the same time attempting to deny the absurdity of death and our subjugation to it. For, ultimately the inheritance points to the death of the donator, a termination.

The offering and poem then are dialectically bound up with mortality and its separating void. Nevertheless it should be noted that inheritance is a

continuation, almost in the same vein as perseverance on the quest.

From this it is clear that Hæres constitutes a new orientation and structuring of themes already present in Frénaud's previous poems, and that it is a reorientation particularly dependent on the notion of 'le poème' as 'un don'. It gravitates about the central theme of death, which the poem may strive to overcome.

Poem and 'parole' also figure the poet's repeated approaches towards 'l'impossible', the unobtainable or the unsayable. As has been said repeatedly here, the 'chevaliers' on their quest towards the unknown 'château' or the young girls in search of 'la plus haute flamme' are also images of the poet and his approach via language towards 'l'indicible' :

> Comme on voudrait qu'une Parole s'élevât,
> Souveraine,
> Pour justifier ceux qui si gentiment s'usèrent
> afin de faire surgir par un don de soi
> qui ne cessait pas,
> l'universelle, ô l'unique flamme,
> celle que n'a pas su incarner
> leur dieu fils ni ses pareils,
> l'impossible, l'insatiable Amour.
>
> (H 235)

It is bizarre that Frénaud should invest 'la parole' with the hopes normally associated with 'dieu le fils', who is repeatedly castigated, as here, for the raising of false hope and is presented in a negative way.

The spell of 'l'absurde' mentioned above would appear to have been broken. However, the poem does open on an exhortation in the conditional tense:'Comme on voudrait', which attenuates the positive nature of 'une Parole... Souveraine.'

The role of 'le don' or 'le don de soi' is to mediate the indirect attachment (based on intentional prepositions 'pour' and 'afin de' which form ambiguous bonds) the poem seems to produce between 'une Parole' and 'l'insatiable Amour'. The word would rise, elevate itself ('s'élever') in order to justify something. Those whom the word would justify donate themselves in order to bring about the uprising ('surgir') of impossible love.

The parallel suggested here operates through the similarity of 's'élevât' and 'surgir', both of which, of course, in their connotation of upward movement suggest a meta-textual reading that introduces the image of building and its cosmic aspirations. They may also operate as effusive or expansive images which in their associations with a state of outward dynamism suggest the action of bestowal in the sense of a movement outwards.

As a contrast to this choice of language 's'user' the central action of those who are totally human (in opposition to the berated deity) has connotations of destructive or desperate tonality, and the precise

implication of a loss of energy, a kind of spiritual entropy. Matching this, the associations of 's'user' are almost synonymous with 'un son de soi' where the action on the self is made clearer by the evident signification of 'soi', whereas the reflexive pronoun , in its function as part of an integrated verbal unit, tends to obscure the presence and passivity of self.

Counter to this the poet's attitude retains the spirit of the conditional tense in his commitment to a realisation that the power of the word,and of the poem when it is given,may not be as effective as expected :

> Et c'est le seul bien aussi qu'il voudrait pouvoir donner, quand il n'est pas paralysé par le sentiment du si peu, celui dont il aimerait faire de tous les hommes les héritiers. (Trop souvent il se trompe: ce bien ne vaut du tout. Héritage tacitement, universellement révoqué.)
>
> (H I7)

Even when the poem is being considered in a positive light and in what must be called a pretty analytical sort of prose, it is seen as ultimately restricted and refused by those to whom it is offered.

Universality of the desire to bequeath the poem to 'tous les hommes' is only equalled by the universality of refusal: 'universellement révoqué', so that a kind of balance seems to be necessary which ultimately works against the poem's potency as a gift. This is all the more startling when one considers that this

prose passage forms a kind of preamble to the entire book HAERES that explores the relationship of the poet to his art and just how far he can make it go.

Extent or quantity seem of some importance in Frénaud's poetry. For example, in the preceding section the festival was marked by a perception of retention in 'entrebaîllement', or of excessive giving in 'la plénitude', and by a dialectic of tension between them; in this poem the writer feels himself 'paralysé par le sentiment du si peu'. Again it is the case that his act of giving and his gift fall short of the crucial target of fulness.

Paralysis reiterates the theme of stasis and inactivity that stood as an opposite to the dynamic nature of opening and outward thrust. But it also induces thematic interplay with the tacit way the inheritance is refused, the fact this ironically points to an expressive paralysis, a second stage of closure.

It is evident from this that one of the main complexes of meaning which run through the theme of donation is that of the 'poème-don'. The real subject of interest, says Frénaud, is: 'le poème assure-t-il médiation efficace d'une certaine expérience qui fut' (H I6).

The experience itself would seem to get confused with the act of giving as Frénaud writes also of the poem having: 'une valeur qui soit transmissible'(H I6).

The latter could be an abstract description of the gift as 'une valeur' which brings to the receiver a qualitative plus.

Yet the value itself is taken to its most excessive point: 'Singulier patrimoine, le poème, s'il vaut à la façon d'un charme'(H I7). The poem is not only a value capable of producing qualitative change, it would also aspire to magic, to become a talisman which can produce total alteration, a wholly new state.

We have seen how the award may exist in a secret place ('la crypte' for example, which in fact signifies something hidden and the place of the dead), but the poet would have the poem-as-gift work in a more overt sense as an intimation of a greater power, of the accession to a new level of experience mentioned above: 'experience d'ébranlement et de pressentiment du tout, de la Lumière.'(H I7).

The gift which the poem posits, and from which it is inseparable, in the latter statement stretches beyond the phenomenological description of modes and states outlined thus far. It is donation of an experience of the All, 'du tout', and of light which,in its capitalised form, suggests some ultimate quality of spiritual illumination.

Despite the powerful nature of these factors, as a phenomenon it continues to possess attributes of

retention. 'Ébranlement' can be described as hovering on the brink of a greater movement, something almost catastrophic and which menaces; but it is only the intimation of its possibility, just as 'pressentiment' implies a threshold of forewarning.

The poem as donation introduces into Frénaud's work a series of tensions which relate closely to the overriding theme of this essay: 'La séparation poétique'. There is a marked occurence of interior imagery that is counterbalanced by references to expansion and effusion. The latter may be parallelled to the concepts of 'l'étranger' and 'le frère' discussed in an earlier chapter concerning 'l'unité' and 'l'être'. In both cases there is an equilibrium dependent upon tension, whereby openness in concession never reaches its highest pitch.

In 'Passage de la Visitation', on the other hand, the enclosed space produces a state of giving and of poetic flow, the intimation of something much grander and of greater power than itself, a 'saisissement' that would be more apt within the ornate grandeur of 'Il Palazzo Vecchio'.

But this unknown force is intimately part of the Parisian site: 'l'être y passe quelque fois'(IP 97) as though being — which has already been shown to be one of the driving forces of Frénaud's poetry — were a passing pedestrian.

HÆRES also implies a similar intimacy, that of known objects that will be inherited, and given as a matter of course. Yet, here the problem seems to be reversed. Not so much is it a question of searching out the experience and transmitting it in the poem/gift, rather the anxiety is over acceptance of the experience by those who will read the poem.

The poem itself in fact becomes the battleground for its own survival in its attempts to overcome separation by the conferment of its experience, which is also transmission of the poet's most intimate self, and at the same time of a more universal self, ultimately setting off some echo in the reader, thereby becoming the key to his self also.

La plénitude — La nourriture

Given that Frénaud considers his relationship with poetry in the sense of a whole inheritance of influences, it is relevant to discuss the background of this subject, and the way in which Frénaud differs from it. The Romantic tradition repeatedly turns to fluid images which are used to express a state of the universe in flux and alteration. But the flow of liquid, the stream, ocean, river, is also used to signify a state of the world in donation and fertility.

For André Frénaud this Romantic fluidity of

'plénitude' can have both positive and negative force. A fluid state is strongly implied in the totally antipathetic 'l'eau noire'(RM 30) or 'l'étang natal où tu ne sauras pas avancer'(LSF IOI).

However, within this dual attitude towards a fluid perception of Natural fertility, the poetic word is introduced as one of the principal referents of the liquid metaphor. A poetic association is advanced, for example, as the central trope of 'La Sorcière de Rome':

> Laisse affluer
> toutes figures affrontées dans la parole.
>
> (SR/DTD 35)

Where the poet clearly expresses a desire to see the conflicting elements within the poetic word engaged in a fertile dynamic. The flux motif is a prediction of the way in which the poem 'La Sorcière' as a whole will develop via confronted elements evoked through language and multiple levels of statement. But it also manifests itself as 'la grande, l'innombrable' (SR/DTD 40) part of the natural order in its disturbing multiplicity and which paradoxically becomes 'la parole par le grondement'(Ibid) articulated word through incomprehensible grumbling that floods the poet himself: 'm'inonde, m'illumina'(Ibid).In this way it provokes a situation of self-donation; the poet loses himself by giving himself in the poem, and as a consequence feels himself absorbed in a flow.

In view of this then it is not surprising that the primary nourishing aspect of the world is that of 'la source': 'Je veux remonter à la source'(IP 64). It has its origin in a secret place, a mystery which the poet constantly suggests is parallel to that of being.[I] Yet he knows what the form of nourishment is he expects there:

> J'irai tant que nous reviendrons
> irriguant, irrigués par l'eau vive.
>
> (IP 64)

'La source' can only be fully apprehended in its dialectical sense when compared to 'le désert', the generalised state of sterility and stasis often characteristic of the Frénaldian cosmos. That for which the poet searches, however, is 'Source totale'(IP 64) which in the poem of that name is identified with 'le néant' in the form of 'ton vide'; a dissipated and limitless entity, without defining contours such as those found attached to the river of the Lamartinian landscape.

When the nourishing thrust of Nature is imagined

I/ 'L'être' may have the attributes of 'la source' so so we see it gushing forth from a hidden place:

> L'être impatiemment se meut à travers tout.
> Il éveille, il s'ignore, il est caché.
> De l'une à l'autre forme il ne passe pas,
> hors quand se défont assez toutes mes prises
> pour que remonte et sourde soudain
> au travers du silence un éclat.
>
> (IP III)

in its most extensive form, as the absolute, it ceases to be nourishing promise and is inverted into:'un arc-en-ciel teint par la flamme'(IP 65) or 'tendrement calciné par le bonheur'(Ibid).

Nevertheless, Frénaud retains the remnants of the Romantic experience of a mythical 'La nature' almost personified and sometimes manifesting itself via the body of a woman when it is most clearly charged with the poet's desire. This personified form of the surrounding environment permits the poet to develop images of donation and nourishment.

The 'Grand corps étendu dans la brume' (RM 37) reminiscent of Baudelaire's 'Ciel brouillé' (Fleurs du Mal 79) affords a confusion of 'le paysage' with the pliant body of a woman. The donating and positive aspect is seen 'par delà les corbeaux et la cendre'(Ibid) and consequently distantiated and made different from things which are negation and 'désert'.

The notion of 'la brume' itself promotes images of fertility and giving, since the form which is uncertain in its contours due to a sort of adumbration, implies both possible penetration or possession by the observer and uncertainty of position in that which is observed, such that it may almost seem to flow. The description of the woman/landscape progresses inevitably towards a liquid description at the virtual centre of the poem :

La grande plaine oblongue de ton ventre
et les profonds herbages,
les hauteurs de tes hanches
où perle un gentil ruissellement de l'eau.

(RM 37)

The sole articulation in these lines occurs at that point where the most fertile and positive aspect appears: 'où perle', and it is in these words that a verb drawn by analogy from the substantive 'la perle' is used to introduce the almost imperceptible liquid movement which is, however, via its association with the original referent from which the word is brought as though by metaphor, affected by its solid connotations of roundness, perfection of form etc.

Its hidden nature is also implied in the progression of phrases describing extent: 'grande', 'profonds', 'hauteurs', which leads towards the diminutive and dynamic 'ruissellement'.

A further polarity apparent in the surprising attribute 'oblongue' applied to 'le ventre', with its counterpart in the round fulness of 'la perle', suggests a tension of that which is full and fertile, pouring outwards in directed movement, and things rigid in their outline.

On the one hand in oblong it is suggested that such fulness has clear contours and extent, it is open and given in its geometric clarity; on the other hand, as a pearl it is suffused with mystery through the

connotations of great value that object has;its roundness and fulness are a concentration of the donatory and fertile quality implied in 'la plaine'.The dynamic which the double activity 'perler' - 'ruissellement' describes, continues in a tableau of natural abundance :

> Montagne aimée des abeilles et du vent
> de mon souffle mort, recomposé autour de toi
> pour pénétrer par la bouche entrouverte.
>
> (RM 37)

The second half of the stanza develops towards a more complex and abstract picture. Metaphorical link between woman and nature in a state of donation, is taken up in the image of a mountain and the bees which are associated with it in an affective relationship. They figure a dispersion of the mountain's energy, as does also 'le vent', in a dialectic between the static, solid and massive, the diminutive which is also dynamic, and finally the intangible/unsubstantial: 'vent de mon souffle mort'.

Perhaps the most striking feature in these lines is the juxtaposition of an evidently fertile element in 'abeilles' and a distorted image 'le souffle mort', where 'le souffle' usually shows presence of life; but it fits into the polarity mentioned above, under the image of 'le désert'.

However, these lines are further categorised within the theme 'la nourriture - le don' by the rep-

resentation — within the construct of word pictures they represent — of what may be termed a situation of flow and impediment.[I]

It is not difficult, for instance, to notice a progression or <u>flow</u> from 'abeilles' to 'vent' via an association of ideas along the lines of <u>dispersion</u> briefly mentioned above, similarly evident is the step from 'vent' to 'souffle' and to 'bouche', the latter introducing a firm idea of sexuality and donation. Yet this pattern is internally wrought with conflict. Where 'abeilles' and 'souffle' imply fertility, and even donation in the sense that 'souffle' also signifies inspiration, the latter is totally altered by the adjective 'mort' attributed to it. The introduction of death proposes a parallel reading of 'vent' and dispersion as a negative force of sterility. The

I/ To illustrate what is intended by this a quotation from Jacques Réda the poet, in describing the tone of Frénaud's poems, may be useful :

> De ce ton le poème ne se départ pas: brèves affirmations, où l'ellipse du verbe accroît la densité des phrases qui paraissent répondre alors à la pressante,... interrogation qui cerne la clairière des mots; ou cadences bientôt figées par l'approche de l'émotion et qui, au lieu de consentir à la pente qui les entraîne, comme une eau contenue par un obstacle invisible, s'élèvent. Car l'obstacle est en elles. C'est elles qui se refusent à l'épanchement sans réserve, préférent se hausser à ce niveau d'expression laconique et distante...
>
> (Jacques Réda: 'Le coup des cavaliers, André Frénaud et 'l'Etape dans la clairière' Gallim. 1966)

progression towards an overall impression of dispersal in 'abeilles' and 'vent' is reversed in the word 'recomposé' which, following the comma, seems to re-articulate the poem in a new direction or to hold back the original development towards an image of 'la plénitude' and of 'l'épanchement'.

'La bouche' in its ambiguity also seems to impede the line of development towards fertility in this poem. It is 'la bouche entrouverte', at once sexually available and giving itself in openness, yet also suggestive of the mouth of the dead. The word 'pénétrer' has a parallel set of connotations; the act of sexual contact, and the act of murderous violation.

The personalised 'je' only appears in this stanza via the possessive in 'de mon souffle mort', and has a consequent close association with sterility and a menacing slant. The pronoun 'toi', referring directly to the woman and which (by juxtaposition) clearly associates her with 'montagne aimée' introduces 'l'autre', the all important partner, into this conflict.

The poem then is an attempt to progress towards an: 'aurore où toi et moi serons à jamais confondus' (Ibid) and through the giving aspect of woman and Nature, towards a kind of unity which transcends time.

The failure of this movement is possibly due to 'd'anciens ravages'(Ibid) those rifts which are part of the human condition, the wounds of experience which

mark the poet's art. Frénaud's attitude to his life (cf 'Ma vie' RM 70) intimates the presence of 'la plénitude', and of a certain flow in the fundamental form of 'la nourriture'. Here too that which is given remains ambiguous when he addresses his dulcinea/life as 'Ma lépreuse endormie' :

> Je suis parmi toi avec l'autorité de mes faux (pas
> et de végétations haletantes, les yeux bandés,
> agglutiné à la profonde nourriture.
> Sous tes eaux mortes j'aspire le lait,
> avec les algues et le sang qui en font cette (opale,
> ourdie par tant de ravages... ta lente vie.
>
> (RM 70)

The nourishment which constitutes a gift within Frénaud's life is to be found within a disconcerting depth which seems to alter its value. Like the mysterious forces within language which both drive it and undermine it 'la nourriture' exists beneath, and is further complicated and distorted in its positive elements by 'les algues et le sang', menacing in their connotations and releasing powerful affective impulses (fear of things which inhabit an intimate depth of liquid or of the body, which are shocking to the touch) whilst at the same time the confusion of milk and blood under the common term 'nourriture' is an evident truth. It is again the product of moments of destruction 'les ravages', threatening in their multiplicity. Evidently, the pattern of 'plénitude' - 'mort' discussed above recurs in these

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lines in the dialectic of 'eaux morts' and 'lait'-'sang', further complicated by the word-play 'opale'-'eau pâle'. It is the poet himself who both absorbs: 'aspirer' and secretes his 'lente vie', so that its excessive fulness and warping of natural signs of abundance is an integral part of the poet's self.

The concept of negated or distorted plenitude is one which haunts Frénaud's poetry. Constantly articulating his poems and his view of art and Man's destiny (for example, in the realm of politics) is the relationship between what is obtained and given, and the breakdown of a situation favourable to donation, the result of this is separation. In an interview with the critic Jean-Yves Dubreuille, Frénaud expressed this dialectic clearly:

> Champ clos privilégié de la contradiction interne qui va se jouer dans le poème comme un combat! A un pôle,l'ardeur,le présent, perdurant ou renaissant de la passion, à l'autre, la plénitude absente.
>
> ('Courrier du centre international d'études poétiques' No 153 p 10)

The dialectic which typifies the quest theme also contains the seed of donatin abundance in the enthusiasm of the voyager. The Magus at the outset of his jouney invokes the: 'seigneur de la plénitude' (RM 133) whom he associates with another invocation: 'Ô campagnes premières' and with 'les déserts/ par notre fièvre reverdis'(RM 133).These images

are counterbalanced and undermined by the realisation that he has experienced only: 'mirage sur les gouffres et les déserts sans répit...' (RM 137). The poem in general is split and disrupted by such an outpouring, and lyrical movement checked by bitter lucidity.

On the quest for a childhood past, however, an oasis of natural donation seems possible following the picture of an unchanged countryside: 'La nature cependant a conservé la noblesse ancienne'(SR/DTD 159); and if such an abstract, emotive virtue is preserved by the landscape it is in order that it may be given. It is a place in which 'rien n'a bougé'(Ibid) nothing is beyond the apprehension of the eye or the poet's personal experience. The order of 'La nature' in this particular moment is one of giving :

> Ô arbres vieillards,donateurs modestes, solennels
> (des fruits!
> Ô troupeau enfantin des arbres, petits fronts tau-
> (rins
> empanachés de tiges blanches, par le grand vent
> (résistant,
> assaillis, ô frères tutélaires.
>
> (SR/DTD 160)

Sense of offering seems to alter the poetic perception in the direction of naïvety. It also sets off the metaphorical transformations of the trees (and of nature as a whole) in that it is the initial personification of them: 'vieillards, donateurs' subsequently they become 'arbres' - 'bétail', and via the association with Frénaud's 'key' animal 'le bœuf',

they are potentially 'frères'.

However, the trees also oscillate between being 'vieillards' and 'tutélaires', aged protectors on the one hand, and on the other 'troupeau enfantin','petits fronts taurins'. They are subject to a fluidity which is almost dreamlike.

Their nature as 'donateurs' seems to flow from their status as 'vieillards' which sets them in tune with the quest of the poem for a distant and fertile past. In their fraternity they seem to signal the conquest of separation by a natural environment strongly charged with emotion.

Not only is it a conquest over the distance between poet and his surroundings - which now cease to be 'muet' — but also over the separation which time forces upn him, and it is achieved by way of the offering:

> Vieux pays qui nous offrait dans tous ses jardins
> la dédicace d'un parfum de réséda.
>
> (SR/DTD 161)

Things that are given are again superfluous, 'le jardin' is already the decorative aspect of 'vieux pays' and of nature as a whole; but 'un parfum de réséda' goes further in this direction,since it is described specifically as : 'plante d'ornement cultivé pour son parfum'(Robert). The gift brings us back to reflection upon its own nature rather than on

the significance of what is given. 'La dédicace' is more clearly a way of giving than a description of the gift, and obviously points to the literary implications of the poet's search and the offering which terminates it.

There is a similar tone to the donation described in 'Saint-Vallerin' where the separation of childhood and present is recognised: 'Fini l'enfance, la mort avec la vie'(SR/DTD 130). Yet within this desperation donation seems possible and revitalises the transitive relationship between poet and nature. He considers himself as the grammatical object of positive verbal action in the word 'donner':

> L'automne m'a donné la dernière parure,
> violette et jaune sur les vignes rangées.
>
> (SR/DTD 130)

Festivity is adumbrated here in the image of 'la parure' and its exalting meaning for the poet of show and communication, the consecration of Nature's appearance in a clearly comprehensible form. The vine contains surface connotations of celebration wildness and the gift of inebriety; however, the vines are also 'rangées', contained and restricted on one level of interpretation,and on another they are given freely to the poetic eye in a stable and well ordered form.

They give to the poet personally a terminating festivity 'dernière parure' almost a precursor of

death:'la mort avec la vie'.The gift of Autumn appears to be a conquest of the separation of three major elements: 'enfance','mort','vie', within the association of two colours: 'violette et jaune', reminiscent of a kind of escucheon 'le blason', an image which Frénaud is drawn to, and that seems to signify the inheritance, and the need to continue existence by the intermediary of some sort of sign remaining.

The poet's relationship with 'l'automne' is equally ambiguous. It is a season able to stand both for 'la Nature' and 'le Temps'. What it gives is both relevant in terms of time: 'dernière' and emotional value 'parure'; yet in this it is also opposed to nourishment (as it focuses on the superficial appearance) or essential content of the vine. The latter is at its most distant, for it is not consumed, not poured, nor even in the form of wine; however in this state,specifically 'sur les vignes', it is converted into a donation. Not only is this 'don' bound up with the passing of time in 'l'automne', it is also the product of 'la fin', the terminating season prior to the death of winter.

The personal past which the poet explores in such lines is presented as an area of various sub-strata into which he penetrates and which presents him with unknown problems during his quest for the unity of the self. In response to the gift of Autumn, he continues:

'La lumière émerveille les yeux défaits'(RM 130). The poet's eyes are dead, yet in their negative state,they are sensitive to light, they are undone, multiple and refracted into the plurality which characterises the poet's being, they are defeated and unable to continue on the quest: 'les yeux défaits' and 'la lumière' are held apart by their very nature as 'défaits', and by the wonder ('émerveillement') which is induced. The gift of light and colour, however, continues to amaze, to pierce the state of indifference into which Frénaud fears he might sink.

These deep-lying layers of exploration are within death, the self, the past, but most importantly in the poet's voice. Word or voice are affected by the same 'profondeur' as that which tends to obscure the poet's perception of 'la lumière' to such an extent that voice and light often seem indistinguishable:

> S'il n'est permis de recouvrer
> les éclats où l'on fut vivant,
> qui peut faire semblable lumière
> sinon la fin et l'origine?
>
> Vivante au fond, contrebattue
> à plein sang par le cœur complice,
> innocente et veinée, toujours prête,
> mais pourquoi soudain dans la voix?
>
> (SR/DTD 138)

Unity or 'la lumière' of one's life is not permitted; yet it is present deep within the voice and the visceral self ('au fond'),within the

substance of life in its 'plénitude' (ie 'à plein sang'). Its sudden and mysterious appearance in the voice is parallel to an 'émerveillement', a momentary epiphany within the poet's language,or a state of concession when all seems to be illuminated.

However, the poet counterbalances this depth,its possibilities and its menace, with the expansive surface of 'la prairie':

> La prairie avait trop de charmes
> pour être donnée à la vie.
>
> (SR/DTD 138)

Forms which are open appear in many of Frénaud's poems to suggest a kind of fulness and overflowing of the natural order. Yet 'la prairie' one of the most expansive representations of Nature,is considered unsuitable to be handed over to life, since it is too clear, too unequivocally 'charmant'.The gift which achieves unity is a more complex phenomenon. It penetrates the layers lying between 'la fin et l'origine'. It has the contradictory nature of the forms of offering discussed above, and of 'la lumière...soudain dans la voix'.

The prairie, however, is possibly given to death as a potential place of burial. An allusion to this may be detected in the poem's title: 'Etait-ce prière à la mort'. The morphology of the word 'prière' finds a faint but convincing echo in 'la prairie'. The

polarity: 'vie' - 'mort' seems to pass through these images of donation, openness ('la prairie') and depth ('au fond').

With regard to the accordance of a charming, idealised Nature in 'la prairie', the act of donation is evoked only to be negated, yet it is closely bound to the interaction between light and voice; depth and surface; dispersal ('les éclats') and recuperation ('recouvrer').

The world in a phase of excessive oblation and exuberance contains similar tendencies and messages to those noted above, and which point to a kind of philosophical absurdism, since the donating environment leads only to a more agonising perception of the poet's own desperately unhinged, and contingent position :

> La terre grasse et les bœufs, tous les biens
> (meubles,
> en droite possession comme autant de fumées,
> je n'ai rien recueilli à travers la rumeur.
>
> L'héritage c'est l'ouverture du rempart,
> et la mort chez moi chez elle dans tous les
> (coins.

(H 9)

The process of conferment, upon which the poem focuses in these lines, adopts multiple forms and seems to be witnessed in an instant of transformation; or alternatively, it is seen at different levels. Perhaps most importantly, and most strikingly, it is the possibility of the word being offered; but

one which remains unobtainable 'à travers la rumeur', through undistinguishable, unarticulated and dispersed noise that characterises 'la profondeur' and 'l'épaisseur' with which Frénaud's poems are fraught.

In a similar way, 'les biens meubles', 'tous les coins' and 'autant de fumées' reveal a dispersing progression into things that are unstable, unsubstantial in their vague multiplicity ('autant de') and in their form.

These deviate from the initial concreteness and apparent barmony of 'la terre grasse et les bœufs', which appear to introduce bucolic descriptions of abundance. Their tonality suggesting fulness, sets up one of the terms of a dialectic which is maintained throughout the poem and the book HAERES.

The things conferred in this dialectic are not simply 'en droite possession', unambiguously assumed by the receiver, because the ingeritance is also a threat. It is 'l'ouverture du rempart', and whereas 'l'ouverture' may have positive connotations in evoking a state of outwardness and donation, 'le rempart' is the means of retaining and protecting the self and its unity in a precarious balance. It may be compared with 'le château', which also stands as a metaphor of the poem, the building structure which is articulated unlike 'la rumeur', or 'les biens meubles' and 'la fumée', since these are typically uncertain and

unstable.

Furthermore, the gift is a disturbingly generalised introduction of 'la mort', which spans the gap between poet and 'elle', fills the most intimate recesses of arranged space: 'les coins' where 'elle' and 'moi', the two polarities of a possible amorous unity, are conceived in terms of a building or part of one . This leads to a critical point where the mistress is invited into a state of boundless insanity:

> — Faisons les fous pour nous alléger de la folie.
> Viens, nous déborderons, ô nous gaminerons,
> parmi ton ample sein, nourricière de mort.
>
> (H IO)

Limits and spaces ('remparts' - 'coins' - 'elle' - 'moi') which formed the subject of discussion so far, are here intentionally defied in a paradoxical game that mimics fulness.

The penetrability an exacerbated kind of giving produces, reaches a critical point: 'De l'une à l'autre.../ ainsi allait se gonflant le train des choses' (Ibid).

Dialectical exchange, one of the main elements in Frénaud's poetry, continually feeding it and maintaining tension, seems to break loose, and abundance takes on a negative aspect. The language of the poem also begins to stretch. The words 'allait se gonflant' suggest a continual swelling, and in fact they swell the verse verbally.

All the divisions which held the poet's cosmos in check seem to break down: 'Les parois aujourd'hui éclatées'(Ibid), in this description it is vague enough to imply any of those areas Frénaud is preoccupied with: the self in its stability, time, the other, death, etc. The outcome is an overflowing into the nourishing femininity of death 'nourricière de mort', with its implicit paradox.

In a willing concession to madness,death is seen as a benefactor, a donator. It produces the inheritance, and the poem 'Hæres'. Yet this view of death as donator is challenged: 'Le silence n'est pas la plénitude'(Ibid). 'La mort', area of silence, can only be considered as a nourishing force in the madness of a moment when the structures of the poet's universe seem to be collapsing. It is this disintegration itself which gives the poem its substance:'J'ai nourri le poème avec la vie qui s'écroulait'.(Ibid).

An alternative may be that the poet feels tempted by silence as a means of escape from 'la plénitude' and excessive donation.

In this Frénaud may be compared to a whole tradition of poets drawn towards the calm of silence which quells the voices within. The most notable of these is evidently Rimbaud whose poems attain similar periods of excess.

The threat for Frénaud is that the word brings

all to the surface from an unlimited depth. If this is the way things are understood, then death is a plénitude; an uncertain dark zone from which come 'les bouffées des morts'(SR/DTD I32) confused voices.

Not surprisingly silence is an escape from both the voice and death which constantly seem to percolate through,and undo all frameworks ('défaire','déborder') including language. Silence avoids breakdown, maintains 'la paroi', and prevents the poem from being nourished by disintegrating life.

Frénaud's poems present multiple and totally different facets of themes which are repeatedly found to play an important role in his work globally. 'Plénitude' and expansiveness 'illuminate' nature; yet when they burst through all containment and framework into wildness ('faisons les fous') they become a threat. In several poems the principle of a nourishing environment occurs as a positive interpretation on a complex event.

The 'double rôle nourricier', attributed to 'les vaches' (H I27) reflects the qualitative duality of 'la fête de Saint-Blaise' which contains both pagan and orthodox Christian elements in a fertility rite. The cow's situation is structured and governed by its role. Its nourishing and donatory aspect is concentrated in the theatre of the rite which suspends reality and shapes our perception of it in a positive way.

The theme of nourishment is under control and is given another structural retention in that it is 'double', as opposed to the menacing and boundless multiplicity of an adverb-phrase like 'autant de'.[I]

The Magus' experience of a natural order which responds to his desire for a universal kind of fellowship, includes a vision of positive nourishment :

> Souffle apaisé, volcans aujourd'hui étoiles
> (bleues,
> roues nourricières qui d'elles-mêmes jouaient,
> flocons bruissant d'azur.
>
> (RM I37)

Only when the energy of the cosmos, 'le souffle', 'le volcan', is calmed and idealised into 'étoiles bleues', can the nourishment theme be considered positively. Significantly, it is attributed to 'les roues', alluding to the regular and orienting stellar motions, and to the fundamental human model of the cycle.

The reading of 'souffle' and 'volcans' as indicators to the nature of the poem is also evident. It has already been mentioned that 'souffle' has 'l'inspiration' as a secondary meaning. The volcano hints at the menacing depth which continually overflows into the poem, and may reveal the cyclic nature of the poem implied in its reciprocity;also note: 'au cœur du poème... un magma de multiples forces contraires,'(H I2).

I/ cf Above: 'en droite possession comme autant de fumées' (H 9).

This also holds good for the kind of mutuality the poet experiences in love. Woman is capable of giving a visual, ocular nourishment, the power of new vision and of amazement, the possibility of a new way of seeing :

> Ta bouche muée en la mienne
> allaite la parole neuve.
> Mes yeux nourris par les tiens
> s'émerveillent et je vois.
>
> (IP 66)

Between the two kinds of nourishment set out there is a complex structural relationship. They are almost juxtaposed in a metaphorical way so that between 'ta bouche' and 'mes yeux'; 'nourrir' and 'allaiter'; 'émerveillement' and 'parole neuve', there is a suggested interaction.

Interpenetration of poet and woman is not only at the amorous level, but spills over into that of poetic creation in 'la parole neuve' and the restoration of vision, reinstatement of the poet as 'le voyant'. This mutation through the dual act of nourishment ('nourris' 'allaite') of 'toi' into 'moi' implies the breakdown of limits and barriers, however, the dynamic remains controlled within a clearly disposed relationship.

The careful balance between sensuality and an apprehension of something higher leans towards a sublimation of the alimentary images, due to the force of the idea which dominates: renewal of the poetic

relationship with the world. The poem focuses not so much on a vague abundance which nourishes, but on the movement of nourishment from giver to receiver : 'Ta bouche... la mienne'; 'mes yeux... les tiens'.

In 'La Sorcière de Rome' what is desired is a controlled flow, not the inundation which disrupts the poem and dispels lucidity :

> Grande nourricière, si tu sais mon désir,
> laisseras-tu passer paroles qui m'éclairent?
>
> (SR/DTD 43)

Feminised and magnified, the nourishing deity is conceived of as regulating the passage of words and of illumination. As an act of giving nourishment repeatedly appears in positive contexts in Frénaud's poetry.

'La Grande nourricière' is a further avatar of 'la sorcière', 'la voix souterraine', or 'la mère folle', but she is more clearly linked with the theme of donation and flux. The beneficence of her donation can be seen in comparing what is given by 'la grande, l'innombrable' (SR/DTD 40) which leaves the poet 'évanoui', and bestows an equally fierce, instantaneous enlightenment 'm'illumina'; whereas the 'm'éclairent' , here associated with 'la Grande nourricière' has less disturbing connotations in its suggested clarity. Equally, the present tense within a relative clause dependent on 'laisser', tends to dissipate its poetic impact.

An important association can be seen here between the poetic word, the nourishing force, and a potentially mystical illumination. Possibly they point again towards the epiphany-type experience which is desired and which draws on all three elements.

The poem strains for an intimation of Being, a sudden change in the disposition of the world. 'La lumière de l'amour' also approaches this :

> Nous nous sommes reconnus. Le monde s'est ouvert
> dans un grand balbutiement où se débattait
> tout l'ancien malheur aboli sous les regards neufs.
>
> (IP I82)

Suggested within this aspect of illumination during the poetic quest, however, is its contrary in 'l'épaisseur' and darkness or depth which inhabit the poet's clear perception and the renewal of his experience of the world :

> Rien ne manque à la profondeur
> du profond.
> Le Rien s'élève, le fauteur.
> Il regorge en masse, il s'entrouvre.
> Il est l'abri violent et le gouffre,
> la nourricière noire.
> O négateur, il règne.
>
> (EC 23)

In both cases there is an important reference to opening, in one case positive and in the other restricted and negative, by association with 'le noir' and 'le profond'. Although the poem treats 'le Rien', which is masculin, in its nourishing aspect it is feminised into 'la nourricière noire'. This

is after all the threatening zone of 'l'autre', and woman is sensed as sexually different and ambiguous. She is 'la sorcière'.

The nourishment theme's importance can be deduced from its metaphorical use by critics in their appraisal of Frénaud's work. In his introduction to the recent edition of Depuis toujours déjà and La Sorcière de Rome in the single Poésie/ Gallimard edition Peter Broome makes extensive use of it.

The tensions existing in Depuis toujours déjà are considered in terms of offering and flux :

> La poésie, parfois, subit des ouvertures merveilleuses: moments... où l'on se croirait en présence de la "source ronde". C'est le temps selon Milena, le temps comme "un enfant qui joue" résorbant le moi dans le flux indivisible,réunissant sujet et objet... offrande et accueil,
>
> (SR/DTD IO)

Subjects dialectically opposite to those of the Milena poem, encapsulating the uncertain and menacing forces from beneath are also described by Broome in terms of a nourishing act :

> ces présences enfoncées... témoins de l'ombre énigmatique... nourrissent leurs relations contradictoires avec le poète.
>
> (SR/DTD IO - II)

The poet's voice is rendered uncertain and disturbing by a source of nourishment. However, it is typical of the way Broome describes this relationship, as well as of Frénaud's own

treatment of it in interviews, that the nourishment itself remains undescribed and stands as the inference of an act of donation, since it is an unspecified condition which permeates the poems.

In Broome's opinion the quest is: 'l'idéal d'un festin où... on partagerait une nourriture miraculeuse à la "table prodigue"'(SR/DTD I7) and he also qualifies this notion with its dialectical counterpart: 'on se retrouve parmi les emblèmes vides, on marmonne des formules impuissantes'(Ibid). Even in its quest aspects you can see the poem loaded with the dual properties of negative and positive nourishment in the critical mind.

Extending his trope further, the poem is considered through metaphor as a phenomenon of the natural order because of its complex reference to a dynamic implying nourishment:

> comme un arbre, 'immense réseau de sève et de blessures' se nourrissant des sources les plus louches pour tâtonner aveuglément vers la lumière.
>
> (SR/DTD 20)

The dynamic is one of transformation from base into sublime emerging; here the dialectic is more rigorous as Broome aptly illustrates in his numerous examples of synoeciosis used to describe Frénaud's poetic themes.

It operates on all levels and, nourishing substance of the poem, it tends also to be its underlying

fault, its separation. Equally, in Frénaud's 'La Sorcière de Rome' that city is 'le carrefour des contraires' (Broome: in SR/DTD 20) to the critic, and its contradictory role as an alimentary zone for the poem is highlighted: 'Lieu de la célébration et des larmes, source nourrissante et nostalgie stérile'(Ibid) where the festival and its contrary are significantly associated with the donating force underlying the town itself 'une énorme métaphore du poème'(Ibid).

Le don maléfique

The various states of bestowal which have been discussed so far are, perhaps above all, emotional networks that orientate the poem's material, engaging the writer along certain lines of questioning, within his language, as to what the word can achieve in the context of the commanding and usually lucid vision of 'la voix fêlée', and the generalised state of separation to which he is sensitive.

However, the affective equilibrium which the gift implies may be undermined and distorted by the donation if its form is tortuous and indicates an intentional alteration of the simple relationship 'donne' - 'reçoit'. No longer is it simply a question of the presence in a poem of 'la nourricière noire',where

the donator is recognised as malevolent or as belonging to the dead and the general area of 'le noir', rather we are faced with a distortion of the giver from his original form, with a difformation of that which is given, or with a situation where the gift is made impossible

I/ The Wrong Present

One of the main relationships for the poet with regard to the act or state of donation is that which one has with the mother. She is potentially the supreme form of 'la nourricière', and combines in a positive way the fertility of giving and a purity to which the poet responds. On the strange quest of the 'Navire négrier'(LSF 23) which seems to drift, out of contact with normality and with substance, in a similar rejection of contact to that of Rimbaud's ' Bateau Ivre': 'les parents, les amis étaient oubliés ou s'il leur arrivait de songer à eux c'était comme à des morts'(LSF 24).

However, for each sailor the arrival on board of 'la mère' has special significance. She gives them something which alters their world: 'elle... leur avait apporté ce sentiment si lourd'(LSF 23) a weight balancing the unstable movement of the ship and what that signifies in terms of existential contingency, the agony of dissociation from all that is home.

Above all she replaces the memory of their captain, which now only exists as: 'une incitation à poursuivre au-delà de lui, jusque dans la plénitude étrange de sa Mère.'(LSF 24).

The maternal force may also be experienced in its totally distorted state as 'Mère marâtre', and the donating energy of the mother is equally altered, inducing a kind of harsh lucidity :

> Il y a des vers dans la viande
> que je tends, affamé, à l'affamé.
>
> Il y a des gloussements parmi les pleurs
> dont j'abonde pour l'humilié.
>
> Il y a du sable dans le baume
> dont je flatte le supplicié.
>
> (LSF 43)

Evidently, the relationship is between a maternal presence and certain states of being, which describe an aspect of Man in general at his most passive: 'affamé', 'humilié', 'supplicié'.

The referents to which these metaphorical terms point cannot be totally separated from them; there is a sense in which Frénaud intends the word 'affamé' to evoke a starving person. But it is clear that the word connotes an existential or quasi-spiritual state in which the poet often casts himself, for example as the quester hungering for his revelation, humiliated by his defeat in the attempt to conquer unity,tortured by separation.

The donation is also of a more complex type. Actions by which it is performed 'je tends', 'j'abonde', 'je flatte', are heavily toned verbs. 'Je donne', and the neutral, clear relationship it may imply is replaced by terms which interpret the act. So that its positive aspect resides almost exclusively in the transitive instant of the verb copula.

'Je tends', for example, implies other, and more emotive qualities than a simple conferment. It suggests a fear of refusal, a hesitation in that the act of transferring the given thing from one person to another is not yet achieved; the transition of the unwholesome nourishment from 'la mère' to 'l'affamé' is not truly completed, but suspended and potential.

'Abonder pour' and 'flatter' contain similar connotations which expand out the sense of 'donner' and tend to reduce its effect. 'Abonder' introduces the idea of an excess which is not received, a 'trop plein', again in a state of suspension, and consequently it implies disequilibrium between the two parties.

'Flatter' includes troublesome connotations of obsequiousness and deception. The gift is altered by things which are diminutive and almost imperceptible: 'des vers', 'des gloussements', 'du sable'. In their insignificance these things are able to undermine the powerful emotion of donation. So that the incantation introduces conflict into bestowal and distorts the

gift into something malign. Through language arrives an unhinged view of the world, and the inflection of what should be a direct relationship between 'la mère' and 'l'affamé'. It is the sign of 'le néant' discovered at the heart of 'la plénitude': death and degradation ('le ver') which enters into things that sustain life ('la viande'). Negative states continue in this way despite a positive effort in the formal sense i.e. in attempted donation.

Despite the occurence of incompleted acts of giving, the repetition of 'Il y a' reveals a completed state; the undermining phenomena are not put there or potentially present, they are already there as a certainty. The exception to this is perhaps the final stanza of the poem which plays on this apodictic formula by changing its sense:

> Il y a, mon amour, que je peux donner
> mon trouble seul et ma misère.
>
> (LSF 43)

Asserted here is the presence of a problem which holds back or impedes an initial concession or desire to concede, rather than the certainty and simplicity of an undermining influence. 'Il y a que' has an almost conciliatory tone introducing a restriction; a lexical representation of the barriers surrounding the self and the difficulty with which this presents the poet.

The framework set up in previous stanzas is

rearranged, so that the negative aspect appears in the second couplet, whereas in others it is in the first. The verb 'donner' establishes the neutral nature of exchange, and the abstract epithets 'opprimé', 'supplicié' etc. are replaced by the possessive 'mon amour' which has an influence via association on the negative revelation 'mon trouble', 'ma misère'. The latter are also an abstraction of the inventory of concrete negatives used to undermine the giving process which precedes them. With the effect that in assuming the things given as her own attributes or possessions, they lose their concrete, definable presence, become uncertain and therefore unmitigable.

The bestowal itself adopts a more conditional aspect in the use of the auxiliary 'je peux donner... seul' revealing that it is the donating mother herself who's scope is restricted, and not that of the receiver.

Such reverberations within the poem between conferment which is intentionally warped and undermined, and one who's restricted nature is an inevitable corollary of the self, are an enactment of the barriers which prevent giving and 'l'unité' even in the maternal relationship, which has the greatest potential.

Should the sexual bond between Man and Woman be reduced to something meaningless or to a conflict, similar distortion in the poetic focus occurs :

L'amour que j'ai fait, à mon corps défendant...
Mais les hommes ont peu de défense...
Bien sûr, c'est sans mauvaise intention
que les femmes nous donnent les maladies.

(LSF 86)

Although off-hand in its tone, as though it was a piece of overheard small-talk, these lines mask a darker aspect of 'le malheur' beneath their initially apparent superficiality.

The metaphorical use of 'défendant' and 'défense' implies a perception of the barriers that maintain the state of separation. The 'maladie' given is a result of such a breakdown, exposes a distorted and unpleasant side to the transmission which the love theme usually generates in Frénaud's poetry. The tone is even more ironic in the assertion 'c'est sans mauvaise intention', and it is easy to read into 'bien sûr' the possibility of its contrary.

By this detour the poem reflects inwards on itself and on the idea of love as contest; 'bien sûr' is tinged with uncertainty, women are malign donators and the whole idea of 'défense' in love is revealed as imposture, since it is continual exchange even when as such it is at a negative stage.

Ironic and comic is the inversion of the man into the woman's role of defending herself against amorous onslaught. Communication of 'les maladies' figures the introduction of 'le néant' and of negativity

into the love relationship. At the same time it operates as a standing joke, so that the poem's focus on a conferment works at two complementary levels. The joke can only succeed at the point where love is considered as an ideal with which 'la maladie donnée' clashes.

Perhaps the main point of focusing the poem on this negative donation is to ironise the exchange which takes place and the possibility of overcoming barriers of defence that it seems to represent. This is apparent also in the change in person from one line to the next in rapid succession: 'je', 'les hommes', 'les femmes', 'nous', which can be interpreted as a development from the personal and the particular to the general. But the links backfire and reveal something facile in the poem's framework which aims to orchestrate experience.

So far the wrong present theme of donation has been peculiarly linked with motherly affection and with amorous association. Considering the fundamental and formative nature of these two terms of reference within the poem, it is hardly surprising that the third area affected by a similar kind of distorted giving is on the spiritual level, aimed at ironising the dynamic relationship of God and Man.

The claim of the religious encounter to reach into crucial areas of human existence and bestow upon them a clear sense and orientation is tested in

many of Frénaud's poems such as 'La Sainte face révélée dans les baquets'(LSF 245) and 'Plainte du Roi Mage'(RM I3I). The claim made by the latter to a universe of communion and communication: 'Tous les êtres gagnés par mon regard nouveau'(RM I37) and to a pulse of life emanating from the sacred which nourishes:'s'y combler de vivre'(Ibid); such a claim is negated by the eventual absence of any Godly presence (for the Magus this is ultimately due to time which takes the infant/vision away) such a presence might bestow this life-force.

The poet/Magus is thereby reduced to registering the limits of his human abilities: 'Je ne suis que de cette heure d'ici. Je suis seul.'(RM I38). Solitude cannot be overcome in human terms, since the illumination which religious experience affords is now only parodied in a limited personal beam of light which fails and the deity is absent: 'Mes fanaux sont trop courts'(Ibid). The beacon is an attempt at communication and warning which orientates the other or 'les autres' through a symbolically dark void in relation to the self. It is a derisory remnant of the divine light presented in the wandering star.

If breakdown of the relationship with God induces isolation and separateness, the deity himself is viewed by the poet as actively inciting such a situation.His estrangement from Man is exacerba-

ted in that he enacts an association of idle thought or wandering imagination - undirected and consequently to some extent absurdist,offering no orientation - with distorted bestowal: 'Rêverie de dieu ou les mauvais dons'(LSF 47).

The 'mauvais don' almost implies an accident without clear plan or programme. It is the product of divine revery, a concept containing seeds of paradox (as suggested above) since the supreme intelligence is usually counted upon as ordering the world along rigid lines and not as an agent of illusory dream.

However, there is a further inversion in the poem following the opposite direction, as the descriptions of giving seem to lay out a rigorous pattern, and are dominated by the causal adverb 'pour que': 'j'ai inventé l'amour pour qu'il te force et te laisse'(LSF 47). Articulation of the verse in this way is emphasised by the object 'l'amour', supposedly a spontaneous and irrational emotion, here governed by a tyrannic and malevolent logic rooted within language via the phrase 'pour que' which explains and overlays the donation, states that, in terms of 'les mauvais dons', it can be clearly rationalised.

> Je t'ai destiné le pain pour que tu en manques.
> Le vin aussi,pour que tu saches en abuser.
> J'ai préparé les larmes pour que tu en aies l'u-
> (sage.

/...

Et j'ai prévu la gloire afin que d'autres soient
(frappés.
Je t'ai promis la vertu pour qu'elle te soit
(grise.
Je t'ai lancé la beauté pour étinceler, lasser.
J'ai inventé l'amour pour qu'il te force et te
(laisse.
Je t'ai gardé l'honneur pour que tu sois ensang-
(lanté.
La fierté, je te l'ai confiée pour tout rendre
(pire.

(LSF 47)

'Inventé'; love, the most valid way for Frénaud towards a universalised condition of giving, is not given, but calculatingly designed as an object or system might be, as though it were drawn from nothing, a pure fantasy without foundation. Consequently, at the centre of the wrong-present is 'le néant' and paradoxically it is produced by a deity.

The gift is further alienated in that it is not linked to the receiver in a directly transitive sense. It is an invention, which unlike 'la donation' does not necessitate a recipient.Nor is it made indirectly transitive as might be the case in 'je t'ai inventé...'; the line again points inevitably towards the clumsy adverb 'pour que' as point of transference. An important bent is taken by the wrongness of the present and it is in this distortion that the action becomes transitive and the recipient passive to the point of subjugation: 'il te force'. Yet this too is an ironic deposition of a system of significations which with other codes of reference would have a

positive and unifying connotation. Since unity in the Frénaldian sense depends on penetration into 'le château' of the self, undoing of ramparts, but this must take place in a dynamic tension of 'soi' and 'autre'. Here the tension breaks, and a further aspect of 'le néant' enters into the poem, for no unity or contact ensues from the violation of 'te forcer' simply, and as a direct consequence there is a movement of abandonment: 'te laisse', which implies a state of solitude.

Despite the repeated distuption of structuring elements, the poem depends on the influence of symbols orienting the poem's meaning in a particular way, and markedly towards phenomena that have powerful emotional connotations for the poet. Objects that constitute the nourishment theme, as is evident from previous discussion, repeatedly add substance to donation and educe its various conflicting and unifying elements. God's ironising statement is turned by Frénaud upon things which, in terms of alimentation and its poetic meaning, affect him most as poet: the ritual prestige of bread and wine are among 'les mauvais dons': 'le pain pour que tu en manques/Le vin aussi pour que tu saches en abuser.'(LSF 47).

Contradiction, central feature of Frénaud's poetic process, reveals itself to be the underpinning of

the poem's irony. Both irony and contradiction are factors relevant to the poem's organisation. The first applies to statements in their intrinsic quality as they are related to one another. In other words it operates at the most basic level of lexis amongst propositions or parts of propositions, even within the different meanings of single words which the poet attempts to 'activate'. In contradiction words deny each other by words; are contrary to one another in character; deny and thereby undo the essence of each other, this is how contradiction works intrinsically, and produces tension within the poem.

Irony refers to perception and the point of view adopted with regard to such antitheses, the ability, closely related to contradiction, to apprehend two or more apects at the same time, within the poem this promotes counterpoise.

Accordingly, donation is expressed in an indirect and dislocated sense (eg. the verb 'destiné' in the above quote) which includes connotations of fate and future promise with the consequence that the bestowal should entail its own negation in Man's lack: 'manque'.

Giving is again, and in another complex of contradicting movements, wrought with void as an essential component. The aim built into the life-giving substance 'le pain', is that it should be experienced as

an absence, its dearth has for its corollary (and somewhat on the semiotic level also[I]) death, and it evidently points towards a more metaphysical want which acts as an indirect metaphor for separation, is experienced by the poet as the opposite of 'la fête' or 'la noce'.

The gift of wine is also complex. Although indirectly actuated by God, the poet/Man is depicted as actively engaged in procuring his own void by way of distorting the wine's intended purpose, he is not passively subjected to divine will as in all other verses.

Wine is, mythologically speaking, a type of nourishment that borders on the spiritual because its main function, as well as satisfying the needs of the body, is to alter the state of the mind and the emotions. Distortion of 'le vin' takes the form of excess, which is diametrically opposed to the distortion applied to bread.

Yet, both imply a spiritual imbalance in either direction and suggest the gift is wrong, the giving deity an agent of malice, and the poem subject to the destructuring vagaries of an incomprehensible potency: God. There is, nevertheless, a conditional element introduced into the invalidation of wine, since

I/ For example, in the phrase: 'faire passer le goût du pain à quelque un'.

the auxiliary 'savoir' explicitly states the knowledge and ability to abuse and distort only; so the donation is not necessarily in order that they will abuse it. From this it appears wine is exempted from the inevitability of divine negation.

Abuse of wine is tinged with connotations of cerebrality, and is held in suspension by the auxiliary verb. Its affective links with the festival and a state of brotherhood presumably are too great for the poet, and they tend to break down the poem's symmetry which was along lines of donation and its relationship of tension with denied or warped donation. The ritual connection of bread with wine which is reproduced, though ironically, in these lines, provides an easily recognisable orientation towards the sacred and the metaphor of the body and blood of God which are conferred upon Man.

Sacrality is, however, offset by an overriding sense of purpose, though distorted; donation is not mystical and superfluous in its necessity, but is subordinated to a higher design developed in the poem by repetition of 'pour que'.

Wine, through its representation of blood, has a greater psychological potency than all other images here and would seem to generate the following line at the level of subjective meanings: 'J'ai préparé les larmes pour que tu en aies l'usage', where 'abuser'

and 'l'usage' contrast and are both applied to a fluid associated with the intimate recesses and emotions of the self.

The first('le vin') is a sign of joy absorbed into the self; the second ('les larmes') of sorrow pouring outwards. These concrete images which activate complex associations are counteracted by the numerical dominance of abstract qualities: 'la gloire', 'la vertu', 'la beauté', 'l'honneur', 'la fierté', all of which point to areas of sublimation that, almost inevitably in Frénaud's poetry, involve immediate negation.

Focusing on a direct, transitive act of donation ('donner') and its interpretation (ie. in the words 'c'est pour...') the poem forces together the concrete and abstract :

> Je t'ai donné le souffle, c'est pour te le ra-
> (vir,mon enfant.
> Je t'ai donné l'espérance pour vous mieux trom-
> (per.

(LSF 47)

At this point the poem changes. Variation in the form of donation ceases, and the word 'donner' itself, more closely related to the fundamental act, is repeated in a rhythmical way which implies some sort of stability emerging from the various lines which reinterpret bestowal through different copulas: 'Je t'ai destiné', 'préparé', 'prévu',

'lancé' etc. However, this culminating form which satisfies a certain desire for stability within the poem, and emphasises the preponderance of donation, is centred on vacuity and negativity despite its regular and stabilising description. For its meaning is death 'le souffle ravi', inspiration destroyed, and the tyranny of hope where both negative and positive valencies are inextricably bound and which pushes the poet on in his absurd quest.

'L'espérance' it is which unveils the framework of deception in all the preceding verses. Its complex interaction of human desire and illusion is present within all forms of donation. The rhythm is disrupted in a more evident way by the sudden change in person from 'tu' to 'vous' within a single statement.

Following the mockingly affectionate words 'mon enfant', it seems to uncover a sudden distantiation from the subject which points to the illusion of closeness and contact which donation creates. The insistant repetition of 'tu' and 'te' is undermined, its effect is reversed by this alteration, so that the whole poem is reinterpreted and the non-transitive expression of giving was further removed, since the personal pronoun used was a deception only made explicit in the final line.

Refusal of Donation

The gift may also contain 'le mal' at the core of the exchange which takes place. Refusal to give or to take provides a clearer example of impediment to the state of donation than the ironic distortions noted above. Complexity therefore resides less within the passage of donation deviated by barrier and counter-barrier in a taught dialectical development, than in the open exposition of a failed attempt to overcome 'la séparation'.

The amorous connection of two bodies in an instant of fluid contact: 'De nos deux corps s'écoulait un profond serpent'(LSF I5), and which in the fluid description of its movement, seems to filter through the menacing, nocturnal and submarine barriers: 'L'eau passe à travers les atolls de la nuit'(LSF I6).

This contact by penetration nevertheless results in: I/ images of things in a stage of entropy, disorganisation ('en colonne croulante'), 2/ in impediment('on n'avance plus'), and ultimately 3/ in images of cloying solitude ('Solitaires coagulés'.)

Embedded within this weave of movement and stasis which demands highly imaged and multi-levelled language, three stanzas set out the complex relationship between 'Je' and 'Tu' , and the intricacies of interaction which seem to parallel the more recondite, oneiric language of the poem's main body. The most

involved of these treats a refused donation :

> — Je t'ai donné autre chose que toi-même.
> Tu n'as rien pris et je suis dépouillée
>
> (LSF I5)

Two nuclei of meaning seem to be present in these lines: I/ the notion of the other 'autre chose que toi-même' implies contact, penetration and breakdown of the limiting barriers of 'le soi' in a positive sense, since it is the end of separation;

2/ 'Dépouillé' referring to the woman herself figures an opposite of giving: theft, paradoxically arising from refusal of a gift. It connotes an act of violence and the state of being undressed, elements of meaning which also indicate a breach in barriers of 'le soi', but in a negative direction. Abstract relations replace 'nos deux corps' as point of focus. The breach which permits sexual and spiritual contact is also 'le déchirement' within Man's being, it will be both positive and negative in Frénaud's poems as will its opposite 'le rempart'.

The poem orchestrates the interplay of these through fictional 'Tu' and 'Je', and along the paradox of an affectively charged action which is tautologous in its exposition, and a parallel lack of action, a neutrality, which entails emotionally powerful consequences in the word 'dépouillée'.

Is the second sentence a consequence of the

first? Are they without logical relation save in the affective tensions which run through the notion of a positive and a negative breach within the monolithic presence of the pronouns 'Je' and 'Tu'?

There is an almost mathematical rigour in the way these two statements cancel each other out as though they aimed at the metaphorical 'zéro pur', a resolution of conflict, but dangerously close to 'le néant'[I]. This is a commanding image in Frénaud's verse.

The positive descriptions of donation ('donner', 'autre chose', and 'que toi-même') each progresses towards a more confering 'don' which is almost a tautology, since what is given is, of necessity 'un apport' or something other than himself to the recipient.

This line is neither 'plus' nor 'moins', it contains no dynamic, the progression is illusory, and according to this line of interpretation it remains at

I/With regard to this equation we may study the opinion of Peter Broome: 'Si donc quelque équation poétique peut être établie dans la théorie de la création artistique de Frénaud... elle s'appuie sur un sens aigu de la précarité de l'expérience et de l'émotion, sur sa capacité typiquement poétique et à référence ontologique à la fois de distinguer entre phénomènes et modes de l'être, et pourtant de parvenir entre eux(...)à une certaine fusion ou échange, renversement ou équilibre, qui souligne implicitement la nature précieuse et flottante du paradoxe et de la dialectique, plutôt que leur propension à bousculer et terroriser... nous devons envisager les poèmes de Frénaud comme offrant une balance sensible entre le minimum et le maximum...'

(Peter Broome: 'SUD' Nös 39/40 A. Frénaud 73-74)

the pure level of the statement: 'Je t'ai donné',without any real expansion of its sense.

The action described in the second line produces a more intensely negative effect; that nothing is taken means the woman is left with less or with nothing at all, and this because the donation is at a higher level (ie. beyond the mere act of giving one's body) an exchange which here breaks down, and which finely alludes to the defect within the poem also. A defect which makes of it 'conquête dérisoire', qualified by 'notre inhabileté fatale'.

This ambition of the poem to achieve 'la conquête' and overcome internal and external impediments, a conquest by which it should become a locus of contact and tension, is described by Frénaud as a key feature in his composition :

> C'est une poésie de la possible joie et de l'échec métaphysique de l'Amour. A travers le déchirement vécu des deux cotés... le mouvement du désir porte le poète à abolir toute frontière entre deux personnes, c'est-à-dire entre deux êtres qui sont eux-mêmes des unités de contradiction antagonistes, à les fondre l'un avec l'autre, jusqu'à en faire un seul être rayonnant qui se confondrait avec le rayonnement de l'être même, au-delà de ses reflets.
>
> (NIF 79 - 80)

The poem is characterised by its attempt at the metaphysical level to overcome certain frontiers, it is not said how he would 'abolir toute

frontière', the contradictions and antagonisms of two beings are not explained,and the description of the poetic process remains static, until Frénaud reaches the central aspect of the poem's ambition :

> Les approches et le saisissement, le vain combat, avec les ruptures et les reprises... parfois la reconnaissance d'un multiple échange heureux avec le monde qui se trouve alors incarné par la femme, et qui nous justifierait d'être là.
>
> (NIF IO)

Presence of 'les ruptures', 'les approches', of breaches, ramparts and frontiers, proposes a static, unconnected perspective and implies the necessity of what might be metaphorically called a verbal description, a movement that reveals the area of contact.

The wall surrounding the lovers is immobile even when broken,yet it invites movement through its opening, and it may be found to have a parallel in the substantive (as opposed to verbal) form of much of Frénaud's poetry.

It is the verbal form, and its capacity to operate as a link and joint, which is developed here and expressed in 'le multiple échange', an exchange which provides not only the poet, but also 'nous' with an existential basis: 'nous justifierait d'être là'. But the dialectic of the poem, and the relationship of individuals it exposes, inevitably returns to the

state of extreme separation where 'la frontière' becomes meaningless :

> Ce serait alors l'accomplissement dans la durée...Mais aussi l'extrême détresse... le désert;... l'oubli; la solitude: voilà comme se présente l'amour dans ma poésie.
>
> (NIF 80)

In 'le désert', 'l'oubli', and 'la solitude', no distinct spaces exist, there are no barriers, simply a vacuity which, as was seen in a previous chapter, intuits extreme anguish. Consequently the poem reverberates rather than progressing, or it forces the reader to concentrate on a moving, changing area, between ambition of donation and its failure: 'la séparation', their interlocking within language, a kind of poetic synapse within conscious perception. The central role of the verbal copula and of what I would simply call poetic movement is borne out repeatedly:

I/ I should like to attempt to back this notion up using the concept of phusis in the rhetoric of Aristotle, and which Paul Ricœur sees as a deciding feature of metaphor and poetry:

> le terme même de phusis, ultime référence de la mimêsis. Nous croyons le comprendre en le traduisant par nature. Mais le mot nature ne trompe-t-il pas autant sur la phusis que le mot imitation sur la mimésis? L'homme grec était sans doute moins prompt que nous à identifier la phusis à une donnée inerte. C'est peut-être parce que, pour lui, la nature est elle-même vivante que la mimêsis peut n'être pas asservissante et qu'il peut être possible de mimer la nature en composant et en créant. N'est-ce pas ce que le texte le plus énigmatique de la Rhétorique suggère? La métaphore, est-il dit, met sous les yeux parce qu'elle signifie les choses en acte.' (III, III, 1411 b 24 - 25).
>
> (P. Ricœur : La Métaphore vive p 61)

La grande ange au travers de la forêt,
si les moutons n'y passent plus, ni personne,
n'offrant plus rien,
exténuée,
immobile désormais.

('Désaffection' H I67)

The words 'n'offrant plus rien' in this poem have an uncertain valency. It is difficult to tell whether they refer to the head clause or sub clause. Both would make sense; with the former it implies that without men and sheep passing, the trough offers nothing since the state of conferment is in abeyance. With the conditional clause sheep and men no longer offer anything. In both cases the offering is linked either logically or grammatically with 'passer' the passing, a movement through which could activate the whole scene. In some ways then the poem would appear to be articulated almost verbally at this point. Yet it contains no main verb, and the culminating words: 'exténuée/ immobile désormais' enforce not only an impression of stasis in the unalterability of adjectival attributes, but, through 'désormais' they deny temporal alteration, time being the distinguishing feature of the verb. Within this poem also is a pun pointing to the possibility of an alternative reading along emotional lines, since the word 'désaffection', as well as signifying abandonment, also plays on the obvious presence of the word 'affection'. The offer is refused, as is affection, nourishment or movement.

Refusal of the present implies an exacerbated form of stasis.

Only structures of possible exchange which are negated along the clearly equational lines noted above seem to proliferate. In this context, the poem often focuses on a search for a child: 'un enfant pour l'adorer ou pour lui faire mal.'(EC I4) or a relationship with an infant: 'j'ai connu la première apparition de la petite fille'(LSF 25).

Evocations of the child in Frénaud's work strain towards a positive concept of its role and its presence, this inevitably links the child with a breakdown in exchange as, for example, in 'Plainte du Roi Mage' when the Magus realises the limitations of his epiphany and, after seeing the birth, continues to hope for 'un enfant radieux, à la fin'(RM I37).However, the accidental mistress who bears the poet's unknown, unseen child, is the objective of negative emotional reactions and of the donation which fails:'Je n'avais rien à lui donner, j'ai tout perdu'(LSF 45). Ironically, of course, it is from this negative exchange that the child — an extension of the poet's self — is born. A sense of wrong attribution also pervades the poem, the woman who generates negative donation also distorts the quest: 'Ce n'étais pas elle que j'attendais'.

The Gift Goes Astray

Distortion of the present in its contingent form and refusal of its transitive operation, are evident factors in its disintegration and malevolence. However, the gift may also be wrongly attributed by the giver, its ultimate aim may go astray.

The notion of direction here is important. Shot through with the incidental happenings of the quest and its dictates, the poem gropes for something, searching for an orientation. One of the ways in which this aim is articulated is in the image of the gift, and the mythological bases for this are numerous and evident, beginning with the example of 'Les Rois Mages'.

When donation has gone astray therefore, the consequences are of a different sort than in above examples. The recipient now unhinges the poem and causes a disruption in the flow of exchange, a breakdown in the quest. The poem attempts to reorient itself by almost obsessive questioning, the world out there becomes menacing and demands all the force of concentration.

Reality presents the child with problems of interpretation and discovery that are fundamental to the poem: 'L'enfant ne voit que des signes incompréhensibles sur la paroi'(H 24). Ultimately it is an alternative state of things, a kind of epiphany

akin to the poet's desire for being, for which he searches: 'C'est de l'autre côté de la devanture peut-être que bat la réalité véritable'(Ibid).The attempt to penetrate this otherness takes the form of emotional donation, which is bound to fail :

> S'il y eut des bouffées bienheureuses, ce fut sans contact... une invention... Il n'y a personne d'autre. Comment pourrait-il se trouver comblé, si l'amour c'est lui seul qui le donne et le recueille?
>
> (H 24)

Rooted in a dialectic either of tension, refusal, or distortion, the offering demands presence of 'l'autre'. Otherness is emphatically denied 'Il n'y a personne d'autre', and the child, like the poet in his pessimistic moments, finds his expression reaching only himself. Solipsism begins to mark the attempt to reach an opening, to find 'les portes bleues', which are the poem's subject, and which connote the presence of 'l'issue', the opening which is not only expanse and possible escape, but a fulfilling movement: 'c'est le va-et-vient aisé et c'est le rayonnement pur'(H 26).

Anguish of solipsism and restricted outpouring points also towards the poem's ambition, the child's desire for amorous exchange is parallelled by the alterations within reality which produce the mystical leap of the poem: 'Des lettres ont recommencé à se former... pour produire le mot décisif...'(H 25). The

child's outpouring of affection would appear to aim at reciprocation,but his true wish is to be registered, understood: 'pour se faire entendre' (H 24). His desire is also to produce meaning in a way which is 'décisif'. The resolution of the child's enclosure is effected by dualistic exchanges :

> les signes se sont concentrés en deux réseaux en mouvement, qui se placent l'un derrière l'autre... et entre les deux, une joie n'en finit pas de percer (...) De l'un à l'autre, dans l'unique rayonnement, je me trouve ouvert et saisi — transporté et transportant — univers sans rupture et sans entrave...
>
> (H 25)

At the cynosure of movement, as though 'De l'un à l'autre' and 'dans l'unique' were interchangeable adverbs describing the same event, there occurs an alteration in poetic focus; it is no longer the child in the third person acting as subject, but the poetic 'Je',suddenly introduced at the crucial point where the system of exchanges described appears most similar to a metaphor describing the technique of metaphor in which two distant subjects are brought together to act one upon the other. At this juncture the poetic consciousness ceases to be the groping child, and assumes the strength and presence of 'je'.

The child's reflexive gift operates not only on an affective level, but also in multiple references to the ambition of the poem and of consciousness to att-

ain states of liberation and equilibrium. However, the mythical context is not altogether absent. The child's search is for a reality-altering key, and for 'rayonnement'; this in a sense resembles what 'Les Rois Mages' search for. Their gift also goes astray:

> La jeune fille s'est donnée aux soldats,
> que nous gardions dans l'arche, pour le rayon-
> (nement,
> pour le sourire de sa face.
>
> (RM I29)

The sacred girl (an apocryphal invention of Frénaud's) becomes an ironic form of the gift, disrupting the order to which the Magi have dedicated her. Sublimated forms of communication, 'rayonnement', 'sourire', for which she is kept,are replaced by the more simple act of giving oneself sexually, but here it is to a group of typically oversexed men, moving the encounter further away from the zone of extreme sacrality and orthodoxy implied in 'l'arche'. An alteration in value actuates the undirected donation :

> Le rubis n'a pas mûri,
> Je le donne à qui voudra.
>
> (RM 3I)

The multiplicity of donatees become a vague 'qui': anyone. The gift is worthless, and the act of giving becomes a vacuous parody. The object itself is conceived of in a confused way intended to unsettle the poem so that meaning is never

clear: a ruby cannot be ripe or unripe, and there is possibly a confusion with 'les fruits pourris' of the preceding line:'Que les fruits pourris éclatent comme des grenades,'(RM 30).

'Le don' in Frénaud's poetry has the effect of an organising and disorganising theme. It produces complex meaning and generates metaphorical links, but also reveals their underlying conflict. For example, 'nourriture' — a positive concept — is always verging on some representation of 'le don maléfique', a form of bestowal which destroys or distorts exchange.

One overriding identification is of poem as donation. The poet's uncertainty as to the meaning of his work and what it confers is only parallelled by that of 'Les Rois Mages' in their metaphysical quest: 'Quel est leur vrai dessein aux grands donateurs' (H 34).

His uncertainty about the aims of their donation suggests ultimately they may be the same as his own. Yet, even this becomes unstable ground; Frénaud sees himself as 'donateur dans l'incertitude' (IP I98).

Exchange, reception and emission drive the poem, but they are fundamentally uncertain processes. Similarly, the dialectical movements by which 'le don' can be reviewed as negative or positive have a vertiginous effect. Despite the substantival aspect, the scarcity of verb-forms, which has often been used to describe Frénaud's poetry, its dynamic lies at a deeper level where important themes such as donation cannot be pinned down or adequately described.

Beyond any simple formulation or conclusive outline, superfluous and contingent, it may proclaim a kind of senseless joy which denies cause and effect or rigorous structures. Yet it is also ritualised and meaningful (as for 'Les Rois Mages') a guiding experience and indicator of something superior to itself. In the latter case it invites distortion and disintegration.

In all its avatars the gift may be internal or externalised; in the first case connoting the secret and consequently a high value, the almost unattainable which has mystical potency and can theoretically alter everything; in the second it is outward and frank, an externalised flow which induces beatitude. Between these two the poems develop a complex interrelationship.

The afflatus also spans this field, coming at one instance from the modesty and secret familiarity

of 'Le Passage de la Visitation'(IP 96) at next from 'la grande, l'innombrable'(RM I2) in a consciousness rending flow which constantly threatens the hold language has over the subject matter of La Sorcière de Rome.

The donation theme brings into the poem several kinds of symbolic meaning which give it a clear direction and interpretative basis, all of which, in the exchange and transmitable experience they imply, advocate an opening in 'la paroi' which prevents any sense of contact.

'La fête' (celebration) which, in Frénaud's poems, often remains unattributed and without clear connection to any event, is simply a moment of communion. Yet, when defined, as in'Noël interdit', refusing the child entrance into the atmosphere of giving and openness of the world.

The festival is a gap in normal experience on the temporal level, its spatial equivalent is 'l'auberge', which also implies the approach of donation and of an essential form of nourishment. It has an orientating quality; its space and meaning are distinct from the amorphous extent and disruption of the quest.

At the centre of 'l'auberge', however, 'le don' may be associated with death in the form of 'la crypte', where the secret of what is to be given is enclosed.

The building also connotes donation via its metaphorical connections. It imposes a framework on experience and can signify the capacity of the self and of the poem for a donation. However, the building also encloses and may approximate 'le rempart' and its negation of a communing spirit.

As we have seen, the dialectic of this aspect in Frénaud's poetry becomes immensely involved and leaves the reader with a sense of stylistic tension and elaborateness which attempts to control the thrust of conflicting experiences constituted by: I/ an unresponsive universe, and a stultified self unable to communicate with it. 2/ Communication and the breaching of barriers. 3/ Illumination which is an epiphany and alters the external universe as well as the poet's 'soi', makes them one, but as a direct corollary induces... 4/ the agony of refusal, and relapse into 'l'eau noire' and stultification.

The building ('château', 'auberge', 'Maison éteinte'(IP I76), 'Palazzo Vecchio'(H 66)) always seems to draw the poem towards these problems of equilibrium which are central also to the theme of 'le don'.

Primary symbol of the need for an oriented and communicative world, 'la main' is figured appearing at a distance, as though from nowhere and without clear introduction or logical links: 'Très loin, une main tendue en vain'(EC 36).

The stranger, or 'l'autre' about whom the poems and quests seem to gravitate, only rarely reaching,contacting his otherness in 'le confondement' ('l'autre où toi et moi serons à jamais confondus' (RM,70) or 'l'unité', is conceived in connection with the hand.It is 'la main' which should forge the link with the sudden and world-changing appearance: 'sans nulle main pour prendre la main /de l'inconnu qui n'apparaît pas'(EC I3).

The other is a precondition for the parousia of a world of exchange where the self can experience 'le va-et-vient pur'(H 26) which is also 'le rayonnement pur'(Ibid). Yet this interaction tends by absorption, to make of the other a kind of extended self. This influences our perception of HAERES, the inheritor, a familial conferment which indeed restricts 'le don' to a small group, but 'Hæres' in its metaphorical form can be extended to include all men in a unifying intimacy. Consistent with this state of inclusion,however, is the morbid association of 'l'hoir', the male inheritor and his dependency on death and sorrow.

Outward-flowing donation from a natural order, and which can be expressed as 'la nourriture' or 'la plénitude', always verges on ambiguity. 'La source' is strongly positive and imbues Frénaud's poetry with clear psychological and affective currents which also occur in the mainstream of modernist French poetry.

Capable of altering 'le désert', the amorphous expanse which surrounds 'le solitaire', it stands as a metaphor of 'la trace' which guides the poem and sets bearings, but it also originates in a secret place and has the mark of mystery, of a value-enhancing enclosure. When identified with 'le néant', a non-entity without defining contours, it results from the conception of a nourishing thrust in its most extensive form 'Beauté blasonnée par l'absolu'(IP 65) and is inverted to 'un arc-en-ciel teint par la flamme'(Ibid) and is 'tendrement calciné'(Ibid).

A certain inevitability prevails about the poet conceiving the conferring pulse of nature in this way. He is driven by a force of conflict and contradiction, of multiple polarities, within his personal view of things and the ambition which underpins this 'force' or quality: the desire to obtain an absolute level of contact. The conditioning factor I am trying to point out here is what produces 'le don maléfique' and mutilations of exchange which mark out steps in the evolution of a poetic process and ultimately the poetic 'château', the combination of all Frénaud's books, which is erected from various strata of the 'profondeurs' within the self which will be expressed in words.

Most importantly for our discussion of Frénaud's poetry, 'le don' and the transfer or transitiveness

evoked with it are metaphors for the poem, the quest and other representations of the poem which activate different emotional qualities. Frénaud's ambition with regard to this is that the poem should constitute 'une valeur qui soit transmissible'(H I7).

The Dislocated Realm of the Poem

At this point it is important to recognise that the world the poet presents is altered by, or filtered through, his sensibility. Following from this there are two distinct possibilities.

Firstly, to draw into the poem the world in its ineffable nature, to refer to it via metaphors or figures which attempt to cram as much disparate reality as possible into his work (as is the case with Frénaud, his poems are firing off in different directions) or refer to it as allusively as possible. This remainder of reality transformed into language,images, metaphors, is organised and personalised according to the poet's ambitions. In the twentieth century French tradition this organisation is often along the lines of an ontological search or quest.

The second approach is to exclude those aspects of reality which detract from the 'pure' poetic concept. In this case language becomes a sort of game. This is not only true of late I9th century symbolists. For the abstract idea, 'le néant', 'l'être', 'l'unité' can come to dominate poetic enterprise as has been seen earlier in this discussion. Frénaud admits that his poetry is far from sensual, and that it is 'une poésie pensée'. Furthermore his tendency to indulge in

word-play has also been shown.

Roger Cardinal, in his book Figures of Reality (London I977) writes of a poetic tradition stemming from Rimbaud according to which poetry makes the world extraordinary, gives us a new perception of it, via a 'strategy of displacement and dislocation'(Cardinal, op cit); also that Rimbaud hoped to erect a counter reality from dislocated fragments of his sensibility.

To an extent these things are true of many poets and, predictably, they hold good for André Frénaud as well. However, he reassesses this poetic attitude in a new way, rearranging it in terms of his dominating aesthetic and philosophical principles: the search for being, the quest for unity via the poem, and ultimately, the perception (through the poem, even in its greatest moments of attainment) of unalterable separation

This chapter will be based on four forms of dislocation and the way they relate to its dialectic complements: location and construction. They are as follows: I/ dislocation of world and environment 2/ dislocation of self 3/ dislocation of 'toi' and 'moi' 4/ dislocation of 'le pays'.

The significance and importance of location is evident here. Self is considered as 'le château', 'l'île', 'la clairière', 'la maison'. World and environment in dislocation are a parody of those places

invested with sacred or mystical significance and which, as the historian of religions Mircea Eliade points out, figure a rupture with, and an orientation of amorphous space (and time). Places such as 'L'auberge dans le sanctuaire', 'L'idéale maison', 'Ménèrbes' or on a larger scale, Rome, Génova, Florence, Paris. One of the characteristics of Frénaud's sensibility then is a desire for a carefully structured space. This is revealed in his preference for certain quattrocento painters :

> Certaines toiles, m'ont aidé à reconnaître dans la réalité et à me donner l'envie de construire à mon tour, ou de parfaire, une organisation de l'espace, impliquant, avec des édifices, des verdures et des places, dans la lumière.
>
> (NIF I72)

If Frénaud's poems aim at a sense of space, they are still subject to the poet's lucidity and the consequent perception of a disordered unorganised space, 'pans de murs', 'colonnes croulantes' 'la tour poudrière'. The world which reaches the poet's senses in the moment preceding creation is one in which making, organisation, and destruction vye for supremacy.The poem emerges from this bearing both a strong desire for articulation and creative 'lumière', yet at the same time (and through the kind of image used Frénaud makes us see that it is inextricable from the other) a tendency towards collapse, destruction, 'balbutiement': 'Une lumière,acropole au sommet de mes

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songes,/ ayant lui, s'éboula'(IP I8). The sudden illumination of the creative instant 'ayant lui', and its total degradation, 's'éboula', via the organisation of verse and syntax, are crushed together.

It is hoped that in this chapter the consistency of this attitude can be illustrated and its numerous manifestations, as well as an investigation into its consequences for the poetic enterprise and the dominant metaphor of separation.

I/ Dislocation of World and Environment

The world comes into the poem, since only what the poet has experienced and reorganised or which has been reformed by contact with the subconscious, can be communicated. The incommunicable, towards which the poem seems to strain, only appears at these 'fêlures' of which Frénaud speaks. It is only when the clarity of words and images reflecting the outside world begins to break down that something other than given experience can be perceived.

Nevertheless Frénaud refers directly to his world and its dominant state: 'Le monde est en dérangement'(IP II0). The world is directly stated as a place disturbed and dislocated. So that even when the sacred space, Notre Dame de Paris, orientates his poetic sensibility, and seems to affect the world by organising it, there is a sense of agitation and

disruption which surrounds the cathedral and contrasts with it :

> Tout se dissout
> autour de ta majesté tranquille,
> buissons de nuages, figures d'ardoises,
> déjà la pluie.
>
> (RM 20)

Time, as is repeatedly the case with Frénaud, seems to take part in this disrupting movement resulting from the poet's attention being focused on Notre Dame: 'Déjà la pluie'. There is a sort of jump which brings on the final step of a picture becoming gradually diaphanous via the multiplicity of 'Tout', 'buissons de nuages' (a metaphor which swings between a kind of solidity and total vaporisation) 'ardoises' and finally 'la pluie'. The whole of Paris is in a dislocated form, confused via image and metaphor with the poet's brain or 'state of mind' perhaps; of the town he praises: 'ton ciel pourrissant, ô mon heaume enchanté.'(IP 31). The poet's peculiarly magical 'helm' (refering at multiple levels to the helm of the gallois, the 'bonnet phrygien,and more clearly, the poet's capacity for poetic thought) is associated with a sky which is disturbed, dislocated.

The metaphorical use of 'pourrissant' immediately performs a dislocation, but also implies substance or things in the world in a state of change and negative alteration. Paris is repeatedly described as 'mon

amande bleue'(IP 30 sta 5; 36 sta 3) a beautiful and disturbing image which allows us to consider the town as lover ('amante') and something edible, familiar, yet at the same instant strangely unfamiliar in its blueness, although it refers to the sky. The firmly understood location and elected space, Paris, begins to draw us into a world which will fall to bits and refuses to obey our preconceptions. 'Les mystères de Paris' consequently opens on a disturbing experience of the town which has become diaphanous :

> Déjà le feu des coqs
> a brouillé les grands claveaux de la nuit.
> Déjà les abeilles s'envolent des nids de l'aube
> et grèlent sur les tambours des laitiers.
> Hésitante, la pâture d'une journée ouvrière
> déboule vers le travail, pressée comme un chou-
> (fleur.
> O matin neuf et déjà rongé.
> L'armoire bâille, qui eut sa jeunesse végétale
> au sang blanc
> et les vieilles gens dont le cœur a battu na-
> (guère
> ouvrent la fenêtre grande
> pour découvrir les plateaux ensoleillés de mé-
> (moire.
>
> (IP 34)

Again, in this moment of dislocation where the solid becomes volatile, there is an interaction of two levels of experience, the cry of a cock becomes fire, implying light, heat, life, but equally destruction; 'la patrie', the solidity of the town's presence, is undone by these emotional connotations present in 'les coqs'.

The poem continues with consistently disruptive

images: 'les abeilles s'envolent', suggesting the disintegration of a hive and mimmicking the movement of a population. 'La pâture déboule', workers, strangely like some kind of nourishment, run through the town 'déboule', in dislocated movement. The time of day itself undergoes this process of disintegration and dislocation: 'O matin neuf déjà rongé'.

Experiences which the poet approaches also disrupt the normally idealised image of a town and penetrate its sordid aspects :

> Rue Vivienne, le vampire s'approche de l'adolesce-
> (nt
> qu'il aborda sous le porche de l'hôtel de Beaujo-
> (lais.

(IP 35)

Whilst at the same moment in these lines Frénaud adds a strangely humorous comment in mentioning 'l'hotel de Beaujolais' with the notion of blood and wine, its sacred significance and the evil of 'le vampire', joining to disrupt even further any clear perception of meaning and kind of experience the poet is aiming at. This uncertain sexual aspect is given added dimension :

> Colibris frelatées, les dactylographes.
> Le rouge à lèvres et leurs règles qui les ont
> (tachées.

(IP 35)

The associations of 'frelatées' and 'rouge à lèvres' with menstrual stains produces a

dislocation in the poem's tone. The hummingbird arouses images of delicacy and exoticism which suggest the poet's feelings towards what he sees of Paris are elevated and uniformly positive. But the way in which menstruation, the double sense of 'lèvres' in 'rouge à lèvres' which can equally refer to vaginal lips, and the colour and activity of the hummingbird are worked together, dislocates the clear picture of things. The poet begins to explore areas which have more to do with his internal state than what he actually perceives or writes down on paper.

In 'La noce noire' the association between an agonised view of the world and images of destruction and disruption is more clear: 'Les tonneaux débondés roulent par toute la terre'(LSF 55). The search for the 'fiancée' upon which 'les noceurs' seem to be launched, takes place amongst images and objects in this state of dislocation and separation. The barrels are evidently a sort of image for the wandering men themselves. The barrel contains alcohol and keeps it in a useful state. Yet here it is given to useless movement about the whole world, which immediately introduces a wider, cosmic implication into the poem. The world which the poet perceives as that of hopeless quest through a separated zone is continually experienced in terms of dislocation.

What happens to the world when it comes into

contact with the disastrous wanderers? Things which were designed to hold the self and its products in an integral state are perceived as dislocated and destroyed: 'les silos rongés de rats et d'orge'(LSF 56)the enclosed space intended for guarding is undermined at once by its contents from the interior, and by those who try to enter from the exterior. The home also — a space which guards the self, the family, and, as Frénaud says, their memories — begins to dislocate: 'les maisons mal jointoyées'(Ibid).

Similarly, all attempt at a building which aspires beyond the given space and into the 'au-delà' where contact and unity may be possible, undergoes destructive forces: 'tours tronquées/ montant et descendant dessus l'horizon'(Ibid).

The poet's personal solitude induces experiences of dissolution and dislocation. It is as though any perception of the self in a larger context without personal connections (such as love) which stretch from deep within the self into the outside world, reduced the latter to a state of disruption :

> J'ai oublié ces éclats dans la brume
> Que le vent t'emporte, bouffée doucereuse,
> et que je sois seul comme je suis seul.
>
> (RM 33)

A dislocated and almost disembodied series of memories 'ces éclats' leads to a deeper sense of dissociation from a world which

gradually loses substance. The uncertain and disquieting presence of 'ces éclats' reveals an aspect of Frénaud's poetic sensibility. When the world he experiences begins to distance itself from him or vice versa, and the poet's capacity for interpreting and formulating reality breaks down, it becomes dislocated into 'ces éclats'.

On the timeless quest of 'les chevaliers' in 'L'étape' the face, which is seen and interpreted as either friend or foe, becomes a dislocated image: 'Un visage illisible dans ses éclats qui changent' (EC I3). The violence of 'éclats', their implication of a certain stage of destruction and of dispersed energy is parallelled by a sense of things being undone: 'c'est détourné par la profusion'(EC I3).

The poem itself, as a picture of the world, or an imprint reflecting the way the poet's emotional barometer reacts to the world, is 'éclaté' and 'détourné', dispersed into various books which Frénaud is constantly attempting to articulate (as in the new edition of La sorcière de Rome and Depuis toujours déjà combined) and embarks on new routes in the poetic quest which the writer himself had not desired or foreseen ('le poète construit un chemin dans l'opacité'(IP 233).

Ultimately, the poem progresses towards 'l'illumination', and the final 'éclaircissement' of

its own nature. Yet 'l'éclat' is a momentary and derisory allusion to this integral light. On the temporal level also it is a dislocation of the whole; time, in short, bursts open. 'L'être', the unnamable force which the poem chases, paradoxically becomes articulate and mobile via the dislocated form of 'l'éclat' :

> De l'une à l'autre forme il ne passe pas,
> hors quand se défont assez toutes mes prises
> pour que remonte et sourde soudain
> au travers du silence un éclat.
>
> (IP III)

It is perhaps because 'l'éclat' is this disturbed moment in the silence and integrity of the unsayable, that it is able to transmit being's presence. The poet himself, in his emotional states, or his whole self in all its senses, is undone. His grasp on the world is destroyed.

An apparent paradox occurs between the idea of 'l'éclat' and the notions of fluidity in the movement between different forms, and 'sourdre'. However, this unfathomable movement of liquid is also a dislocating influence :

> Et je ne la maudis pas
> si elle n'apparaît pas, s'il n'y a pas d'île,
> mais le fleuve seul, épaissement, qui roule ici.
>
> (IP 53)

In this poem also a premium is set upon the appearance which will structure experience

and reveal the unity of love.

The island acts as a stable, defined space within the uncertain movements of 'le fleuve', a dislocated area of encounter in that its substance is continual change. There seems to be an identification of the negated appearance of the mistress, and negated presence of the island. The river can also form a temporal representation. Its movement is described in a confusing use of the adverb 'épaissement' which seems to adhere closer to the noun 'fleuve' or adjectival 'seul' than to 'rouler' which is hived off almost by the relative pronoun.

'Epaissement' has strong connotations for Frénaud and seems to figure the impenetrable 'profondeur' within which the clarity of an articulated or architectural space is not possible: 'Mais déjà le souffle a tourné, un murmure épaissement: les grands arbres, toutes formes confondaient...'(EC I2).

An indistinct language from deep within the psyche 'un murmure', shares these characteristics of difficulty in expression and distortion of sense data. You have the feeling at these moments that the poet is losing touch with familiar surroundings and is being drawn closer to an experience which disturbs his language and dislocates perception. This is the result of contact with the deep subconscious in its genuinely disturbing form.

Yet the splinters or flashes of events or of emotional levels and states, are altered and rendered positive by love and contact with 'la maîtresse' :

> Tes éclats d'avant se retrouvent
> dans ton regard qui les brûle.
> Mes figures ne sont plus désertes,
> qui se rallient à ta source.
>
> (IP 66)

There seems possible here an identification between 'tes éclats' and 'mes figures' which spans the dual psychic force of fire and water. Here the river ('fleuve') assumes its positive and locative form as 'source', the spring which, from a single, hidden (and therefore quasi-sacred) place, irrigates a geographical area. The disrupted message of 'les éclats' rendered more disturbing in their plurality, is re-forged by the ardour of 'ton regard'.

The loved one, ideal form of 'l'autre' is able to articulate and locate that which is dislocated and disrupted. This ultimately leads to a confident assertion of unity which is surprising in Frénaud's poetry: 'L'intégrité de l'amour/ intégrera toute la vie.' (IP 66).

The parallel of fire and water ('Brûle' - 'source') is a striking illustration of sudden integrity present in the poet's sensibility. It is noticeable that the thing which sets off this reduction of the dislocated world is 'le regard', which like 'le visage'

transmits the message from within the self or within 'l'autre' to the outside world.

'L'éclat' in other poems seems to be a definable article of the phenomenal environment, a thing to which you can point directly like a splinter of glass. However, the connotation of such a word is not clear. It may be associated with other evocations of the dislocated world the poet sees and feels or devises intellectually :

> Quels éclats retiennent les vitres sous les cor-
> (niches?
> Qui s'approchent et, toujours imminent, qui
> toujours se détourne?
>
> (LSF I88)

This poem is strongly coloured by the quest for some secret and its potential presence. The dislocated and uncertain form of 'les éclats' are themselves unknown and subject to investigation. 'vitres sous les corniches' provides a tantalising outline of something concrete and knowable, almost familiar in their fixed architectural lines, yet held together by that which emerges from an unreachable depth in distorted shape.

Although it forms the central guiding factor of the poem, the secret is experienced in a dislocated way, as approach and turning away. Both these movements are held in a contradictory tension by the fact of their continuance in the repeated 'toujours'. The description is not of a sudden apparition of unity

here, but of the usual and continued possibility of its occuring. The dynamic this produces is one which often tears the world apart.

The poet's world is not compartmentalised and disruptive tensions such as the one discussed above are not restricted to the object of the search. The poet's own existence is part of the disturbing interaction of levels. In fact the 'secret' which runs through all the poems is seen as being both outside the poet — out there in nature and especially in the big city — but also deep within regions of himself unknown to him :

> Mais qui en toi résiste à l'écho indéfini
> qui prolonge une violente parole différée
> parmi tous les cris, par les détours?
>
> (LSF I88)

The trace of dislocation is here left on the word — the expressive sound such as 'l'écho', 'la parole' — as well as on the poet's deeper self. Echo is,of course, disrupted and distorted sound, possibly a message which is undecipherable; but it certainly and quite importantly is reflection and deflection of sound, the poet's own message returning to him, giving a sensation of sameness.

The external world then does not respond, it merely reflects. The 'word' is 'violent', tearing apart the calm silence or the equanimity of language, disrupting the internalised and self-contained code-

system that language hopes to become.

It is further thrust into dislocation and uncertainty by being amongst disrupting forms which are multiple and escape definition: 'parmi tous les cris, par les détours', the cries or shouts again distort the idea of a communication, and make this more violent and disruptive, whereas 'les détours' are abstract, do not coincide with the dominant 'lexis' of sound and message. Consequently, the referents can be in multiple areas — pointing to a sound out in the material world, which is lost amongst complicated turnings; they ('détours') can refer to the message lost within the poet's self and its metaphorical deviations (the word 'tour' also has the sense of subterfuge and indicates a kind of poetic self-deception.

Depth is the predominant domain for such an extreme form of dislocation, and it is within disruptive and violent depth that the poet finds the substance, the raw building materials, of his poetry.

Social Man as a whole also contains (and periodically releases) this attractive depth, 'la déesse Raison' admits: 'en vos yeux candides m'égare/ une profondeur inaccessiblement attirante, douce,'(IP 44). Reason itself is distracted and led astray into an area of humanity which, whilst it is attractive,cannot be reached; the secret motif here reasserts itself. Yet isn't the 'déesse Raison' also the poet looking at

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Man and the excrescences Man pushes into the world from within himself: towns, palaces, poems etc.? Reason searches for total control or an area which can be controlled, and finds only the dislocated landscape of the human interior, forcing her to admit, like 'le roi Mage', like the poet in 'cette nuit-là à Génova', like the riders questing in 'la clairière': 'je ne sais où je vais mouillée d'effroi'(Ibid) in an avowal of intimate, physical wetness.

Within the depth she perceives is only the unsettling dynamic of a broken vision of the locus: 'éclat de notre vrai domaine, de toujours entrouvert et repris'(Ibid). The dualistic dynamic of 'entrouvert et repris' enforcing a picture of something ungraspable (like Frénaud's image of 'les moires du temps') is a description of the landscape where 'l'éclat' appears. It verges on the realistic: 'par delà les collines rongées et les abîmes de mémoire' (IP 45) but via the preposition 'de' becomes a metaphorical reference to an internal state, a part of the mental map that has been eroded away 'rongée' and figures abysses which can engulf Reason.

The relationship between totality and dislocation is perhaps the main feature of this aspect in Frénaud's poetry. In instants of idealisation when the poem ceases to be irrigated by 'la violente parole', the dislocating and unifying phenomena of the world

seem to coexist :

> Je m'attarde au pas du fleuve pour me lier à lui.
> Pour me rassembler dans le mouvement qui le
> (guide
> et ralentit quand il arrose une maison dans
> (l'île.
> Je me suis retrempé dans sa promesse courante,
> qui émerge entre les murs jaunes que défait la
> (brume.
>
> Ces richesses qui ne savait me dissoudre,
> je les lui donne et je prends pied sur ma terre.
> A partir d'une île je m'investis dans la total-
> (ité.

(IP 52)

Fluid images of the world to which the poet is attracted are reasserted. Yet here they are not the uncertain and disruptive influence seen above. The tone is almost that of a Rousseauesque revery. The river here is characterised by a sense of purpose and conforms apparently to the poet's internal state. It slows down near the island, does no violence; it does not roll, alone and indifferent as is the case on p above, but 'arrose', suggesting the ultimate intention of rendering fertile and of conventional geographic description.

Further, it is almost personified 'au pas du fleuve', with a suggestion of steady rythm and direction. It is guided, and figures a promise, counterpart of the secret to be discovered on the quest. In all this can be found a sense of the oasis, of the poet's experienced world slowing down to some purpose. The poem reaches a newly articulated point both in time

(as alluded to in the flow) and in the poem.

Liquid in its most dynamic and tangible form, the river, yet becomes an instrument of dislocation when it generates 'la brume', as it emerges itself through 'les murs jaunes', as though it had penetrated and disrupted them. Mist, in its almost intangible representation of the fluid principle breaks down the barrier: 'les murs jaunes que défait la brume'.

The notion of things undone in Frénaud's poetry is a strong one, the face, a secret foreshadowed in 'La sainte face', undergoes dissipation: 'les marques où se dissipe/ le visage non formulé'(IP 64).[I] In this instant of calm, however, the dissipating motif has a positive meaning. It allows the poet access to his ideal island and encloses and adumbrates its surrounding space. And, with a dynamic of exchange 'je donne et je prends', alters the status of the fluid forces which potentially dissolve his integral self — so that it becomes the basis for 'ma terre' a totally personalised and amenable world.

The dislocated view of the external environment then may have positive or negative implications. How-

I/ Similarly the poet's life: 'Il fallait te défaire au matin comme un peu d'eau'(IP 84); or 'Je m'en vais parmi les quais défaits'(IP 208).
'Tous les nœuds déliés, les spheres/ joueront dans les jardins'(RM 23).

ever, the internal state of fragmentation which reaches deeper into the self and the cosmos which the self attempts to form with the external world is the more agonising and productive element: 'déchirement signifie séparation et entrave'(IP 234). Yet it is from such 'déchirement' that the poem takes form and dislocation remains at the heart of Frénaud's most structured poems. As Roger Little has put it, the poems are: 'ces châteaux provisoires qui sont des fragments inadéquats... mais inappréciables de l'Autre'(R Little: 'Frénaud face au vide' in SUD vol 39/40 p 237).

2: Dislocation of Self

Part of the poet's quest for unity, and for 'l'Autre', takes place within the uncertain and ambiguous boundaries of the self. Paradoxically, consciousness of his own personal existence leads not to a sense of integrity, of the self as a whole, but to a series of images of fragmentation and dislocated forms:

> Je suis là dans la même peau,
> poitrine sans poitrine jointe,
> seul en moi-même divisé,
> sans accès à l'unité bleue.
> Dans le vide où mal je respire,
> sous l'énergie désaccordée,
> des rats ricanent et gémissent.
>
> (IP 210)

Suddenly, at a particular junc-

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ture in Frénaud's poems, the self is a restriction, an imprisonment, directly experienced in this case not as a depth or an uncertain zone of consciousness, but as physical presence, 'peau' and 'poitrine'. The negated image of 'poitrine jointe' contrasts with the complex idea 'en moi-même divisé', implying the multiple facets (like 'se dissipe le visage') of the poet's interior state and their antagonism. The within of which the poet is aware ('dans') is considered as 'le vide', an unfitting environment which in its airlessness reverts back to the physical image of 'la poitrine'.

Yet the final dislocation of this picture of the intimate self is the abstract and uncertain image of 'l'énergie désaccordée', a force which in its lack of harmony and its disrupted state undermines the poem. In the way of sound it can only produce the sneers and whines of rats, a sub-human noise, and a threat.

This reflexion on the poetic self centres on the fact of solitude, a force which seems to negate the locative tendency of adverbs 'là', 'dans', 'où', or prepositions 'en', 'sous', 'sans'. In tending to define the poet's limits and a surrounding structure, these words are counterbalanced by the poem's attempt at Totality, since 'Le château qui brillait'(IP 210) — viz the enclosing and containing structure which contains 'l'autre' and often prefigures its presence — is dislocated, undone :

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De tout sans lui suis détaché.
Le combat n'a plus de visage,
plus d'emblème ni de raison.
Le château qui brillait, obscur,
s'est arrêté de battre interdit.
A quoi bon vouloir y poursuivre
par la douleur une vertu,
si plus rien ne fait foi?

(IP 2IO)

It is now 'obscur', its life-force that dramatically shares the physical attributes of the poet's self: 's'est arrêté de battre interdit'. The subliminal desire for location and orientated space which filters through in the above lines, is cast out in a preceding line before it can fully develop: 'De tout sans lui suis détaché'. Without love ('lui'), the grasp on Totality becomes a total absence.

Ultimately, when the poetic adventure allows the self to emerge from its limits, the alteration into 'l'autre' is proven impossible: 'sorti de moi encore moi-même'(IP 2II). This movement towards the exterior only finds expression in dislocated form, a line of poetry which turns in on itself in a variation on 'le détour' — it is 'un retour'. Resulting from it is a further shattering of experience: 'aisi l'éclat fait d'une eau morte/ touchée par un soleil rouge'(Ibid) is nothing but a moment's flash of illumination fashioned from dead water. It re-introduces allusion to uncertain and frightening depth, distorts the connotations of 'le fleuve' as discussed in the previous section,

and unleashes a disquieting interference between the psychological potency of fire as bringer of light, and water as an element of suffocation now clearly a harbinger of death.

Furthermore,a reading of this stanza as a whole reveals that the consequential adverb 'ainsi' leads to no main clause, but runs out into a series of descriptions :

> sorti de moi encore moi-même,
> ainsi l'éclat fait d'une eau morte
> touchée par un soleil rouge,
> quand le désir me saisira,
> le regard droit et les mains fortes,
> en manteau de sang rayonnant,
> le bouquet de larmes pâli,
> les yeux abîmant la douleur.
>
> (IP 2I0)

In a complex and largely fragmented image which probably owes something to Baudelaire's 'Vie antérieure', the poet's own eyes, and implicitly his inner-self, reflect the faltering appearance of an illumination which tantalisingly points towards unity. Yet the poet himself is enclosed ('manteau de sang rayonnant') within a distorted representation of the sun's dying light, as though the externalised picture and the personal, existential state were inseparable.

'Dans l'île'(IP 53) the poet seeks a fixed and comprehensible environment in which the self can find harmony: 'Je veux rester fixé sur cette place'(IP 53), where the inner tensions can be forgotten so that he

loses the agony of consciousness — he would reach a state of material existence 'jusqu'à l'hébétude'. Although it is a desire for structure and the loss of conflicts within consciousness, the movement towards static material existence becomes a disrupted enumeration of articles in the environment the poet wishes to lose himself in :

> Ou si je ne peux être l'arbre, qu'on m'attache
> aux poignées d'un trou d'égout s'il n'y a rien
> (d'autre,
> ou que je sois la cheminée qui regarde sa fenê-
> (tre.

(IP 53)

Already the poem begins to adumbrate the opening as an elected image, 'trou d'égout' and 'fenêtre' figure the exit in two fundamental ways, descent into an airless or infected depth, or flight into the landscape and light, fecal obsession and sublime obsession, heaven and hell; opposition and disruption. By a final movement however, the poet reveals a different desire for escape :

> Je veux quitter le temps qui ne m'a jamais aimé.
> Déposé là jusqu'à ce que l'on me prenne.
> Je suis fait pour disparaître hors de moi.
> Je ne suis venu que pour me perdre en celle-ci.

(IP 53)

Being there ('être là') is again exposed as a distressing poetic problem. This approach to the self reveals conflicting statements and modes of existence within each line: I/ 'Je veux',

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positive and active desire which contrasts with 2/ passivity in 'Déposé' and 'que l'on me prenne', the poet subject to a controlling force which is itself adjured by him. 3/ Existence as intention 'fait pour', but it is paradoxically its own negation,an impossible movement of the self outside the self, a dislocation within 'le moi' 4/ positive action and desire for self-loss are combined, a derisory restriction 'ne... que',direct intention 'pour'.The division and fragmentation of the self emerges in a disrupted pattern of desires regarding its existence, and statements which develop not outwards,but inwardly distort one another. Even the dominant notion of getting outside is understated and confused.

The desire for self-loss which inherently is a desire to dislocate the personal world and to escape its dictates (which cause the poet such anguish and produce the blockages preventing a free flow of energy); this movement towards self-escape passes through a dialectic of dispersal and concentrated material :

> Si je dois renaître, que ce soit
> dans du bois bien mort,
> ou dans de la neige
> parce qu'elle fond,
> ou dans de la pierre
> qui jamais ne rêve.
>
> (RM 36)

Evidently this view of the self

passing through one material form to another owes something to Asian cosmology. On the basis of this reference it is possible to say that Frénaud borrows and reorganises parts of myths to attempt a new structuring of his personal experience.

However, as Frénaud has repeatedly insisted, the 'arrière fond' of myth (that which says a spiritual life beyond death is possible) is unacceptable to him. The reincarnation idea, then, remains at the level of a reference to the self as it is 'là', given once and for all. The conditional 'Si je dois renaître' establishes the extent of externalisation of the self; it is a possibility used to illustrate the various tensions within the ego and the way these produce a kind of dislocation separating the poet from himself.

Immediately the stanza presents a fundamental opposition which unbalances the poem's message by disturbing preconceptions of how experience is rigorously divided; the rebirth will immediately be a death in the poet's putative transformation of the soul. That wood is normally a living substance further enforces this conflict, and contrasts with the lifeless quality of stone where the subconscious ('le rêve') loses all sway. On the other hand the desired quality of snow is its ability to melt, which points to a need for dissipation of the self; this disintegration of 'le moi' is almost tentatively suggested as an afterthou-

ght, yet it is the only point where a clear reasoned formula: 'parce que' is used. Snow and wood are susceptible to various kinds of change which can be construed as involvement in the eternal cycle of oppositions between life and death, the alteration of states. Whereas stone describes the poet's predilection for a static loss of self, total 'anéantissement'. These leanings towards various forms of excursion from the self into the material world do not form a clear and unified image or a structured picture of the ego; they reveal dislocation of the poet's interior.

Frénaud considers this interior dislocation an integral part of the act of producing poetry. And isn't it possible that poetry emerges from 'notre inhabileté fatale'? It cannot be too often repeated that the relationship between the poetic act and all other preoccupations is essential to Frénaud's poetry. This relationship is not often illustrated or made clear. It is left by the poet to operate beneath the surface of the poems or within joining points and dislocated areas of the various poetic collections. By this what is meant is the reference to poem as quest which is hardly ever made except in 'Le château et la quête du poème', and the poem as the unity which is the quest's aim, or the poem as 'cité étrangère'. Perhaps above other things the poem is 'la réalité cachée de soi' :

> Il y a, au cœur du poème, derrière le poème, révélé par lui, un magma de multiples forces contraires, qui tournent, s'entrecroisent, se heurtent, veulent s'échapper... Et qui s'échappent, effectivement, en propos obscurs — ce sera le poème — sans ordre apparent, possiblement.
>
> C'est de la réalité cachée de soi qu'il s'agit, et une discontinuité, une incohérence même, qui ne sont pas voulues, peuvent se comprendre comme étant exigées par l'objet qui se forme pour qu'il se forme précisément, celui-ci ne pouvant le faire autrement qu'à sans cesse tourner court et reprendre ailleurs, laissant percer quelque chose parfois d'un foyer incandescent, non maîtrisable, multiples traces et reprises d'élan de l'Eros toujours insatisfait, irréductible.
>
> (H I2)

With care, and by definitions which become increasingly precise, the poet approaches the metaphor of 'un magma' — amorphous, uncontrollable mass of molten rock awaiting form — which will hint at the nature of the poem's secret. However, the metaphor does not improve, since the contradictory and discontinuous centre of the poem is described primarily as its heart; the organ which maintains the life of the whole organism. With this in mind you can see an opposition between the comparison drawn from the natural order 'out there' in the most extreme form on the material scale; and the reference to an organ which will identify closely with the poet's intimate, physical reality, his interior.

This then is not simply an idle trope or a dead metaphor which Frénaud uses, since it becomes an

essential part (in the articulation of the whole work) of the way the poem approaches its own problems: 'le sang coule dans le poème,/ sort de plus loin que mon cœur.'(IP III). Caught in a moment where the concrete nature of the poet's physical existence and the abstract force which runs through the poem are identified, it would seem that the poem is an extension of the poet's body. The blood which flows in it emerges 'plus loin'. Distantiated and separate, it is nevertheless the same life-force.

At a further removed layer of metaphorical meaning, blood, heart and poem are this hidden and unknowable thing which makes the poem work, makes it move[I], and which at the same stroke incurs its failure; an element the poet names 'l'être' which — significantly similar in this to the blood of the poem — 'se meut à travers tout'(IP III).

'Réalité cachée' as description of this motivating entity which assumes numerous avatars, gives a second degree of interiority. One which has the typical Frénaldian tension of being hidden and secret, withheld from view or comprehension, but also real, and consequently available eventually for understanding, and able to exist externally, without the poet's supp-

I/ In this I am appropriating for my own purposes the Aristotelian concept of mimêsis phuseôs, described as 'le Réel comme Acte' by Paul Ricœur: La métaphore vive p 6I).

ort. Parallel to this is the fact that 'discontinuité et incohérence ne sont pas voulues'. The role of the poet acting consciously is to bring these uncontrollable and contradictory forces into the controlling and grossly logical forms of language.

So what is the meaning of 'soi' in this description? Possibly we have reached a stage where the idea of a supra-individual ego is again tentatively introduced. But as an anonymous and unspeakable thrust which produces above all the work of art, undermining all forms of expression whilst at the same time elevating them. This dislocated area of self and poem does not remain internalised. It is a dynamic which may be put into action by things outside, elected places and objects. The Palazzo Vecchio in Florence has a sudden and immediate effect on the poet's sensibility as he directs his attention :

> vers la Tour et vers la force qui me vidait de moi-même peu à peu et s'épaississait en la place (pour devenir quoi, je ne savais pas, mais, à coup sûr, pour m'apporter quelque chose au-delà de mon pouvoir),
>
> (H 64 -65)

Self, under the influence of an unknown and alien power, is taken outside the boundaries of the ego and,with the energy which dominates the poet, becomes concrete within the space he sees in front of him. This is the basic relationship Frénaud perceives. But within its description he places an

important theme already discussed here: exchange. For as the unknown empties him of himself, it also brings him something: 'pour m'apporter quelque chose',and the moment of getting outside the self, or of externalisation, involves a complex dialectic as the self which has opened and gone out in turn becomes the recipient of something else which is, paradoxically 'au-delà'. The tower of the Palazzo is itself interpreted as a symbol of 'l'élan de l'homme pour monter au-delà de lui'(H 65) and it is with the tragic failure and continuation of this aspiration that Frénaud identifies.

Continually qualifying his poems is the motto of 'la conquête dérisoire' ('victoire... limite'H 65). Frénaud aspires to this moment of openness when he can go beyond: 'Je me suis ébranlé, je vais m'ouvrir'(IP II0).He also works through language and certain key experiences towards an instant when he can be 'présent/plus haut que moi pour m'éclairer'(IP II0). The identification between poet and Palazzo Vecchio — chosen space in the external world which draws out the self — becomes more developed in Frénaud's descriptions of the self's own conquest :

> Je m'épie parmi ma conquête,
> pourquoi je m'y reconnaîtrais?
> C'est moi si peu le responsable.
> L'autre, je ne l'ai pas connu.
>
> (IP II9)

What appears here, however, is

that the poet's self has practically disappeared altogether,the conquest which is the poem or æsthetic experience is exclusively the domain of a supra-individual power,in the words of Friedrich Otto which Frénaud quotes in Notre inhabileté fatale, it is 'der ganz andere', that which is totally other and beyond the self in what appears to be a further leap towards dislocation.

Spying upon himself (in a debased form of surreptitiousness) the poet seems to be separated from his own actions and their exalted stature. At this point the revelation that takes place at the Palazzo, and the usual experience of self as disrupted, part company: the former experience goes without 'une dépossession de soi totale', there is a continued residue of the self (a continual possession with which to engage in exchange) which remains conscious of 'L'autre' and 'le soi' as manifested in the aspirations of the building.

At this point in the discussion it seems there is reconciliation between the desire to escape the opacity and confinement of 'le soi', to attain an experience of 'l'autre' and 'l'être' on the one hand, and on the other the wish to remain 'soi', the self in its integrity yet in communication with something far beyond it.

Just as it is not truly possible for the

inspired religious mystic to lose himself in the Divinity, he is still there communicating his experience or remaining in a significant silence, so is it unfeasible for the poet to lose himself in the poetic thrust to the extent that he gives way to silence and total self-dissolution. There is always some message remaining.

For the Magus, inspired sibling of the poet, self-loss is a precondition for contact with being,and it is towards that which he strains, identifying himself with the vacuity of being and Nothingness :

> Si je veux approcher de l'être qui n'est rien,
> la voie du sacrifice est l'or que je lui offre,
> et le mourir à soi nous recouvre d'encens,
> la myrrhe n'a pas de sens.
>
> (H I8I)

However, this description of an internal state of affairs, a 'témoignage' of the poet's relationship to the thing motivating him is nothing more than a 'Rêverie du mage'(Ibid) an idle thought contrasting with 'Les difficultés du parcours' on the preceding page of this log-book of the quest where the self loses its bearings and is unable even to approach being — in other words, to go through the steps of poetic creation — due to the weight of the self's presence: '— Je n'ai pu m'avancer, d'être lesté de moi'(H I80).

This dialectic within the poetic work considered

as a whole is self-destructive however. The images of value attributed to self-destruction ironically echoing the gifts of the Magi, turn in upon themselves. 'Nous recouvre d'encens' connotes in 'recouvrir' burial and incense at a burial rite, 'la myrrhe' is a nonsense, an empty gift; the ultimate distortion of the exalted theme.

The search for 'le sein original'or for 'Le perdu inoubliable' is conducted via language: 'j'essaie avec ma langue'.Identical in nature to Man,to the poet, language is an 'épaisseur' and an opacity which paradoxically holds back that which it is intended to produce. In the end it is a word into which he can be dissipated that the poet seeks out: 'recouvrer — oh ! je tâtonnerai — une parole où être aspiré, respirer,/ où me dissiper dans la mer'(H 202). By a kind of jump in the metaphor-making machine of the poem, 'parole' is transformed into 'la mer', an enormous and almost cosmic entity which provides another atmosphere,a kind of breathing and way of sustaining life unknown in our order of the world, consequently something totally Other, a depth and an area in which the self can be lost.

The self is dislocated in the word by which it attempts to reach totality in the other. Yet this dissipation into an immense incommensurable force is only one aspect of the self's dislocation within

'la parole', for it is also haunted by 'la voix fêlée' the multiple aspects of the voice-within, which, in their disquieting multiplicity can elicit a negative response from the poet in his quest for 'l'unité'. This groping movement towards being, the approach along the intricacies of the quest in its multiple forms, is repeatedly dislocated: 'Nous avancions en tâtonnant... Avancerons-nous?'(LSF 68) and beyond the disruptive significance of affirmation — question, the word 'tâtonner' presents a movement within the world, and a contact with it, which are uncertain and lacking direction or sequence.

To what kind of discovery does this faltering enquiry lead as the reader is drawn into the poem's multiple streams? Only to the perception of a manifestation of power in the external world which turns out to be the poet's self in a state of dislocation :

> Dans le magma rocheuse où s'effritaient nos corps,
> j'étais pierraille et ronces, ma terre, ma tête ocr-
> (euse.
> Mais du feu gicle et hurle et l'eau en trombe
> a fait lever le cercle ardent... C'est moi encore,
> la lumière qui fouette les arbres sur mes débris.
>
> (LSF 68)

Traced out here is a dynamic instant during the ongoing adventure of the self attempting to reach beyond illusion into 'la lumière' which again emanates from the all-controlling force of being. The poet, paradoxically, thinks he is here

saved from loss of self within these disturbed and disjointed things of the natural order, and is returned to the agonising perception 'C'est moi encore'. The identification of self with what is 'out there' does not entail self-loss within being in this case,but the unavoidable presence of the self within aspects of the world which are a fixture of the quest: 'pierraille', 'ronces', 'arbres', 'débris', 'trombe', 'feu', are all found, at different points, within quest poems such as 'L'étape', 'La noce noire', 'Plainte du roi mage'. The upshot of this is that the dislocated external space in which the quest appears to take place is parallelled by the poet's internal space; the area of contradictions and multiple routes which he maps out in search of 'le château' which he will become in losing himself: 'laboureur au labour de soi dans la nuit'(LSF 69).

By a process of continual self-discovery, the self, the poem, and the search they undertake, turn in upon themselves and seem to be forced into an unescapable movement within the labyrinth of the ego.Ways out of this intestinal tension do present themselves however. The impetus which drives the poet towards the Other, leads him to consider areas of myth and imagined experience by which the violence and destructive capacity of the idealised presence can be alluded to. 'La mort d'Actéon' presents the moment of contact with

a Godess, and slows down the destructive, mortal interplay between Actéon's self and the otherness which is the beast on the one hand, and the deity on the other. Actéon's death is not necessarily punishment :

> Voulait-il se perdre quand il regarda les seins (nus?
> Et fut-elle si cruelle, déesse où femme,
> à vouloir le précipiter hors de son corps?
>
> (DTD II9)

The leap out of one's own body, and the violence and pain which are part of this in the case of Actéon, are corollaries of contact with the Other and the desire to go beyond the labyrinthine movements within the dislocations of the ego: 'Désirer, c'est se perdre en l'azur étranger'(DTD II9).Here the element in which self-loss is achieved has opposite connotations to those noted above (p280 'me dissiper dans la mer').

'L'azur' sets up a series of literary and mythical reverberations, it is synonymous with 'l'idéal' in symbolist imagery, and is the seat of the divinity in mythology. In terms of poetic sensibility it would appear to be contrary to 'l'épaisseur' and the threat this implies. However, 'l'azur' also evokes vertigo and the kind of inverted chasm of depth which haunted Baudelaire's imagination. In response to this area of the dislocated self,the poet perceives his ego as lost and dispersed negatively: 'Où m'atteindre qui ne sais

où je suis'(RM 28).

There is a contradictory set of movements within Frénaud's poetry then, to escape or lose the self, and to rediscover it: 'Qui voulais-je prouver? Où me perdre? Où me/ prendre' (DTD I36). Yet both these reactions originate in a single perception: 'Je me suis inacceptable'(RM 32). The true self is lost,and the self which remains is unacceptable.The movement outwards in an attempt to escape the given semf, and inwards in search of a true,ideal self, are one and the same. They both depend on intervention of 'l'étranger','l'autre'. Solitude or separation is almost a consequence of this inability to escape the self: 'Je suis le même encore. Je me retrouve/ seul, ennemi de moi, étranger'(IP II9). Contact with the other implies an alteration of the ego, a leap beyond the limits of the self and solitude. Love, the supreme kind of contact is, however, predated by self-hatred, as though it was motivated by this self—destructive impulse: 'Haine de moi, plus vielle que mon amour' (H 278).

Separation/unity, as dominant metaphor, bears upon all areas of the poet's affective experience. The identity of the ego, which the poet attempts to register at various levels and stages in the tentative approach towards being,is dislocated and results in separation both from the fundamental presence of the

force lurking behind poetry and from 'les autres'. As illustrated throughout this essay, contact with others at a deep level entails immense difficulties and the poem itself is not a clear communication of the poet's interior which stands a chance of being understood by others.

Approaching the subject of the poet's self, the poem adopts structures which develop inwards via a sort of internicine struggle between aspects of single poems and the conflicts between poems within the book, in the end between books within the poet's collected works. Language and identity are disrupted from the mythical unity (otherwise expressed as 'l'harmonie' or 'la correspondance') which haunts the Western literary tradition.

Language in the poem attempts to operate as a mirror — although a distorting reflection, poetry is obliged to be mimetic — the titles of some of Frénaud's poems reveal this important form: 'Miroir désert' (DTD II0); 'Dieu au miroir de l'homme' (H 237); 'Ce miroitement'(IP I89). The self attempts to be mirrored in its partner's presence in order to achieve 'le néant' :

> Celui qui rêve d'un miroir où il s'évanouirait
> et s'imagine capable de le façonner,
> miroitier naïf s'il croit pouvoir fixer,
> par la grâce de quelque chuchotis favorable,
> ces ébranlements qui l'éblouirent
> sous l'avers noir de sa cuirasse.
>
> (H 278)

The suit of armour is an almost conventional figure for the enclosing stiffness of the self which precludes contact with the external world, with the Other, but most poignantly, with the intimate 'toi'. The poem as mirror attempts vainly to reflect away this separating environment, not in a destructive and violent movement, but in the most passive and low-key form of dislocation, a fainting, 's'évanouir'.The self will simply be dissolved away in the reflections of the poem.

3/ Dislocation between 'Toi' and 'Moi'

It is in considering the region of intimate relationships and their failure that the poet becomes most sensitive to the failure of 'le miroir', and by association, to the reflexive and dissipating capacity of the poem that would induce unity and complete contact with the intimate partner 'toi'.Distinguished by this pronoun from the impersonalised and unspeakable potency of 'l'autre', thou is nevertheless a potential representation of the unity and desire which the other commands.

'Le rêveur brûlant', poet-messiah who dreams of inventing the mirror by which 'notre inhabileté fatale' will be destroyed, also articulates the conjunction of 'toi' and 'moi' :

Pour annuler tout le malheur
au miroir de son sang où le mal
reconnu perdra sa disgrâce,
dans le calice qu'il nous prépare,
l'Amour en le vin embrasé,
nourriture libératrice,
de corps en corps il s'aventure.
Il n'est toi ni moi, il est l'autre.
Il est toi, il est moi, il s'efface.
Passe-t-il entre les figures
où nous suffoquons d'avancer?

(LSF 249)

This brings the discussion to a point where a multiple parallel asserts itself. It has already been noted that Frénaud is sensitive to a link of identity between the poem and his own blood, with all the affective connotations this may have, and its significance in terms of the self. At the end of the previous section the image of poem as mirror which can dissipate the enclosure of the self allowing intimate contact illustrates its reflexive nature.

A further intricacy is added to this pattern in the figure 'miroir de son sang'; the intimate life-force which remains enclosed within the physical being and is only released in a moment of violence, now via reinterpretation within the poem, and its multiple identifications with the poem, becomes a reflecting agent enabling the 'moi' or 'soi' to move into an intimate relationship.

The first of these parallels or metaphors, 'sang' = 'poème', implies the poem operating as an internalised and intimate element of 'soi', in fact its very

life-source hidden from the external world and only emerging 'plus loin' like 'la source'. In the second metaphor ('miroir' = 'poème') the poem is considered as a vain attempt by reflection upon the self within (ie: hidden 'sous l'avers noir de sa cuirasse') to bring about intimate contact between the internalised self and the other. In the above extract ('miroir'= 'sang') a critical point is reached which reflects on those others. The reflecting principle is no longer externalised,but is an intimate part of 'le grand cœur qui se veut surpasser'(LSF 249) who may be the poem, the Messiah, or 'l'Amour'.

The mirror again aims at dissolution, here on a further removed scale of general human concern where evil and sorrow will be 'annulé', and siginificantly, 'reconnu'; in a knowing-again is given a hint as to the mirror principle running through the poem. A thing re-known becomes absorbed and dissipated just as the self will be.

Within images used which are all strongly symbolic ('calice', 'vin', 'nourriture') are multiple instances of reflexiveness. 'Vin' reflects 'sang' in a metaphorical transubstantiation, 'nourriture' has the same relationship with 'corps'. The poem's focal point 'Il n'est de toi ni moi, il est l'autre./ Il est toi, il est moi, il s'efface.' is further reflected in the

line: 'de corps en corps il s'aventure', which re-emphasises the physical nature of the relationship, the repeated steps of poem and quest through different protagonists, different bodies; also a possibility of intimate physical communication. It further mirrors the notion of passing between 'les figures', advancing through the perception-altering forms of language that as the life-source of the poem, constitute the essence of 'le corps'.

The role of 'toi' and 'moi' here is an ultimate enactment of this intimate reflection and the passage from one interior to another, embodying the force which is both the presence of 'l'autre' and absence[I] of 'le néant': 'il s'efface'. Paradoxically, it is in this very dissipation that 'l'autre' is 'toi et moi'. Yet at the same time it is 'ni toi ni moi', something alien to the intimacy which demands the presence of more than one identity. Its very atmosphere is alien and destructive: 'nous suffoquons', as unbreathable as 'la mer' into which the poet would be absorbed.

Relationships of intimacy between the poet as a constituent 'moi' and the other as 'toi', the woman/mistress, appear to be disrupted and altered in the poet's conception by presence of 'l'autre' and the inacceptable within 'toi - moi' which prevents their

I/ Ie the absence which is 'le néant' and which is implied in the words 'il s'efface'.

identification with the totally alien area (whether this be 'les figures', 'l'eau noire', 'la profondeur' or 'l'épaisseur') in which 'l'autre' moves.

The lines of the poem themselves become a series of mirror-images surrounding and dislocating the central metaphor of a kind of divine love; and the fact is that 'toi - moi' also takes part in this dislocation of the unique.

Within the poet's series of 'témoignages' which the collection of poems seems to represent, reflecting various aspects of his state as poet, the other as primary driving source may fade from view, present in the poem only insofar as it is always implied in language's ambition.

Self and the intimate 'thou' assume the foreground in the poet's desire for unity. Total union between 'toi et moi' in its development towards 'Possession totale'(RM 40) resembles the consequences of advancing into the alien atmosphere of 'l'autre': 'La glycine des rêves me pénétrerait lentement/ et m'étoufferait en toi avec douceur.'(RM 40). The plant is already of another order, since it is part of a dream-world, an insidious creeping plant which, like a dream or a lover, penetrates the poet. But it produces a parallel penetration expressed in 'm'étoufferait en toi'. The meaning of the verb 'étouffer' is altered by the unusual use of the preposition 'en',which seems to

be a remnant of the penetration theme. Stifling and penetration into the intimate partner become inextricably identified, yet the alien atmosphere is given positive associations: 'lentement', 'avec douceur', so that the contact, although it is a dual penetration in both directions (toi & moi) and into various atmospheres: 'rêve', 'plante', 'toi', it retains an almost imperceptible quality.

A further layer is added to this build-up of atmospheres and exchanges, where smoke is 'grouillant' and 'rauque' as well as presenting an unnerving multiplicity: 'Je viderais l'amphore de silence, grouillant de tes fumées rauques.'(RM 40). Here then is an area alien to, yet always at the basis of the poem: that of silence, and the poet presumeably absorbs the contents of this throwback from Mallarméan symbolism in a further network of affective associations where the amphora's liquid content (which the self can swallow) becomes plural smoke, an atmosphere which the self cannot survive in, and which, by pathetic fallacy, takes on the effect it has on the throat: 'rauques'. This effectively focuses on a physical result of interpenetration, and on the most significant area of the throat, from where the voice and hence the poem comes.

Conjunction of the intimate couple is not only a movement towards 'le profond secret' or 'la réalité véritable'(RM 40) which subtend the poem and are a

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consequence of penetration, it can also figure as the passage into death, 'cette Nuit où je te retrouverais' (H 274). It is the dead who form a kind of fertile substratum beneath life, and which must be renewed by multiple additions :

> ... et le renouvellerait pour d'autres vivants, quand nous serons passés, toi et moi, dans leurs grappes.
>
> (H 274)

The presence of 'toi et moi' is again at the centre of a passage into another order. The interpenetration of the couple which is a dislocating influence on the poem and its clarity of perception, is caught within the interpenetration of the dead, 'leurs grappes' and their renewal.

It is indeed only within death and its uncertain dislocated context that the couple can achieve some kind of union, for in the here and now: 'il est interdit de nous unir ici, Mère.'(H 274). Death is that zone where the other is obtainable as an inextricable corollary of the destruction of limits :

> ... S'illimiter à l'autre au rythme de la souveraine pulsation...
>
> (H 274)

In both sets of italics, the poem reaches an oasis where intimate communication and movement from one form (or one figure) to another becomes possible. As has been said, for Frénaud there

exists no 'arrière-pays' beyond death. To cross its threshold is to lose all location, it is dis-location, a nothingness without the structures and oriented spaces of reality. Consequently, it is within the common absorption into 'le néant' that intimate contact with 'toi' takes on a broad general meaning — 'toi et moi' become part of 'leurs grappes', the inanimate, dependent community of the dead — and reflects on the existence of 'les vivants' who must attempt to interpret 'les morts'.

The limitless 'néant' outlined above is mirrored in the poem's attempts to release a flux which can pass amongst multiple forms and deny those limits the often analytical nature of language imposes. Passage from one sphere of influence to another is all important as Peter Broome points out in his article: 'La voix fêlée d'André Frénaud' (SUD I98I) :

> l'œuvre de Frénaud est une œuvre ouverte, poreuse, avide de toutes les hypothèses soulevées par cet étrange problématique... Le poète éprouve alors l'immense remuement clandestin des morts qui réclament leur renaissance, toujours à refaire dans l'homme présent.
>
> (SUD I98I No 39/40 pII7)

It is not simply that the dead form a collective influence from the past, they are also the all-absorbing force of 'le néant', the vacuous hinterland. Such a state of porosity which dominates

the poet's view of the world cannot be detached from the subject of intimacy with 'toi' and uncertainty as to personal boundaries. So that the relationship between 'toi & moi' seems to be absorbed into a more general question of movement between figures, metaphors, forms of the physical and symbolic worlds,of some unspeakable force.

Bodily distortion which the power of the poem exerts ('Parole de la Gorgone au serpent') operates a dislocation in the limits between 'toi' and 'moi' to an extent far exceeding the effect of 'le miroir'. What was structured reflexive dynamic, reducing the distance from 'toi', now is replaced by a dynamic of flow and porosity :

> Les vois-tu, ces jambes qui s'écartent:
> ô les deux puissants fleuves — est-ce toi ou moi
> qui s'écoule, le double
> ou l'unique serpent,
> à l'un, à l'autre bout, qui se dresse,
> qui englobe?

('Parole de la Gorgone au serpent' H 254-255)

It seems that the problem of whether it is <u>thou</u> or <u>me</u> develops directly from a perception of fluidity and a series of alterations in imagery and in what is supposed to be <u>seen</u> through language. At a crucial point in the poem which unfolds a series of oral images of ambivalent sexuality ('la caverne des délices', 'Gueule béante', 'l'autre bouche' 'une seule langue à nous deux') these lines open

with a problem of perception directed at the intimate partner. Consequently, they involve a moment of distantiation from the immersion within physical forms which continued up to this point, implying that what follows is to be seen, is dependant on the observation by another.

At the centre of this poem is the relationship 'toi'-'moi', the dual form of which seems to influence the corollary of images that spread out from it. The clarification of the partner's vision (of what the partner is supposed to see) in 'ces jambes' implies this duality, and there is a precise focus on their action: 'qui s'écartent'.

The disturbing act of opening, which permits entry of the other, paradoxically produces separation of 'les deux'. From this disruptive opening,which shocks the senses there is an inexplicable leap to an altered perception of 'les jambes' by which they become: 'les deux puissants fleuves'. Yet this form or figure which attempts to exorcise the potency of 'l'écart', is also perplexing in its liquidity which is 'puissant' and 'deux', reproducing the duality 'toi'—'moi' in another image. The latter assume the quality of 'fleuve', they are uncertain and they flow: 'toi et moi qui s'écoule', and at this point the original vision of 'les jambes' dissolves as the poem's meaning develops away from a purely physical

relationship into one of increasing psychic potency and menace. 'Toi' and 'moi' are redeveloped into another image: 'le double ou l'unique serpent', reasserting uncertainty of identity and the totally alien quality of the serpent, principle of plastic fluidity and unsettling movement. The creature is also difficult to understand in that it is 'le double ou l'unique' — where there is the problem of continuing individuation in a relationship of intimacy. Duplicity and distance — in a fluid and uncertain oneness — are asserted in 'à l'un, à l'autre bout', which finally seems to be resolved by the notion of the unique yet double serpent englobing totality.

Not only is the unit of 'toi et moi' involved in this disruptive tension between flow, self, and thou, but so too is the world as implied in 'globe' since it enters this fluid relationship. The development is towards an intimate centre: '... Antre,le seul intime' (H 255) yet also destructive and contradictory: 'originel, terminal, ennemi'(Ibid). The two ends of a single process, origin and finality, are again forced together in a similar moment of lucidity to that which asserts we are: 'des vivants mortels'. Ultimately, intimacy and emnity turn out to communicate in subtle and fluid ways within the poem.

A similar, though less complex pattern, emerges in 'La fiancée juive'(H 265).The personal relationship

is extended to one of general identification with a whole group, expressed in a possessive form and a balanced equation: 'Ainsi que tu es mienne, je me reconnais l'un des tiens'(H 266). This involves an interpenetration which harks back to a distant origin: '...(je) l'étais, depuis l'initial, inoubliable' (Id). The fluidity passing between 'toi' and 'moi' is unsuitable in time. The poem presents this by direct statement 'toi ou moi', yet it is also part of the poem's structure. The point of contact cannot be directly pointed to within the poem's language since it filters through the various images, metaphors and phrases expressing it in contradictory ways. Similarly, the fluidity moving through the poem cannot be pinpointed and is alluded to as 'l'inoubliable' or 'depuis l'origine'.

On the one hand we have seen the intimate 'toi'-'moi' relationship at the centre of the mirror-metaphor which activates certain stages of poetic activity; on the other this formula is a personalisation of the fluid/porous structure again fundamentally characteristic of the poem itself.

In both cases the relationship between 'toi' and 'moi' is of a dynamic sort in the examples investigated. None of them involves a direct statement of identification. In the last, 'tu es mienne, je suis tien', this stage is tentatively approached perhaps via the

important notion of possession, here again however is an idea of transmission rather than simple identity of being. And it is significant in terms of what has been said so far, that when such an equation occurs it has mystical affinities and seems to pass beyond the comprehensible into the area of 'le confondement' :

> Je suis toi et tu es moi, et partout où tu seras je serai, et ma semence sera en tout ce qui vit, et quel que soit le lieu où tu puises, c'est moi que tu rassembleras, mais lorsque tu me rassembleras, c'est toi que tu rassembleras.
>
> Evangile d'Eve gnostique
>
> (H I73)

There is a striking resemblance between this equation and the way in which Frénaud treats the same subject. In 'semence' and 'puiser' for example, the fluid order is completely controlled.

The partner is discovered in all areas of the world, so that the identification between 'moi' and 'toi' also encompasses, as was seen in previous examples, the whole universe. The image of nourishment and externalisation of inner richness is adumbrated in 'ma semence' which takes part in the generalised network of identity, having evident sexual connotations.

The strange link between the natural order ('semence', 'tout ce qui vit') and the mystical

connection of this passage, parallels the concentration on a love relationship between 'toi' and 'moi',and its context of spirituality and sublimation. 'Vers l'infinité bleue' suggests similarly spiritual considerations, yet the poem immediately develops towards the intimate personal relationship, finite in its limitation to two people :

> Nous avions établi le paradis comme une île — ainsi les animaux l'avaient voulu. Et ils s'y trouvaient tous entre eux aujourd'hui. Dès que nous nous étions reconnus toi et moi, nous avions disparu de la vue, les deux un seul...
>
> (H 30)

The disquieting presence of the fluid order continues to be implied in Frénaud's poetry surrounding this evocation of intimacy. But its force is mitigated since it can only be inferred from the image: 'une île', a space defined precisely by its opposition to fluidity.Here it is given an added aspect of security and certainty since it is 'le paradis établi', a place intentionally created, placed in a fixed position and stable as a reality, but at the same time a manifestation of 'l'espace sacré' distinguished from the amorphous nature of the real by its orientated and well-defined contours.

Island-like, the italics of the text form a separation from the rest, as though the moment in time they point to was intentionally set apart. The fixed status of the island-paradise then is exceeded by the

disappearance into nature of the couple. The moment of recognition signals a change in relations with the world, but also a change in the world itself which becomes island and paradise (beyond the Earth). The couple becomes isolated from the world and disappears from view in the time of re-cognition, of knowing again or re-discovering something or someone that was lost and emotionally absent. They retreat into intimacy within the sort of temporal vacuum formed by this sudden re-finding of the partner expressed in 'Dès que'. Although this adverb refers to an order of events in time, it marks a clear break from the preceding lines, and a kind of reinterpretation of 'aujourd'hui' and the fictive present which that expresses.

Within this 'aujourd'hui' — time-period when all animals come together ('se trouvaient entre eux')— the nature of the relationship 'les deux un seul' is potentially present: it is amongst the totality of animals that the couple disappears into paradise.

It is difficult to say exactly what the animal's role is here. Possibly they represent another order of things into which the identification of the couple filters, or a background to the relationship simply intended to throw the reader's normal perception of things; suddenly animals are involved where normally they wouldn't be. So that the lovers' quest for contact and unifying paradise is associated with a similar desire

attributed to animals :

> ... Animaux qui souriaient, en nous accompagnant sans que nous y prenions garde... Eux comme nous, pourquoi voudraient-ils demeurer où ils sont, ailleurs ou ici. Eux comme nous, depuis toujours en marche...
>
> (H 3I)

Unification of the couple passes into the natural order and there it is developed in different forms following the poet's various stages of illumination.

The 'paysage vaporeux'(RM 37) emerges as an ideal landscape for such a dissipation and absorption of 'toi et moi'. It implies another way in which the poetic sensibility mitigates the menace of an uncontrollable flux welling up within the self and in the world outside; a variation on the theme of porosity. Mist evokes a softening of contours rather than their annihilation, allowing the poet's observation of 'toi et moi' to take them in as 'confondus'.

This intuition of unity occurs within time and alters the poet's temporal situation so that what is in the future appears also to be in the present. The animals and the couple are 'depuis toujours en marche' subject to a dislocated and unreasonable scale of time, similarly within space they are 'ailleurs ou ici'; the sudden illumination of intimate oneness also breaks up the temporal scale :

La lumière longe les ravins, plonge, / ...

et voici que s'éclaire notre ombre sans menso-
(nge,
aurore où toi et moi serons à jamais confondus.

(RM 37)

The future event of total identification seems to emerge with simplicity from a string of occurences in the present 'longe', 'plonge', 's'éclaire', and from 'voici que' which strongly describes a present development in an almost exophoric way. The repetition of '-onge' affords a sense of homogeneity, but the description moves away from the absorbing force of 'la brume' to reach the oxymoronic intertwining of light and dark, wherein light — a dissolving agent (cf Rimbaud: Illuminations) and sign or content of being — is tempered by the inclusion of shadow, and 'l'aurore' transpires as a location (where light and shadow mix in an uncertain moment) to absorb the indistinguishable unity of 'toi et moi'.

The paysage then disappears in the quick leap to a future resolution of dislocation between 'soi' and 'autre'; and paradoxically the foreground is assumed by a moment in time: 'aurore'. The united couple are absorbed into the landscape and lost in the sudden light. For it is implicit in the way these lines unfold that the progression of light along the contours of the landscape leads to the abstract concept of 'sans mensonge' and from that to the all-encompassing 'à jamais confondus', which excludes all other

considerations of space and even abolishes time.

Consequently, it is possible to say there is an almost infinite dissipation amongst the world of the relationship between 'toi' and 'moi', but an equally infinite inclusion of the external world within it: 'Mon amour c'est toi, plus d'autre contour'(RM 72).

Battle and conquest as metaphors for the quest, and for the struggle to reach being or 'le secret' within the poem, generate a series of conflicts which enact this relationship with totality (cf 'La mort d'Actéon'(SR/DTD II9) 'Petite ville à rafler'EC II etc) an intimate struggle, in its universal meaning is an enactment of such violence :

> Bête poursuivie, chasseresse exultante,
> la même chevelure.
> Je t'ai agrippée, tu m'as pris.
> Nos membres à jamais au combat confondus.
>
> Mais déjà se défait l'impatiente aurore.
> Etonnés, insouciants,
> nous recouvrons nos corps.
> Si loin, il n'est plus ici qu'un autre, plus
> (rien.

('La chasse' SR/DTD 89)

Tension between light and shadow in creating a locus for union (ie 'l'aurore') idealises this relationship despite dissipation and dislocation of self and thou into the natural order, yet the basic relationship at the centre of such a poem may appear as the violent intertwining of 'Bête poursuivie' and 'chasseresse' in mortal combat. Both partners enact

possession: 'agrippé' — 'pris', dissolving the distinction between which is hunter and which hunted. Both are active and passive, and this provides the poem's main thrust. The interlocking of bodies arrives at the most basic level. The external world is excluded.

Destructive union is also given the stamp of eternity 'à jamais', which seems to prevent all temporal alteration, or passage into a different form. They have reached finality, as it were, within this moment. However, the dissolution of this balance is immediate: 'Mais déjà se défait l'impatiente aurore'. (Ibid). The transitory nature of dawn is asserted here in a sudden return to the sublimating-light metaphor. It assumes the couple's impatience via pathetic fallacy, and is subjected to the immediacy of 'déjà', indicating loss and the dislocation between the time perceived and time which has actually passed.

Similarly, the whole construct of union is dislocated 'défait' in the disentanglement of two bodies. Lacking a verb at all, the statement of mingling is without any true temporal characteristic, situated somewhere in an indeterminate zone between the irretrievable and immediately finished past of the past perfect, and the past which, as Frénaud says, seems to continue into the present via the poet's desire; which is the imperfect tense.

The temporal dislocation which afflicts this

sudden conjunction of 'toi' and 'moi' is important enough for Frénaud to comment on in reflecting upon his poetry :

> Ma poésie est-elle tellement optimiste? Si elle peut paraître telle, c'est peut-être à cause de cette passion ou de cet amour qu'elle implique, immanent au monde, et qui pour chacun de nous serait toujours situé 'antérieurement', c'est-à-dire en arrière par rapport à l'instant actuel.
>
> (André Frénaud: Entretien avec Jean-Yves Dubreuille: Courrier du centre d'études poétiques No I53 pII)

Furthemore, the mingling into unity which exists in a dislocated time-zone, is dissipated in terms of space 'immanent au monde' in a way which has been illustrated throughout this discussion. The poem tends to figure a confusion of internal and external forms so that the interiorised, isolated couple in its moment of combining performs the unification of the world and is lost in this totality :

> Il ne s'agit pas ici de reconnaître l'autre comme transcendant à la façon d'une divinité, mais, à l'ébranlement qu'il provoque au plus caché de soi — le non-soi, dirait-on, franchi depuis toujours — comme la participation à un lieu irrésistible, où autre et soi se trouverait confondus en mouvement avec le monde qui s'est ouvert.
>
> (Ibid)

The synapsis of recognition discussed previously in this essay here gains clearer definition and is determined by a dual assimilation at opposing poles already set out in paragraphs above.

The other is not simply an upward aspiration of the self beyond its limits in contact with 'toi'; for when the intimate partner is present, a re-discovery of otherness comes through the propulsion which stirs within the self in its hidden and most incomprehensible region, and through the passage of self into other in a mingling which progresses in unison with the totality of the world. So that internal and external forms of contact commune and the poet's perception of the world is located: the sudden joining (the copula) is 'la participation à un lieu irrésistible', locus which at once disrupts the orientating framework of interior and exterior boundaries, yet suggests a new presence of the self in movement.

'La bonne continuation'(LSF 29 & IOI) ironically suggests this movement continues at a lower level. It is the difficult and unending route towards a timeless contact. Yet it is the opposite of recognition :

> Et nous continuions à avancer, impatients, pour chercher qui,pour rejoindre qui? Puisque nous ne savons plus si nous sommes toujours ensemble,toi et moi,la main encore dans la main.
>
> (H 32)

Advancement on the quest comprises a total lack of recognition where that which is the object is unknown and the point of contact: 'rejoindre', 'ensemble', 'toi et moi', has only the most rudimentary representation, although it continues to

be one, in the holding of hands.

The point of coalescence then is not so much in physical touch as in the power of consciousness to take cognisance of their intermingling.

Also disrupted and dislocated is the time dimension, suggested in the imperfect tense so dear to Frénaud, and 'impatients', the adverbs 'toujours' and 'encore' which seem to cancel each other out. The time of contact is not in continuous advance, but is abrupt, instantaneous, and its effects are reciprocal between 'toi' and 'moi' :

> une action de lui sur elle qui sera aussi surprenante, et symétrique de la sienne; participants qu'ils sont de la même quête, celle d'un objet, ou, dirai-je plutôt, d'une certaine manière d'être qui les dépasse et qui tend à les unifier, au-delà de ce que chacun vaut par lui-même et vaut lui-même pour l'autre... Effet réciproque et instantané!
>
> (André Frénaud: Entretien avec J-Y Dubreuille; Courrier international d'études poétiques, No I53 p 22)

The quest then is carried out in a symmetrical relationship which implies a tension and a consciousness of one another. This also invokes a certain distance between 'toi' and 'moi'. And this relationship is not arrived at through long duration, but, like the sudden realisation of a truth, occurs instantaneously. Neither does it maintain the couple as a universal centre, englobed and englobing,because it is 'au-delà', beyond them, and unifies them beyond

their simple relationship thereby nullifying their individuality.

Yet this victory, arrival at an illumination which is the absolute, paradoxically depends on the maintenance of dislocating boundaries between 'toi' and 'moi', and on consciousness of their difference: 'La victoire... c'est l'abandon à un absolu où, différents, ils communieraient'(Ibid).

Victory is achieved through passive abandon. The poem returns to its state of tension where there is an imperceptible oscillation between self and other, poem and being. In fact the state of unification is never achieved, only approximated: 'La réconciliation... si elle n'est jamais décisive, passe par la reconnaissance de l'autre en tant qu'autre.'(Ibid).

Spanning the gulf or 'la faille' is never a total act, never decisive, since the poem and consciousness depend on a tension and dynamism which would be lost in the Nirvana of absolute identification. If such identity between 'toi' and 'moi' achieved totality, there would be hardly point in maintaining the two pronouns within the poem and the poet's language would be obliged to invent some other term.

The poetic work as a whole, however, does not sustain this unifying oscillation: 'rythme de la souveraine pulsation'(H 274) since it is largely a trace which follows the poet's periods of loss and retrieval

within time, the instant of recognition appears dislocated, and the 'tu' is asserted/observed as something totally other and agonisingly distantiated : [I]

> Tu m'abusais, tu triomphes par ta partie séparée.
> Déjà je me blesse à ton printemps casqué.
> Dans ton visage je ne reconnais plus le signe douloureux
> qui m'y faisait avancer comme dans mon visage.
>
> (RM I07)

For the poet, his parameters of 'confondement' are dislocated. The mutuality of recognition is reversed, and his conscious faculties fall back into the disruptive temporal flow at the all-important determining adverb 'Déjà' which, it would seem, is not only exophoric (pointing outside the text) but also anaphoric, since it refers back to its intertextual meaning, as can be seen in its use as title for a whole poetic collection Depuis toujours déjà. So that it stands as a sign of an orientation within the individual poem governed by the significance of its appearance in different parts of the whole text of Frénaud's opus: the multiple dislocations of the poetic product through time and altered perception 'L'azur a-t-il été un vrai morceau du temps?'(IP I74).

I/ 'Une alternance de mouvements de néantisation et d'éveil, moins séparés que j'ai dit, une grande oscillation, non sans interruptions et reprises, et qui dure.'
(NIF I28)

Hidden motivations of the poem, the multiple voices, are part of this 'déjà' signifying sudden consciousness of a lack of homogeny in time. The ascertainment of this disruption of the unified love relationship is a further reference to the poem as 'approche' and 'distantiation'.

That this geometrical point — 'l'instantané' or 'le toujours' — by which 'l'unité' was stabilised now appears disrupted, affects those other representations of the temporal oasis where reciprocation was possible. Resulting from this disparity between the isolated moment of unity and the present, consciousness is devalued or undermined: 'tu m'abusais';the exchange of messages between 'toi' and 'moi' assumes a different and more sinister aspect.

The other cannot be comprehended as was the case in the moment of illumination; deception introduces a vast area of darkness. What the 'je' believed is revealed as intentionally false and distant from the actual. 'Ton visage', externalised message from within the self, is no longer available to the poet's consciousness, no longer permits identity.

'Triomphe', 'casqué', 'blesser', result from the relapse into destruction and separation. 'Avancer' is no longer possible, the fertile dynamic is ended and only stasis or sterile continuation are possible: 'd'impasse en impasse,/ toujours tes pas'(LSF I89 -

I90).

Rhythms which activate whatever is secret within the poet and the poem, passing from one form to another and from frontier to frontier, are suspended. Focusing here on a metaphorical confusion between 'toi' and 'printemps' which occurs via the possessive 'ton' (an attribution that extends the potency and scope of the pronoun 'toi') a dislocation of affective connotations is arrived at; 'printemps' constitutes a period of time associated with 'plénitude' and outward development, yet here it is qualified by a state of exclusion, the barrier implied in 'casqué', with its exacerbation of 'triomphe' and 'me blesse', the helmet of a warrior.

The absence of 'la plénitude' entails the return to a place of dislocation and vacuity which is the area of 'toi et moi' when they are excluded from union :

> Sans plénitude je suis dessaisie,
> prisonnière de rien.
>
> En te liant, mon amour te délivrerait.
>
> La neige seule saurait m'illimiter. La flamme,
> (la neige!
>
> Tu t'aimes en un feu noir à n'embraser personne.
> A toi comme à moi, le désert.
>
> (SR/DTD 92)

Enclosed by and conflicting with the overall pattern of negativity in these lines a

possible union — in the uncertain and idealising conditional tense — asserts itself within the female voice, as though in spite of the prevailing tone of absence. It is around this possibility that the poem develops, since it is within its description: 'En te liant' etc, that the absent 'plénitude' is implied (a paradoxical 'plénitude' which would liberate the lover by tying him down.)

In the image of snow there is a further complexity, since it alludes to 'la plénitude', but stands as an element of purity,opposite of fulness. Yet it alone is able to break down the woman's boundaries ('m'illimiter') and to open her outwards in its mystical connection with fire.

Linking these two elements is another paradox, since flames release snow by destroying it. Both snow and flame are altering agents. Although each cancels out and opposes the other, they both represent purification and light, attributes of being.

However, the liberating bond is not present in the poem's terms.The fulness of a reciprocal relationship fails her and she is ungripped, prisoner of nothing. The second half of the equation: captivated — captivator, so central to a poem like 'La mort d'Actéon' is missing, and her situation is dislocated. The force of 'le néant' within the word 'rien' imposes itself on the conjunctive power and the duality of

snow and fire.

'Le désert', which is the only remaining place for this dissociated couple would seem to result directly from the expression of a relationship 'sans plénitude'. The male recedes into a sterile enclosure within 'un feu noir à n'embraser personne', another paradox, though it is in a different sense: the luminous connotation of 'le feu' — 'la flamme' is denied and perverted along with the heat/passion signification, and the expression 'à toi comme à moi' subsists as a parody of 'tu es moi'; no identification is possible here, only a sterile parallel where self and other inhabit identical deserts.

The symmetry: 'prisonnière' — 'prisonnier'; 'plénitude' — 'désert'; what is — what could be; italic print — Roman print; sets up a negating and separating structure about 'toi' and 'moi'. And it is not from absence of 'l'autre' that the desert theme results, but from intensified perception of 'l'autre en tant qu'autre' whereby a shared environment is no longer possible.

Although the sudden conjunction between two beings may occur or have occured, it was within a disturbed and illusory world of mistakes: 'parmi les faux pas, le silence'(IP I82) and without entailing immediate entry into a state of 'plénitude': 'Nous nous étions rencontrés dans le dénuement'(Ibid).

Fulfilment remains a distant promise, in the future and not of this moment, again conditional on a 'peut-être', whereas the parallel deserts prevail: 'chacun dans son désert, qui voit dans un vertige/ peut-être la promesse d'être une fois comblé.'(IP I82).

Noticeably, this new state of recognition between lovers and its ensuing 'comblement' are so distinctly other and different from the atmosphere or world in which they exist that, like a city seen from a great height or another planet, a mere glimpse of it causes a physical reaction: vertigo.

The central couple 'toi et moi' induces a perception of separation and parallel deserts culminating in a 'Toast en réponse'(SR/DTD 95) the dual nature of the poem in a declamation.

Celebration of separation and unity: 'A deux déserts si distants/ à la lumière qui les sépare'(Id), the elected space of the dislocated couple shows as a desert separated by light of a specific kind,since the light of 'l'illumination' is associated with an approach towards being. Here, however, it is a separating light, as if the signal from one desert to another marked the distance rather than aleviating it. Yet this is also celebrated as a progress: 'A la vérité d'une approche éperdue'(Id) the advance towards something unnamed and uncertain is wild and dislocated.

Yet, like the poem who's 'traces' are disrupted and remade, it is marked with a dialectical truth: that progress is possible, but not intentional or controlled by fixed orientation towards the goal. It is a traverse of: 'ton désert animé/ par un avril de mille mensonges.'(IP 63). In passing through these areas of disruption the poet and the lovers arrive at a point of parallel exchange in celebration: the words 'A toi. A moi' :

> Aux défis de l'impossible.
> A deux déserts si distants.
> A la lumière qui les sépare.
> Aux gemmes incertaines de l'abîme.
> A la vérité d'une approche éperdue.
> A la médiation du feu.
> A l'inacceptable. A la reconnaissance.
> A l'échange. A la réparation.
> A la migration ensemble.
> Au commun accès.
> A toi. A moi.
>
> ('Toast en réponse' SR/DTD 95)

'L'échange' and 'la réparation' point towards a reversal of the separated state as do the descriptions of outward and inward departure: 'migration', 'accès', qualified as they are by the adjectives 'commun', and 'ensemble'. The coalescence of the two may pass via 'la médiation du feu'(Ibid) yet part of the celebration and dedication is the position of deserted vacuity which each partner inhabits prior to the consacration of their unity. On a similar note, with regard to the poem's structure, this 'Réponse' is initiated by the more articulated poem 'Au vin' :

Ni à toi ni à moi.
A l'étranger sans visage.
A l'embrasement de la source.
A l'égarement sans traces.

A l'orée de la nuit,
elle s'élança de la nymphée.
Elle s'est évanouie comme un orage.

(SR/DTD 94)

Several phenomena adhering to the theme of dislocation attract attention here, perhaps most striking of them, the fading of the mistress like a storm, provokes a series of textual echoes.The loved one is absorbed into one of the most distracted and violent representations of natural force: 'un orage', she is at the purlieu of night, making the point in time metaphorically a forest; place of lost wanderings; an edge which becomes ambiguous as she leaps away from the delicate 'nymphées' into the violent weather. This movement away is evidently parallelled in 'la Réponse' by 'migration' and 'accès'. But the loaded terms 'sans visage', 'sans traces', have no parallel (save perhaps 'le désert' with its multiple connotations) they point to the poem, language and architecture as much as to the unknown 'she'.

A celebration in the 'plénitude' and festivity of wine becomes an iteration of aspects of the world dislocated by lack of presence and the failure of reciprocation, the sign from the interior self: 'le visage', is absent, so too is 'la trace', orientation of

space and poem, pathway to the domain of 'l'autre' or of 'toi'. Denial of any celebration of the couple themselves 'Ni à toi, ni à moi', most clearly signifies the distance and proximity of the two texts. For in both poems the balance of imagery and emotive descriptions depends ultimately on the potential unity or disunity of self and the other in an intimate way. In other words, they both emerge from the same considerations, but towards opposite poles.

There is one further way, however, in which this relationship is denied, commitment to silence: 'Ni de toi, ni de moi je ne parlerai'(SR/DTD 97) where the poem closes on a total denial of their presence within the text, again though paradoxically pointing to the emotional importance of their absence and a committal to silence which is the ultimate desert in terms of poetry. For, like the tentative steps towards the poem's creation and its inherent noûs (the unknown essence) the path towards love is an ambition, and the poet's constant fear is of failure and mediocrity in face of the magnificence which the enterprise assumes. This is what distorts the poetic lover's reactions :

> Contre quoi se défend-il? Contre ce qui serait un amour trop en deçà de la plénitude à laquelle il aspire, et qui fut, jusque là, déçu. C'est pourquoi il se méfie de l'autre, de la même façon dont il est incertain de ses propres forces.
>
> (Frénaud: Entretien J-Y Dubreuille op cit. p 22)

This abstract as 4th section of previous chapter

Chapter 7

4: Loss of Location

Le pays perdu, le pays d'enfance, la patrie.

As the poet's sensibility approaches a world in which the ideal harmony has been disrupted, and the images of threatening multiplicity, 'l'eau noire', 'l'épaisseur', 'la mère folle', predominate, the notion of a lost place in which the presence of a unifying light was possible recurs now and again, from place to place in the text, like a nostalgic tug at the poet's lucidity, and acting as a reminder that what he is looking for has already been lost.

It is not surprising that such a place is associated with the landscape of childhood and the innocence and naïvety of perception which it implies. Parallel to this is the consideration of 'la patrie' from forced exile during the war, illustrating a deeper stratum of desperation and an exacerbated dislocation.

Along his progress through the texts the poet discovers that he is without location, he must recover his 'pays perdu', and this is partly the quest undertaken in the poem. Yet the locus patriæ is separated from him; it is a sacred and emotionally charged place. Discovered through 'les hautes approches' (IP I49)

which elevate it to the celestial level of 'l'acropole' or 'le château', it is also the possible retainer of 'un secret' :

> Lieu sacré où l'haleine de l'homme s'exhale
> pour nous inquiéter ou pour nous apaiser.
> Je me détourne incertain, je regarde lentement
> ce pays hors d'atteinte où le monde résonne.
>
> (IP I49)

Placed in a strange kind of juxtaposition, 'lieu sacré' and 'pays hors d'atteinte' create a distance within the poem; this is fraught with uncertainty, as the poet turns from one to gaze at the other. The sacred place figures a sense of loss and death, the life of spirit and physical presence fading away with an uncertain emotional meaning, disquiet or tranquility placed in a frightening balance by the power of the phrase. Finally, 'ce pays', brought closer to by the demonstrative adjective, makes the world resonate, induces a state of harmonious activity and a sort of life-giving dynamism.

This trope using resonance to infer the movement of something beyond immediate conceptualisation and which has positive effect, describes the poem's inner-structure ('Transformateur d'énergie, il lui faut articuler une sorte de machine qui consonnera avec la palpitation secrète de l'Être.'(IP 240).

Despite the grammatical close-up and description of its consequence on the world, it is a 'pays hors

d'atteinte', beyond the poet's grasp as much as is the vibration of being within the poem. For when the poet brings into his poetry something of the total nature of the world, what is meant by that is something of the world which constantly escapes clear conceptualisation; at that moment it seems to resonate, and unfolds before the reader a 'pays hors d'atteinte' tantalisingly present within the signs of language, but always further beyond them.

The poem points to itself as 'seuil', the uncertain and tremulous threshold onto another country. Consequently, when he arrives in 'la patrie', it is simply one more step on the road towards another experience of locus patriae in which the original one can be recovered, the quest for the true homeland is continuous and paradoxical: 'J'ai pénétré dans la patrie, je la cherche ici'(IP I45). It is a previous experience of arrival which the poet looks for in the specific and outwards-pointing 'ici'.

The feeling for the homeland as here and now 'j'ai retrouvé la vraie contrée qui m'était promise' (IP I46) leads to a deeper consciousness of the self moving through the world in a highly articulated and directional way, and with sharpened sensitivity: 'Oh! j'y vais accéder. J'arrive au centre enfin./ J'avance encore. J'écoute. J'entends.'(IP I46).

This rediscovery of the promised land is temporally dislocated; at one instant in the past-perfect tense ('j'ai retrouvé') finite and distant,at the next it surrounds the poet and is encountered in the present tense in a series of active verbs implying a clear progression towards something.

Frénaud's attitude to the notion of a lost land goes some way to explaining this shift in time between distantiation and presence :

> Nous répugnons à nous souvenir de certaines douleurs extrêmes ou de circonstances où nous nous sommes trouvés humiliés ou honteux. De la même façon il y a des lieux qui se trouvent liés à un excès de joie autrefois entr'aperçu ou rêvé, et qui peuvent vous devenir interdits quand les circonstances, comme c'est le cas d'ordinaire, vous obligent à vivre très loin de telles experiences. Au point que le souvenir n'en apparaît plus que comme l'absence d'une île lointaine; on a besoin de leur opposer une dénégation totale.
>
> (NIF 27)

The place here is not directly apprehended as 'le pays'. It is not the place towards which poet and poem follow their tortuous path in desperation, rather a series of localities 'des lieux' which have special emotional associations; these come close to the sensitivity of the poet's self, its pride and desire to avoid the quasi-physical wounds of shame and humiliation.

Joy, an emotion of the most precarious order in

Frénaud's world, links via dream and a kind of half-vision ('entr'aperçu') with the revival of such a place. Emotional dislocation and distance mark the poet's reaction to 'le pays': the very naming of it invokes the agony of an absence. The quest towards this painful zone of loss and separation continues, and there are repeated allusions to a point in time when the secret was glimpsed of the elected location :

> Mais il ne retrouve
> la profonde image
> qu'il a entrevue
> dans l'étoile de neige,
> au pays d'enfance.

(RM I25)

Literature — although this may often only happen at a subliminal level — dominates the forms which focus the poem's attention. 'Pays d'enfance' is not simply a neutralised area where the poet was happy as child, and where a sense of communication was possible, it is the location of another dreamlike half-perception, that of 'la profonde image'; firstly image is appearance and representation, yet here it is qualified by its greater depth beyond any superficial bodying forth of something more important (eg. of 'l'être'); secondly, in the poem with its overdetermined language, the word image signifies a linguistic creation, the act of evoking appearance within language.

Both of these types are immediately given in 'l'étoile de neige' which points both to the childlike vision, its epiphany, and to the imagistic link in language via the attributive 'de', a metaphor forcing together the connotations of snow and star to create a depth which alludes to that of the deep image and the childhood land where such linking of the distant and the present was possible.

In recovering the regions of childhood, 'Le retour de l'enfance'(RM I04) the poet does not regain contact with acuteness of vision and sensibility. The child emerges from a barren zone: 'L'enfant se relève de la région pétrifiée'(Ibid) a lack of movement and life which characterises the ossification of the past so that the child now has 'son visage de quartz' (Ibid). Resulting from this is the poet's sensation that to continue within the land of his present life, he regains some of the animal-like innocence of childhood: 'Et pour traverser mon nouveau désert./une buée m'entoure comme celle qui monte des bêtes.'(Ibid).

The desert region is neutralised emotionally by a personal sone of moisture associated with the surviving simplicity of animals; a metaphor which echoes affective struggles between the personal,interior land associated with a lost or fading past already solidifying and from which the child which was the self emerges altered, and the hostile external world of the

continuous present which is 'le désert', an amorphous and unlivable area.

Pays d'enfance

Although it is a point in time, then, childhood organises the poet's affective associations as might a country to which access was possible, even if difficult. Its implied space is not simply that of a facile opening in which all is given without ambiguity,rather it revolves around the instant of a glimpse; the epiphany of childhood is given and withheld at the same time; that which is distant and things which are close 'étoile', 'neige', 'désert', 'buée des bêtes', are pushed together in this half-observation.

This quality of the childhood country is similar to the one Frénaud appreciates in cities, which retain their secret yet allow brief views of it, to that of the poem also which maintains the dynamic between surface and depth, total clarity and obscurity, opening and enclosure. The town, however, is present before the poet, he can move within it and produce the poem from his reaction to this 'cheminement'.

What differentiates the country of childhood from this is that it is 'hors d'atteinte', or if it is reachable it is only within frightening recesses

of the self.

There is a sense in which childhood and death commune in Frénaud's poetry within the vast cycle revealed behind the decision he takes 'd'être ce vivant mortel'(H 275). The zone of youth is no longer 'la terre', but affects it like a beacon orientating space :

> Ô rayons d'enfance, par dessus la terre désolée,
> Quelles retrouvailles avec les ensevelis?
>
> (H 274)

Rediscovery of the childhood self and the identifiable homeland it entails, passes through the middle ground 'la terre désolée', the despiritualized Earth of the present, and produces a leap towards death in the form of 'les ensevelis', the dead who partake most directly of the earth.The demystification of death is also a celebration of the way in which childhood sees things, and a penetration into the uncertain frontier where the two communicate.

Frénaud's predilection is for the capacity he discovers in childhood to go beyond limits, as in its cohesion with death.The present is stigmatised by this inability to create or facilitate flow, and by the opposite of movement and porosity or illumination :

> Je suis devenu plus fort et je suis plus opaque,
> dans un monde qui ne répond pas.
>
> (SR/DTD I58)

Both poet and external world have lost the path towards exchange and communication,

the 'pays d'enfance' is dislocated, he can no longer discover its traces within his own opacity, and death becomes a menace. Whereas the statements referring to an infant world show it to have been expansive :

> ... L'enfance
> a prolongé les frontières d'une contrée qui fut,
> accueillante partout selon le lieu et la lumière.
>
> (SR/DTD I56)

Not only does childhood extend the limits of this lost country, it also brings it forth from an undetermined past. 'Une contrée qui fut' seems to imply a generalised 'pays antérieur', an ideal place existing outside time which childhood extends into a welcoming 'partout'.

Illumination, which is asserted as one of its main attributes, determines the degree of communication the infant-world produces, and the epiphany of 'l'enfance' is one of the central sources for the later inspiration, enabling the poet to continue producing poems. Remembrance of the grand parents' garden induces just such a point of illumination within the poem with a rhapsodic development of 'Je' within carefully confined space :

> Je m'étends avec lui jusqu'aux confins du monde.
> Je m'enfonce dans ses creux, je respire par ses (herbes.
> Je me suis retrouvé, il me semble, dans ses sou- (rces.
>
> (SR/DTD I58)

Yet this space 'le grand jardin',

in spite of its limitations, immediately affords an extension of the self into the edges of the world, and back again in a psychologically determining movement, into the deep interior: 'ses sources' and 'ses creux', so that child and space become indistinguishable. The climactic step in this expansive interaction transfers or extends this impetus from the spatial to the temporal, whilst the sense of place is reasserted :

> C'était là... Ou dans cette chambre sombre à cette (heure,
> sous les solives... L'horloge veille. Elle était (dorée...
> Et je fus hors du temps.
>
> (Ibid)

The sense of presence is firmly asserted 'là', even though location is uncertain; and in fact is given greater importance via its detail 'cette chambre sombre', 'sous les solives', and provides a strange introduction to the timelessness the child experiences. It is above all the resolution of time which childhood offers, and agonisingly because of this it induces the paradox of its loss within time.

The garden and the child's spatial environment are liable to transformation and extension. The latter becomes 'cette chambre', almost immediately present via the demonstrative adjective, and drawing us into a more intimate space, so that the area can be extended

(to 'les confins du monde') or contracted. Yet the child's ability to alter them is surpassed by his sudden and conclusive movement outside time, definitive and irrevocable in the preterite 'fus hors du temps', echoing 'un monde qui fut'.

The experience of the childhood period then is that of 'l'absence d'une île lointaine', which presents itself as a desired separation from the habitual flow of time and the usual confusion of disorganised space, but it is lost in a secondary and undesirable separation which is compounded by all the other forms it takes discussed in this essay.

The poem sets up the contrast between these two orders of existence: that of the child's land,and that of the disillusioned adult, subject to a world in dislocation and with which he fails to communicate. The 'Pays perdu' then is identified with 'mon pays d'enfance', and a specific orientation of the poet's vision. The countryside has a defined nature, that of the parental home :

> Mon pays d'enfance,
> oh! si loin de moi!
> Ô sillon parallèle
> quand je te revois, bête
> sans croupe ni crinière.
>
> Les jardins maraîchers,
> le remblai du canal,
> bâtiments ferroviaires,
> les vieillards presbytes,
> la cloche du presbytère,
> le veuf sort de l'épicerie,

/...

s'en va au cimetière,
les garçons et les filles.

Mais où donc est-il,
où est mon pays,
qui me conduira?

(RM 48)

Frénaud manoeuvres slowly, but with urgency, around the forms which fill his poetic world[I] (the poem's form seems to mimic a 'balbutiement' which is repeatedly mentioned as inarticulate sound) glimpses and illuminations, chasms of loneliness, vast areas of desert and disrupted space are encountered within his texts and achieve a series or a pattern of conflicting and interacting emotional levels. The poet makes and remakes 'ses traces pour en marquer d'autres' (IP 53) which indicate possibly these paths amongst the sensitive zones and conflicts he discovers or senses within himself.

The ambivalent voice of 'L'étape' divines this also: 'l'homme est sur ses traces, il ne sera/ pas une aube plénière s'illuminant/ pour proférer en le geste premier tout le perdu.'(EC 25). The poem then,like the quest towards totality and 'le pays où vivre' becomes a series of 'départs confondus'(EC I8). That which is lost is apprehended as an emotional locality, so that

I/ This may be what creates the paradoxical sense of movement and stasis in his poetry: 'sans avancer'. The desire to move on, but restriction remains.

suddenly 'ce manque essentiel, violemment "sensible au cœur"... une absence de fondement'(NIF 57) is in the foreground of the poem, slowing down the text; the reader is drawn without preparation into a web of affective significations which is 'mon pays'. Initially the poem opens onto an exclamation of distance which has the searing quality of a painful memory unexpectedly returning: 'oh! si loin de moi!'.

Distance as expressed here suggests unobtainability, the desire to overcome this, and an aperture within the collection of poems giving onto an emotional depth where the 'moi' is immediately communicated in an almost positional relationship to the powerful quality of 'le pays'. A kind of short-circuit occurs by which the lost country of childhood, and the present self are perceived in their state of separation.

The second stanza has all the qualities of a direct observation, elements of the landscape appear to rush out in serial order, as though the observer were on a train. Grammatical articulations are minimised; there are few verbs or conjunctions, yet the evocation is already articulated by the dominating concept from the first stanza of 'mon pays d'enfance' which forms a stronger disposition of landscape and a firm idea of place and time, much stronger than would 'il y avait'. In fact, there is a much clearer sense

of where these things are meant to be, due to such an elision. Each part of the landscape is made clear by its attribute or action: 'les jardins' are 'maraîchers', 'bâtiments' are 'ferroviaires'.

'Les garçons et les filles' introduce the only conjunction in the stanza, figuring a kind of balance and a contrast with 'le veuf' and 'les vieillards presbytes'. The words 'O sillon parallèle' from the first stanza suggest a further interpretation of this picture as a view from a train especially as it seems to govern the statement 'quand je te revois' and forms a play on words with 'Oh si loin'.'Sillon' and 'si loin' the furrow is a track which inevitably takes the poet somewhere, it is also a 'trace', mark on the earth, it confirms the distance by its graphic illustration of perspective.

In fact this opening stanza has its parallel in the third where the absence of 'mon pays' resurfaces to raise the question: was the evocation of stanza two really the childhood country? There is if anything a greater sense of urgency in these lines with their repetition of 'où' and the phrase 'mais où donc'.

A second vision is described :

> ... Il y avait une voiture à cheval
> encapuchonnée, certain tintement.
> Au détour de la crête, le château disparaît,
> en tuiles grises, et le vent de bruine
> le vêt, d'osier et des fleurs du sureau.
> Le mordu ricane derrière le mur.
> Seul je vois l'oiseau dans la mousse, /...

> aux pattes velues... Il faut dormir.
> J'ai entendu un cri... Le tonnerre
> assombrit la carriole.
>
> (RM 49)

This version of the landscape is more carefully articulated, and the indicative phrase 'il y avait' is used, fixing the past nature of what follows. Yet, as Frénaud tells Jean-Yves Debreuille, he sees :

> un emploi inhabituel de l'imparfait dans ma poésie; il y a de ma part un abus de ce temps du verbe qui correspond à un désir de maintenir - ou de faire revenir - ce qui s'échappe.
>
> (Courrier du centre international d'études poétiques No 153 Entretien avec J-Y Debreuille P II)

And this is what seems to happen in the stanza: 'Il y avait' can suggest an undetermined continuation of the past, perhaps as a consequence the verb-tense remains in the present in most lines, and can even include a chronological depth in the past-perfect tense: 'J'ai entendu un cri'.

Proceeding from the presence within memory of the horsedrawn carriage and its cover, the poem develops a series of images relating to a similar set of covered forms: the castle disappears 'en tuiles grises', so that tiles not only operate as a covering, but also partake in textual articulation through the inventive use of the preposition 'en', and they absorb the castle.

In a continuing image of dissipation, the wind — given liquid form ('vent de bruine') which makes it ambiguously tangible — clothes the castle, in an enclosing movement which is paradoxically progressive and gives you the impression of an outward unfolding.

The madman, 'le mordu', is safely 'derrière le mur'. But his sneer gives away the depth of vision within this glimpse of 'le pays perdu' showing it to be a place of multiple significations. Sneering and biting madmen are found elsewhere in Frénaud's poetry as part of the pattern of sensitive areas ('tu saignes,tu ricanes'(LSF IOI); 'Je les mordrai tous'(RM 59). The choice of the colloquial 'mordu' here to express madness, sets off a network of connotations. Bestiality again filters into the picture of childhood, as well as the disquieting presence of animal within Man; 'le néant' is personified as having 'ses dents froides'(RM I3). So that an ambivalent, menacing element emerges within the idyll.

Consonant with Frénaud's approach to the dialectic at the centre of his poetic method (It might be better called a 'synoeciosis' or 'theory of opposites') this image with its powerful psychological meaning,its potential menace lurking behind the walls of landscape, is balanced by an image which releases counter-connotations: the poet/child is alone in seeing the soft image of the bird which almost becomes part of the

moss. Not only does the poet want us to imagine the bird as in the moss with its implied softness and its positive emotional significance, but its claws, here mitigated into 'les pattes', are transformed into the main quality of moss itself 'velues'. So that by metonymy the whole bird takes on a soft, vegetal nature, and is absorbed. Frénaud has carefully drawn the reader towards this area of sensitivity within a desired landscape where objects are placed in special relationships to a large extent dependent on the psychological significance of 'crête', 'château', 'mordu', 'oiseau', which map out the spaces of an interior self and its undulations.

Apart from the strangely evocative 'certain tintement' in line one, which contrasts with 'ricane',the main thrust of the description depends on the visual. However, this poetic oasis revelatory of the childish epiphany as the poet rediscovers it, significantly breaks down with the transposition from the visual to the aural sense.

Like the moment when the poet senses the painful and unapproachable past tug at his consciousness, it is at the point of sleep that the childish world is rent apart and the hearing of the cry is described.The past-perfect tense again suggests a noting down of things which are happening to the poet as they happen at the time of writing. The hearing of the cry is

within the present and the foreground. Since its zone is aural and its effect is shock and disruption, it would seem to have a link at a subliminal level with 'le tonnerre'. But the verb which applies to the latter could either be in the present or past historic tense; the time of this poetic experience — with all the anguish it carries — is uncertain.

Yet its significance in terms of the poet's feelings is clear: the gentle and undefinable 'certain tintement' associated with the carriage has now been replaced by the threat and generality of 'le tonnerre'. This sound incurs a negative visual experience: 'assombrir'. Light is disrupted and weakened. The carriage, invested with special significance as a totem from childhood, descends in status from 'voiture' to 'carriole'. These lines would appear to lead the reader out of the image of 'le pays perdu' towards the lucidity of the poem's final statement: 'Ici, il n'y a plus d'autrefois'(Ibid).

However, the evocation of 'la carriole', the focus on light/sound, and the dialectic which seems to operate even within Frénaud's reminiscence of childish vision, lead us back into the stanza. The cry is an unsettling and awakening interruption. Is it a message the poet should heed? Is it his own voice exclaiming 'si loin de moi'? Intimations such as these remain unclarified, and we are pushed back from the simplicity

of 'Il n'y a plus d'autrefois' into the distressing oscillation which underpins the most important of Frénaud's poems.

His reply to the question 'Où est mon pays?' (IP I37) — posed in a manner which discloses within the poem a deeper region of uncertainty and interrogation — leads towards this area of susceptibility: 'Où est mon pays? C'est dans la détresse'.(IP I37).And the dislocated quality of this emotional hinterland, implies that within it 'les traces', the response the poem makes, may be lost amongst 'Des monceaux gisant sous d'autres douleurs'(Ibid), at the same time evoking the childhood town of Montceau-les-mines and the underground pit-passages metaphorically referred to in 'gisant sous'.

La patrie

The question may arise for the reader: what are the known biographical experiences that shape the poet's vision? Such questions can easily be dismissed on the grounds that the text should be able to stand alone, and the reader's interpretive relationship is solely with it. Supportive of this is the way in which individual aspects of Frénaud's makeup are subsumed within the collective development of his poems. From

it there arises a telescopic effect whereby a dominating metaphor or form; such as the quest, separation, 'le château', holds a key role in orienting different parts of the poet's world.

Those poems written in exile during the war then do not have a meaning restricted to the immediate and particular experiences of the French soldier; although this is certainly present. Frénaud inserts into poems dealing with the war years themes of quest, love, temporal dislocation, and dislocation of place. They are absorbed into the poetic landscape.

Evidently, it would be foolish to assume a poet as sensitive as Frénaud living through forced exile could avoid the effects of such pain on his activity as a poet. What seems to happen is that he creates a kind of oneiric myth around this period of exacerbated sensitivity. 'Soir du chevalier', 'Le voyageur', 'La route', 'Le beau voyage', 'Les rois mages', 'Plainte du roi mage', all in the collection 'Poèmes de Brandebourg'(RM IOI - I3I) allude via invented or traditional legends to the poet's experience in exile from 'la patrie'.

Even in attempting to narrow down the field of considerations regarding separation from 'la patrie', Frénaud's poetry contains latent within it systems of connotations which he has insistently set up in certain poems. So it is worth noting the original point

of departure for discussion which 'la patrie' contains in its etymology: the word 'pater', and by association the vast field of poetic significations which are worked out regarding the male inheritor in Hæres.

The appearance of 'La petite fille' produces an instant of contact and fulfilment contrasting with a general atmosphere of despair, as in the moment when 'toi' and 'moi' are joined: 'comme après une longue absence deux êtres enfin retrouvés.'(LSF 25). The scene in which this beatifying union occurs hints at a situation of exile, probably that of a labour camp: 'Cette nuit-là avait commencé comme les autres dans notre petit dortoir d'ouvriers, cage de bois clair' (Ibid). The end of the dreamlike meeting returns the poet to his dormitory and a repetition of the cage theme: 'la neige tombait de la lune qui était blanche par la fenêtre de notre cage et sur les lanternes'(LSF 26).

The continuation of undistinguished time disrupted by 'cette nuit-là', and the theme of imprisonment, are altered by the child's presence and the strange interrelationship where fatherhood is both present and absent :

> J'étais son père et elle le savait et en même temps je savais que je n'étais pas son père, ce qu'elle n'ignorait pas non plus.
>
> (LSF 26)

Surprisingly, the ambiguously sexual relationship between worker and small girl: 'nous continuions à nous étreindre'(LSF 26) is suddenly understood as 'la patrie'. This feeling that he has reached the homeland seems to be part of the fertile intermingling where the world disappears and the two lovers are lost within being. Movement from the imprisonment of 'la cage' to 'la patrie' would appear to be implicit in their very opposition.

Is the girl simply incidental to this part of the text? Possibly she is a nocturnal confusion; home, dissipation of self into other, tender contact, mystical experience of 'le néant' are compressed into the sensation of unity; the homeland is the culmination of a development :

> — Enfin la vraie patrie, celle que l'on n'atteint jamais... que pourtant j'avais attendue sans y prendre garde depuis l'origine...
>
> (LSF 26)

What is given in this dream of a union beyond normal morality is not simply 'la patrie' in the usual sense of returning from war, but an idealised country which you never reach.

The context of Frénaud's life in 'notre petit dortoir d'ouvriers' is elaborated in other poems. 'La route'(RM II0 - II4) for example, whilst it presents in its title and theme a key image of Frénaud's poetry already discussed above, also provides the reader with

a concrete reference. Yet this is done by allusion rather than direct statement :

> Comme un rameur sur les galères du roi,
> j'ai ma place marquée dans la chaîne des wagon-
> (nets,
> de l'aube au crépuscule je remplis et je vide
> ces mornes sabliers.
>
> (RM III)

In the comparison with a pretty specific type of forced labour the poem's subject is clearly situated, so that the anecdotal information of the prisoner who has a special wagon either in which he travels or into which he shovels sand to build the road, is a second step towards an ever closer focus on his status as forced labourer.

However, Frénaud's poetry is so heavily weighted by the universal and symbolic meaning of phenomena such as 'la route', 'le chemin' etc that the image of 'les galères' achieves a connotative association with the theme of 'la bonne continuation', and the pursuit of being, which, though freely undertaken, becomes a sort of trap. Similarly the metaphorical reference to the wagons he fills as 'ces mornes sabliers', in the context of a daylong activity releases associations with the theme of time.

Along with space the poet is particularly sensitive to time's alteration through his imprisonment. So that by pathetic fallacy the sand-clocks are 'mornes'. The route itself may resemble that of the quest

within 'L'étape' or 'La noce noire', its destination is unknown :

> La route ira je ne sais où,
> je la conduirai si je puis.
>
> (RM II0)

In this expression of a wish to direct the road, the poet sets up a paradoxical situation similar to the one in the voyage in search of the Messiah, as the Magus says of the guiding star: 'Réussirons-nous enfin à l'égarer'(RM I28). The road's destination and the direction the poet will impose on it are unknown. But the words he utters reveal his desire for home :

> S'en ira-t-elle vers mon pays
> pour herser l'éclatant charroi
> de ma débâcle?
>
> (RM II0)

Here 'la route' represents a movement of ritual mourning over the self via its metaphorical sense. Yet this is only a superficial meaning and it is possible to read into the attribution of 'la débâcle' to himself, the closeness of identification Frénaud felt with the fall of France.

He exploits the multiple significations of language: 'herser' signifies both to put into a hearse (to transport to death) and: 'ameublir, émotter une terre'. The image of the road's possible movement towards the homeland becomes also an allusion to his own

labour, the 'chaîne de wagonnets' about which he makes plain his sense of fall: 'je travaille sans chanter' (RM II2). The road, then, leads back — through disturbed visions of death — to an idealised Paris: 'Et verrai-je Paris au bout/ qui m'attend où sourit la Seine?'(RM II0). The homeland itself is personified or animated in a lyrical attempt to capture what is lost. It is 'la patrie' which, one assumes, is drawing close to him :

> La patrie est lente,
> mais j'entends les cloches,
> comme docteur Faust
> un matin d'avril.
>
> (RM II2)

A reference to Faust's hearing the bells and chorus, which in Goethe's play restrain him from suicide, introduces into the poem a wider area of literary influences, plus the metaphysical considerations specific to Goethe's drama; the desire to go beyond one's present condition by a vast leap into nothingness.[I]

Like Faust, the poet is aware of the desperately slow progress towards his elected land which could mean, at one and the same time, the fear of never returning to France before death ('la patrie' in its

I/ 'To take this step with cheerful resolution,/Though nothingness should be the certain, swift conclusion!' (Faust: AI ScI)

literal, concrete sense) or the anxiety over never achieving the kind of communion and exaltation which form a 'leitmotiv' in Frénaud's poetry.

Also significant is the choice of German literary reference. For the poet his exile is not so much a physical distantiation from France; the enemy is not a foreign culture. He speaks of 'les frères ici,/ aux langues lointaines'(RM II2), and assumes Faust's Philosophical position.

True separation it seems is from a state of being in which we might be transformed: 'Transmués nos cœurs/ accoudés au zinc/ avec d'autres voix' (RM II3); yet this ultimate possibility of assuming other voices is separated from us within time. It is placed in an uncertain future. The only valid attitude in the present is a dialectic of acceptance and refusal :

> Miroirs du futur,
> pour s'y voir plus beaux
> quand sonnent les cloches
> du dernier matin,
> il faut accepter,
> il faut résister,
> comme docteur Faust.
>
> (RM II3)

Future time, strangely similar to 'L'autre', acts as a reflector for the self,a means of overstepping the self's present condition. In Frénaud's poetry it is locked in a strained relationship with the past, since 'la patrie' is often firmly situated in 'l'autrefois'. Yet the future is associated

with the bells of Faust's morning, which originally pointed to the revival of Springtime and a call away from death and from the temptation of ultimate knowledge. Here they have become a sort of death knell 'les cloches/ du dernier matin.'

Sole form of transformation and progress for the poet is the one which is internal and part of his condition: 'Devenir un homme,/ la seule magie,/ est art douloureux'(RM II3). His desire to discover 'le pays', his need to return home, his metaphysical quest, and even his status as prison labourer, are disparaged in a single statement: 'Ô prisonnier dérisoire' (RM II2) which in the adjective 'dérisoire' evokes a whole series of cross-references within Frénaud's texts, not least of which is the notion of 'la conquête dérisoire', 'le vainqueur dérisoire', and the production of the poem, the capturing of being which does not fulfil his aspirations, yet remains 'conquête' in a continuing tension which all his poems develop.

Impressions received during exile in Germany force poems to assume certain directions, towards certain areas of signification of which the quest for a homeland is a predominant one. There is also the tone of 'La noce noire', for example, written over the period of liberation (dated I944 - I945) where images of wartime ('les rouelles grises'(LSF 56) 'les hauts fourneaux crachent'(LSF 57) 'de longs canons s'avancent'

(Id) are inserted into a context which expands the spectrum of associations, makes their experiential origin less certain though it is discernible. Such a poem brings together several areas and types of event which arouse strong sentiment: war, festival,religious ceremony, sexual union, search for the ideal woman, suicide, industrial landscape; each of these is used as a catalyst — in the concrete form it takes in language and metaphor — for emotional response.

This part of the poet's sense of 'la patrie' is introduced into a collection of much later poems (roughly I972 - I98I) of HÆRES , specifically within the group of poems which looks back nostalgically to an idealised contact with the French countryside: 'Éclats et fumées de la campagne'(H 79 - 96). 'Brandenburg'(H 86) then, apart from 'Valais', stands out as the sole place-name in this span of I9 poems.

At this point in the collection there is an increased emotional involvement. The homeland is no longer a surrounding place which must be understood and reinforced by language, or a distant memory; it is perceived as a distance :

BRANDENBURG

Promenade des orphelins de la patrie.
Les contrées des autres ne nous parlent guère.
Les femmes sont plus loin, au cœur des jardins.
auberge sans voix, le ciel sans lumière.
Les filles de chez nous grandissent et blondi-
(ssent,

/...

mais le pin est dans l'éternel.

I942

(H 86)

'Route' and 'patrie' are reorganised here in a closer association via the affective force of 'promenade des orphelins' which includes in the general sense of loss and dislocation of the world's orderliness the impressions of childhood.

The POWs left in German territory are 'des orphelins', abandoned by the homeland. The theme is also the poem or poetic force, for the countryside does not speak, the inn is 'sans voix', and the state of separation finds its ultimate expression in absence of expression. There is a suggestion that whereas the German landscape (associated with 'les pins') is eternal and unchanging, the homeland is within time and is altering: 'les filles grandissent et blondissent'.

The homeland seems repeatedly to be in this state of disgrace, but it is the elected place in which totality is believed to be approachable: 'J'avais cru recouvrer la patrie infortunée,/ me saisir total, dans l'éclaircie,/ en m'évanouissant'(LSF I93). The homeland is to be recovered, but it undergoes a further reappraisal since it produces the kind of self-dissipation and self-possession which forms a key part in the dynamic discussed above.

It has a wider sense in organising the emotional

parameters of the self. Consequently it is also the dominant emotional tone of despair: 'Toujours le désespoir sera donc notre patrie,/ avant le néant' (LSF I40). The homeland has a double nature, both despair and nothingness at different points, but the observation the poem exposes is itself contradictory and fundamentally dislocated, since 'la patrie' is both a desired land to which the poet would return and a hard desert implying all the difficulties of continuing existence with 'Notre inhabileté fatale', it is emptiness: 'Le désert, ma patrie, passe/ en hurlant, je n'entends plus.'(RM 67). Under this form as wind and sound, 'la patrie' is not even perceived by the poet, and it is no longer he who moves towards it, but the land itself which passes.

It may also become 'la bouffée', and in this avatar it comes close to the nature of the dead 'les bouffées des morts', for example: 'bouffées d'une patrie qui me préserve et que je comble'(DTD I57) reduced to an almost imperceptible state as a breath which passes, the homeland is in a reciprocal relationship with the poet. How can it preserve him? How can he fulfil it? Or are these attributes simply reversed in a subconscious confusion? The poet preserves his memory of the patria, which in turn fulfils him. The inversion is a clear case of dislocated perception, the effect the memory of a 'pays où vivre' has on him is

undistinguishable from himself, the lines along which messages and actions pass have become confused like 'les traces du poème'. Even this confused relationship of 'les bouffées', the movement of breath and life (or death) is eventually disrupted to an extreme point so that the tension itself disappears: 'Le grand jardin dévoué aux souffles s'est abîmé'(SR/DTD I58) the garden is a closer focus on the home, its organised and calm centre, but even its volatile aspect associated with breath and half-communicated messages does not hold it back from total disappearance.

'La patrie', 'le pays', and 'le pays d'enfance' share the same ambiguity as 'l'idéale maison', they must be approached and constructed from the poet's own inner substance, but they are marked by an internal built-in failure. Furthermore they exist in an uncertain period of time which floats between future, past, and a sort of extra-temporal oasis. They are beyond the present and separated from the poet in a fundamental way, by the poet's nature as a multiple voice constantly searching for unity.

Dislocation occurs at multiple levels within the poem. But perhaps most markedly it is at the basis of the poem's relationship with its source or its raw material; whether this be the virtually unknowable region within 'le soi', a series of data entering the field of poetic sensitivity from outside (eg historic-

al facts such as the death of General Krivitsky etc) or the intersection and interference of these two spheres.

What the poet attempts in his work highlights an extreme disparity underpinning its production. The poems are considered at times to be 'talisman', 'monument', 'château'; at others they are simply 'des statues de vent./ Oscillant entre la facilité et l'impossible.'(IP I96). This probably stems from the nature of the poem's subject, of its quest: the attempt to reach out and 'capter', to pick up and make intelligible things not normally formulated in language. It aims at a grey area between the logorrhorea of an uncontrollable flow of language, and the mysterious secret where words are no longer possible or adequate.

If the poem is an approach towards silence, if it is an object: 'dont le courant gronde sans bruit,/ machine à capter ce silence'(IP 85) how does it bring this about within its boundaries? At the simplest level, given that the poem's tacit element would be an evolution towards what is unsayable in the world and in Man, its ultimate achievement would be a tautology: the redundant reproduction of internal states or complex but unnecessary maps of the world; alternatively, a replica of consciousness-free Nirvana.

A different kind of silence is presented to our

understanding through the poem. It is at those points where what it expresses is not in words; possibly at the crucial point where metaphor takes language beyond tautologous mimesis; possibly in the exposition and production for our comprehension of some emotional depth previously unsuspected, where the power of language negates itself, presents something beyond its signs. This evolution is essentially dialectical. It makes qualitative alterations in the world to the extent that the words of the poem produce a new overlapping of self and other, of interior - exterior, of language and the unsayable.

Language is an activity of exchange, an intersection of consciousnesses (since it is primarily via language that we communicate with one another) in which the world in its infinite contradictions takes part. Being, which is supposedly the resolution or culmination of all dialectical tension, presents itself to the intellect. However, it is never totally present. If it were, the poem would stop. What happens does so within language, and if being or the data from the environment are there it is in a dislocated and rearranged form.

Another possibility is suggested by the fact each poem is considered by Frénaud as separate. They form a multiplicity. Each one activates different bits of the unknown which have impressed themselves

on the poet's mind, and various images of his surroundings which elicit specific responses. His poetry produces from this something which alters the readers' understanding of the way things are. Hopefully it is a new apprehension, a progress towards epiphany: 'Une trace par un monument à inventer./ Une machine à faire entendre quelque chose de l'événement'(IP 243) and not simply the machine of silence.

Environmental imput may have a disorganised form or may be rearranged to suit internal emotional states. Secret areas found in his surroundings which reach beyond the mind, intersect with the internal 'profondeur'. But the most troubling manifestation of the unknown, of 'le magma' is drawn or may arise from within :

> Ces petits monuments verbaux imprévus, la conscience qui les a portés c'est celle de tel homme unique avec son expérience et ses désirs, ses monstres et ses valeurs... l'oeuvre prend une tonalité différente selon la part de la sensibilité qui s'y trouve actualisée dans le dépassement. Ainsi la plus haute joie et le simple plaisir, l'émerveillement, la nostalgie, l'amertume ou le désespoir, la révolte et la rage, la bonté, tous les sentiments éprouvables peuvent-ils tour à tour y prédominer.
>
> (IP 24I - 242)

This sensitivity, like the force of being, also like language, is a dislocating influence. It incurs the multiplicity of levels in poetic language, and the different orientations of texts

which conflict and reticulate to imply something more than themselves — a construct, an architecture. The articulated object which the totality of Frénaud's work elaborates, is based on just such conflicts and dislocations, harmonies and fixed 'lieux' (such as 'L'idéale maison','le château').

The poem is not a window onto whatever is beyond it. The world,the poet,the reader, 'l'être', in their affective power and multiple significations, blur its language and figures. Frénaud is aware of the distorting tendency of language down to its 'syntaxe débile' (IP 238).

Images and preoccupying themes in the excess they impose onto language shatter the tautological oneness of observer and observed. Any view on the mental landscape that the poem tentatively presents is unbalanced. What is going on in such a case? Why does the poem drift away from the simple reception of sense data towards multiple and conflicting attitudes? It would seem that the poet explores areas more germane to internal states than to what is seen outside or the pure content of what is written down. So that Paris, the fixed location, when seen as dissipated and ambiguous: 'Tout se dissout'(RM 20) pinpoints an internal sense of dislocation. 'Passage de la Visitation' or 'Palazzo Vecchio' are places which condense the personal/internal intuition of 'la force qui me vidait de

moi-même'(supra).

About wartime material pressing personal and universal considerations are crystallised. On the other hand, when the world he experiences begins to distance itself from him or vice versa, and the poet's capacity for interpreting reality breaks down, it may be decomposed into 'ces éclats', fragments not only of phenomena he apprehends, but also of the inner depths.

'Profondeur', 'éclats', fluidity, porosity, 'le secret', 'le miroir', in aggravating or mitigating states of separation and in affecting the fixed locus which the poet seeks out, are interrelated and may combine or conflict within different poems.

'La profondeur' is the environment of 'l'eau noire', the fluid principle in its most negative image. It is the breakdown of limits in a menacing sense. For there can be no articulated 'château' or formulated word, only 'la rumeur' emerges within this ill-defined area of depth. It also produces 'l'éclat', or brief illumination which indicates a possible epiphany, whilst its alternative signification is as a dislocated and denigrating fragment of the total experience. It is within the bottomless zone that 'la porosité' and the movement between frontiers, the flow from one form to another is possible: 'Figures affrontées qui savez vous ouvrir/ au plaisir et passez'(SR/DTD 43). Depth also holds the mystery,

'le secret', towards which Frénaud's poem gropes hesitantly, 'la réalité caché de soi', a secret which may be within the self; in the external world of nature understood as 'la source' or 'le sang' the driving energy of the poem. It can only be released by 'la violente parole'(supra) in dislocative moments. Only when the violence and excess associated with this abyss are momentarily controlled or absent from the poem is the coexistence of totality with dislocation possible. Then the fixed location 'une île' and dissolving agent 'le fleuve': 'qui émerge entre les murs que défait la brume'(IP 52)can come into contact without danger. Vaporisation here tends towards the creation of an ambiguous zone where the meeting of an intimate couple will be consecrated.

'L'éclat',although it is a moment of disruption,a mockery of totality and of 'l'illumination', can articulate 'l'être'(see above p257). Perhaps because it is a disturbed instant in the integrity and silence of the unsayable that it is able to briefly transmit being's presence.

Within the porosity,depth, or 'l'éclat', normally distant parts of experience are brought into a disturbing contact; the childhood land is closely associated with death (supra326). The couple 'toi' - 'moi', although they constitute a fertile duality, achieve total contact amongst the dead. They are thrown into a disturbing alien order or an unlivable atmosphere which implies a second depth, a secret place where they lose their

limiting boundaries in death. 'L'autre', an unfathomable entity associated with the undoing of consciousness, does not produce a contact or 'confondement' which can be felt and described in calm equanimity or as part of an expected order. It disrupts and fragments the amorous relationship by introducing the alien atmosphere of 'le tout autre'.

Perhaps the problem of consciousness and perception are the main ones emerging from this discussion. At key points a change in the poem's perspective dependent upon a guiding intellect emerges. During the crucial moment of total intermingling or 'confondement' for example, the 'gorgone' demands visual attention and therefore also a certain intellectual distance from 'le serpent': 'vois-tu ces jambes?', this is despite the fact that serpent and Gorgon are one and the same creature.

Tearing apart the dreamlike evocation of a childhood idyll is the cry heard at the moment of falling into sleep: 'Il faut dormir/... J'ai entendu un cri' (above). The sound distantiates and emotionally rearranges the harmonious articulation of things <u>seen</u>.

'Le confondement', in its banishment of boundaries between self and other or self and universe, has mystical overtones. The use of 'L'évangile d'Eve' points out this ambiguous relationship between such an absorption and the individual's description of it.

There is always a single 'Je' there relating the event. That mind is the true locus for resolving separation is shown by the agony the lovers feel at not knowing: 'si nous sommes toujours ensemble' despite the fact they are joined physically: 'la main encore dans la main'. When the isolated instant of a possible joining between 'toi' and 'moi' breaks down, it is conscious faculties which are thrown into disarray: 'Tu m'abusais... Dans ton visage je ne reconnais plus le signe douloureux'. The lie signals an undermining of intellect and distortion of messages passing between 'toi' and 'moi'; similarly with recognition, which is the important phase of conscious contact. This mental act or synapsis may also be metaphorically identified with the island: 'Dès que nous nous étions reconnus toi et moi, nous avions disparu de la vue, les deux un seul...'. Instantaneous mental contact induces identification and brings about a change in the relationship with the environment from which they recede into 'le paradis comme une île', a structured and secure space.

The state of unification cannot be achieved, for the poem depends on a distance to set in motion 'la grande oscillation' which is alone capable of maintaining a sensitive area of perception both in poet and reader. The poem must avoid the nothingness of Nirvana in which tensions disappear since there is no conflict and no separate identity to instigate it. Being's

relationship with the poem also needs this dislocated duality between dissipation and presence, without destruction of cognitive faculties :

> C'est à force de se dissiper, d'apparaître
> qu'il fait retenir un chant,
> échappé de notre malheur, actionné
> par l'interrogation indélébile, s'édifiant
> sinon pour nous abîmer dans la nuit
> pour nous en approcher.
>
> (H 289)

It is equally apparent that the internal state of fragmentation, the unending labyrinth which plagues the self within, the 'voix fêlée', is more poetically productive. The same applies to the disturbed levels of History which characterise social Man :

> Déjà s'affermissait dans l'affrontement
> l'éclat puissant et noir. La peur
> s'enfonçant dans la nuit pour composer
> des représentations aventureuses,
> hachurait les années enfantines.
>
> (SR/DTD 53)

In the evocation of Rome as the Eternal City, its history developing through disarticulations, destruction and aspiring monuments, the personal childlike sensation is fraught by confrontation and the fragmented 'éclat'. From the plumbing of this frightening depth ('s'enfonçant') arises the ability to organise a vision of things: 'composer/ des représentations'.

The child is part of the city, and Rome contains

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a parallel menacing interior 'des fumées/ qui se glissent à travers les dalles'(SR/DTD 37), and a similar momentary illumination: 'Face éclatante, obscure' (SR/DTD43) a desperate flash which rips time apart: 'l'innombrable éclair saisi dans la traînée des cris./ Puis le dénuement tout à coup, l'opaque'(Ibid). Rome attempts to rise above this threatening subterranean interior through its glory and marble excrescences:'Et plus l'on monte, plus l'on se hausse/ pour s'égaler et pour confondre.'(SR/DTD 38). Yet it is the subliminal and ambivalent voice of 'la Sorcière' which prevails and rises through History.

Time is fractured in several ways; by the self in its need for a final excursion beyond its limits: 'je veux quitter le temps qui ne m'a jamais aimé'(IP 53), and to disappear into the nothingness of totality. It is broken up in the moment of recognising the intimate partner, and may lead to a temporal oasis where a bearable kind of contact is possible; this timelessness is available to the poet's consciousness, and because the conjoining is palliated, it may articulate the poem.

Language distorts the communication of time in the text through the emotive use of verbs in imperfect tense or certain rhythms of description and alterations in perspective. The adverb 'déjà' also produces an effect which may be termed a temporal leap: 'Déjà

le feu des coqs'(IP 34); 'Déjà la pluie'(Ibid). This excruciating sensitivity to a temporal situation or temporal shifts cleaves to the existential problem of being there, and the recognized impossibility of quitting one's given limits, of achieving a level of porosity which does not result in a mere disappearance into inanimate matter.

As receptor of the movements of 'l'Unique' — both out there in the products of the world: natural landscapes, animals, 'la clairière', the shapes of things; or in the excrescences of Man: cities,'Palazzo Vecchio', houses, 'châteaux'; as well as its evolutions within the self — the poem is finely tuned to a dynamic of destruction and recreation: 'la rumeur/ de l'univers qui s'écroule et qui naît.'(H 298). The message is an indistinct sound which must be clarified and organised, a formless 'magma' as it appears in other poems, gushing forth from an opening in the Earth. It cannot be contained. The emergence of the word as violent opening, 'rupture', is refused:

> Oh! je ne suis plus avec vous camarades,
> dans la parole et le geste que vous affirmez
> rupture et accès...
>
> (H 293)

For Frénaud the direct and one-sided statement or affirmation which precludes all else and moves 'à grandes enjambées'(Ibid) towards the ideal or 'la totalité', is not acceptable. Like Faust, he

assumes his human task, and admits the limitations in his ability to express the world and the uncertain :

> Je passe et je repasse, assurant ma faction.
> Je balbutie — poète
>
> (H 296)

Conclusion heading.

The mystical experience (ie some intimation of 'l'être' or a cognate of it) that is the poem's basic impetus alters the poet's view of the world, organises his otherwise dislocated and disrupted thought and feelings, his memories. Yet it does this by separating off the 'illumination' from all other experience. Close-by this epiphany is a feeling of separation and estrangement. It is this distance which motivates the poem, the desire for retrieval against all odds, as Pingaud puts it in his introduction to 'Il n'y a pas de paradis' :

> Séparé de la vraie vie, le voyageur serait condamné à errer sans fin, il ne pourrait que subir alternativement les assauts également trompeurs de l'espoir et du désespoir si la parole poétique ne lui était donnée pour renverser le cours de l'expérience.
>
> (IP 7 Introduction)

In fact what is most clear to the poet about 'la parole poétique' is that it is a relative failure, as a consequence of which he must continue endlessly to attempt to reproduce the experience. His role is parallel to that of the reader. He must interpret and transmit, attempt to make sense of, the resolution of contradictions which suddenly he senses. Hopefully the reader too feels this, and in turn produces his reaction which is just as relative, and which he considers to be just as limited.

What appears before the reader is the necessity

to avoid a clear reading of the poems which might treat them as a momentarily obscured discourse which can be interpreted until it becomes accessible. Frénaud's texts are not static. Their 'bonne continuation': the ongoing process of making poems, is parallelled by the ongoing process of reading.

Attempted in these pages is not a close reading of the poems, but an approach towards them as tentative and uncertain as the steps the poem takes towards 'le secret' or 'l'être'. The focus was intended to settle on those aspects of the text where sense becomes unclear and vertiginously uncertain, and where meaning is most powerful. This would not be a quest for 'original signification' with the hope of arriving at some mystival single proposition. Rather the object is a point of dialectical complexity; the poem's simplest meanings, those given off in a first reading act upon one another to suggest more and more complex readings of the poem, eventually spilling over, or building up, into the relationships between whole poems within collections, collections within books, and books within the collected works as a whole; then into the readers' relationship with the latter.

What the poem points to 'out there' in reality is never certain. Its nature is allusive. Its tropes

and figures aim at something much more than a one-to-one relationship between sign and meaning intended. Of course, this state of things qualifies our reading.

Nevertheless, for us to read at all there have to be a certain number of what Greimas calls 'classèmes' which can dominate at any one time. These can be dependent on the literary tradition, the type of literature involved, or the degree of imput the text itself contains. For example when Frénaud writes 'le château... battait obscur', it is possible for us to read in any 'château', Chinon, Langeais etc; we also know that it has certain connotations for the French mind: Feudal aristocracy, Provincial kitsch, an idyllic or turbulent past, and artisanal achievement which underlies nobility. These find echoes in our own preconceptions. But the text itself comes up with a strong bank of data which already sets up a reading 'le château' is equated with 'le poème', with poet as 'un soi' with 'enclosure' and the inability to communicate, with speech as articulation, with a possession that can be bequeathed, inherited and transmitted. These depend on the text itself laying out clues. Not every poem in which 'château' appears signifies that the 'château' is the poem and vice versa.

There are other indicators to reading that

enforce themselves and solicit our attention, by their repeated appearance in the text, and their close connotative relation to other elements. In these cases however, the poems and prose-commentaries themselves offer few or no direct clues to reading, and the possibilities for meaning increase.

In a type of discourse which proposes a view of things as separated, of the self and individuals as unable to communicate, the expression of certain forms has a strong semantic value and sets up a secondary set of meanings: 'gouffre', 'paroi', 'écran', 'le mur mitoyen de la haine entre toi et l'autre'.

Primarily the poem puts into action a movement against these barriers and perimeters: 'Mes possessions sont trop claires, Je les hais,/ ces limites des joies et du malheur.'(RM 56).But this restricting factor may also be noted in the tonality of some descriptions:

> Grand corps étendu dans la brume,
> de si loin je te vois
> par delà les corbeaux et la cendre.
> (RM 37)

Here distantiation is clearly stated 'de si loin', but there is also an affective type of separating in 'par delà les corbeaux et la cendre', where the associations of blackness, scavenging and destruction by fire (and associated loss of heat) set the woman's body apart at the

emotional level.

Opening & Enclosure

Clearer indicators of an enclosing and separating environment are present: the communal quest for an epiphany or moment of contact with 'le tout autre' sparks off divisive and enclosing metaphors: 'Et le mur mitoyen de la haine entre toi et l'autre' (LSF 57) where the intimate 'toi' is excluded from contact and accession.

Against the background suggested by this kind of reading emerges another tendency within the text, towards various kinds of opening. The poet may experience himself opening outwards or reality and 'l'autre' opening towards him. Positive though it may seem, the opening leitmotiv has the dualistic nature of a threat: 'l'héritage c'est l'ouverture du rempart' (H 9) where the inheritance works both to break down what may be seen as an impeding barrier 'le rempart', but which is also a sign for the self's integrality or of articulation and structure (cf 'le château' as symbol of the poem). Opening on a cosmic scale also prepares for the stammering emergence of the word: 'Le monde s'est ouvert dans un grand balbutiement'(IP I82). This dynamic theme is at the origin of the network of metaphors which surrounds the act of poetic creation for Frénaud.

The theme of giving and abundance, which seems often to be a metaphor for the poem's flow, a stage in its development when the world begins to respond in an excessive way — this theme shows 'la plénitude' as something secret and withheld: 'le sourire de la plénitude/ secrète comme la colombe'(RM 24). Although fulness constantly seems possible and it is desired, it is not allowed full rein here, so that the opening which permits contact is not total, but restrained and toned down: 'la tendresse entrouverte'(RM 25). The shocking revelation of opening, with its sexual implications is reduced by this half open appearance.

The unexpected epiphany which is encountered in the most everyday place and situation[I] is also half retained, half opened, its power made palatable:

> Soudain le feuillage, derrière la haute porte, le long de la maison en retrait, ainsi qu'une promesse ancienne avec des aperçus incertains.
>
> (IP 96)

Not only is the thing shown or revealed held back from openness, the description itself seems to be restrained, moving about the

I/ As if in the surrealist tradition he sets this in a Parisian 'passage', an enclosed place which is yet still 'la rue', ambiguously exterior and interior, open and enclosed. However, this 'passage' is a small side-street near Frénaud's flat in the 17th arr. I think.

subject rather than directly stating its presence. The poem then must be a talisman, an inheritance: 'transmissible de soi à soi'(H I6), but it is also an opening and only works if both writer and readers 'éprouvent comme un desserrement, une ouverture' (H I6).

The structural theme of opening can be considered as having many antecedents, but perhaps the clearest for our purposes are the I9th century symbolists. So that for Baudelaire and then Mallarmé 'le gouffre' and 'l'azur' point to a menacing opening or introduce this opening into the text. The world within the poet's mind or outside it which lacks delimitations when 'l'azur' predominates, the mind and word begin to divagate in the kind of boundless freedom which Mallarmé attempted to control. For Baudelaire a visual 'estompé' was the means to control such an unleashing of energy: 'une gaze transparente et sombre laisse entrevoir les splendeurs amorties d'une jupe éclatante' (Petits poëmes en prose 78). Frénaud perceives or comes to terms with donation, contact with 'l'autre' and the epiphany in a moment of controlled opening.

Recognition

Allied to opening as an indicator to reading is the recurring reference to recognition, a point of

contact affecting language, consciousness and emotional sensitiveness. This also explains certain aspects of unity. The poet sees unity as approaching death and 'l'anéantissement' :

> Ce serait le temps retrouvé avec le temps dépassé. L'autre et le même ensemble. Ce serait l'Unité désirée, recouvrée, la plénitude. Ou la mort, peut-être.
>
> (LSF 26I)

At first it seems death is the controlling factor in this description of Unity. A loss of self in total annihilation is interpreted as death, consciousness destroyed, fulness unleashed, time overcome. But most important here is the idea of rediscovery and recovery of something: 'Qu'il croit découvrir et recouvrer dans sa parole'(Ibid). Recognition is a moment of interpretation and recognising oneself in the text, understanding and meaning. In fact it may point to the idea of a re-reading of the text. This would be suggested in 'la violence des contradictions dans l'unité'(IP 234) recognition maintains distance but suggests a moment of contact, the internal worlds of poet - reader - text suddenly interact, the poet recognises himself in what he writes, the reader recognises some reflection of his interior world in what he reads. Yet this movement depends on a distance, on something hidden and interior to the text.

Although in moments of exaltation it seems the poet is moving towards this unifying state: 'il va se reconnaître et se confondre'(LSF 26I) the state which underlies this is 'déchirement', nostalgia for an original 'correspondance' is no longer possible, and unity is posited as a foil for separation.[I] The knight in the clearing ('Etape dans la clairière') for example, must constantly interpret his own actions and movements because he is rent from himself. If he recognises something it may well be illusion: 'Il fait

I/ This is one of Yves Bonnefoy's observations on modern poetry and how it relates to a previous poetic tradition:

> Toute une poésie cherchera toujours, pour mieux saisir ce qu'elle aime, à se défaire du monde. Et c'est pourquoi, et si aisément, elle devient — ou croit devenir — une connaissance, parce que l'anxieuse pensée, séparant ce qui est de la causalité naturelle, l'immobilisant dans un absolu, ne peut plus concevoir de rapports entre choses qu'analogiques et préfère marquer leurs "correspondances" et leur au-delà d'harmonie, plutôt que leur obscur et réciproque déchirement. La connaissance est le dernier recours de la nostalgie. Elle vient dans la poésie après l'échec, et pourrait confirmer notre malheur, mais son ambiguité — sa fallacieuse promesse — est de maintenir sous nos yeux la situation de l'échec et son avenir même, dont nous attendions tant et qui s'est perdu.
>
> (Y Bonnefoy: Du Mouvement et de l'immobilité de Douve P I86)

The problem posed by the failure of 'la connaissance' and of 'l'harmonie' is central to the poems studied here. It explains to an extent the way they turn in upon themselves via questions and contradiction. The critic hopes to assume a similar attitude in denying that his writing can 'rendre compte du texte.'

clair. Je vois clair.'(EC I2) he is caught in a kind of interpretative solipsism :

> Pour racheter qui? Qu'ai-je su apporter?
> Parmi les reflets tâtonnants de l'aventure
> quel autre que moi saurais-je entrevoir?
>
> (EC I3)

In fact this breakdown of recognition and unity which seriously blights the power of consciousness to overcome the contingency of events also affects internal emotional landscape: 'O fou d'amour/ Pour qui? Pour moi peut-être'(EC I7) so that the poem seems to turn in upon itself, love thrusts inwards (like the poem) into the self and its divisions, instead of producing 'le confondement' with the outside world and 'l'autre'.

It is revealing that the main trope for this kind of internal and disruptive 'recognition' is the mirror or reflection. The darkness or unconscious sleep of 'La noce noire' may also be a mirror trapping the 'voyageur' on his quest: 'Souvenir ou avenir, le seul miroir nocturne...'(LSF 58). This internal reflexiveness then is a lure, and the expected appearance in the external world can only come from internal illusion, the hope of some original revelation so dear to the poetic tradition of 'les correspondances' mentioned above. But here the arrival of 'parousia' is parodied in the play on 'venir' and its suspect duality in future and memory.

Interior & Exterior

Haunting most of the poems and also the critical overall view the poet has of his work is a structure alluding to exchange or breakdown of exchange between interior and exterior. The word is repeatedly considered as something emerging from within the self and attempting to solidify in the external world or to become part of solid and durable reality which may impress itself on the eyes of others: 'Ces paroles qui me sortent, des statues de vent,'(IP I96). Yet this movement breaks down in the dissipating effect which is another aspect of Frénaud's poetic imagery. The building, of course, is another image for this external-internal dialectic; it too is an attempt at tangible and concrete creation from amorphous internal reactions. So that the word arises or is edified: 'Comme on voudrait qu'une parole s'élevât'(H 23) and the most extreme form of internally experienced emotion rises as though from within: 'afin de faire surgir par un don de soi/... l'insatiable Amour' (Ibid). Something emerges from within then like 'la source', and attempts to make an articulated word. For 'Passage de la visitation' which hints at the possibility of the poem's inspiration within the mundane, has this internalised and hidden quality.

This 'lexeme' as it might be called organises a large number of Frénaud's images, most obvious are

'le château', 'la maison', 'le palazzo','le monument' etc which are excrescences from within, and can operate either as enclosures for the self, or an articulation of the self with the outside world. 'le magma', 'le sang', 'les larmes' amongst others, are signs for an intimate interior which may come to the surface and disrupt language, upset the poem's syntax and its relationship to its subject. The verbal equivalent of these are obviously 'sourdre', 'surgir', 's'élever'. The verbal form is rare, and it shows a more evident disturbance of the poet's perception in that its tense is often in the past, placed at a distance and made safe. For the instant when something emerges from within the depths of the self is just as much a threat as when something other than the self is encountered in the world. Both within and without the poet fears the incursion of something alien, yet he also desires this kind of contact. The road along which the poet makes his quest for contact is paradoxically within and without. Again it is only when a kind of dialectical tension is arrived at which permits balance, that a positive contact seems possible within the poem. Only at those points does separation seem about to break down. Here again then is a point of 'déchirement' where the clarity of a traditional organising factor or structure is upset. The relationship between what is within and without

does not permit a symbolic organisation of things, the relationship of language itself to reality becomes less certain.

Solipsism

The poem is also marked by a perception of solipsism where contact seems impossible and communication persists only in derisory and ineffectual forms: 'C'est l'écho de mon cri dans le futur qui m'appelle.'(RM I38). There is a desire to go beyond the self into 'l'autre' which proves impossible. The poem's message is vitiated, rendered a 'machine inutile', and at this point the temptation of silence occurs. But time also causes this solipsistic state, the future is simply a reflection of the poet's own message, his inarticulate 'cri', and he is reduced to an observation of his limits: 'Je ne suis que de cette heure d'ici. Je suis seul.'(Ibid). The problem of the text becomes one of identity and deciding 'who speaks': 'Qui parle?'(H 28I) 'Qui l'a dit?'(SR DTD epigraph 35), the notion of meaning itself becomes a problem, and questions of identity and the single 'je' are a source of obscurity: 'Je suis: je forme une ombre à la lumière.'(IP II2).

Solipsism as a theme is linked closely to the notion of the poem as 'conquête dérisoire', the exalting enterprise which fails, the poet's signals

are inadequate 'mes fanaux sont trop courts.'(RM I38). The light of consciousness then, emitting from 'le fanal' is unable to reach into the disorganising expanse of the sea, his solitude is an opacity. It is noticeable that Frénaud has enhanced this solipsistic interpretation by emmending the I966 edition of this line from 'nos fanaux' where the plural of the possessive adjective suggests the community of 'les mages'. The text then is an enclosed kind of solipsism presenting endless problems of interpretation as it makes itself increasingly more uncertain by this kind of self-questioning: 'Qui te répondait'(SR/DTD 8I) 'Qui jugera'(Ibid 75) 'Qui poursuit sa naissance'(Ibid 68) 'Qui donc s'est soulevé'(IP II9)'Qui parle' (H 276).

Both reader and writer then become involved in the same interpretative game, the same 'parcours', and both are aware of the limitation which makes the text solipsistic, it can never reach out and spark off the exact meaning which would be being ('bedeutung' or the HOW of things of which Heidegger writes). This also refers back to the theme of enclosure and stultification, although the poem attempts to project itself as quest 'Le château et la quête du poème'(IP 233) its progress repeatedly occurs as a circular and internal movement :

le cheminement, comme d'une armée assiégée,
dans les cercles d'un parcours sans mémoire.
(EC 27)

Despite the fundamentally outward or inward nature of 'un cheminement' which usually points to change in position, here it becomes circular and enclosed. The poem's very nature then — or more acurately the way the poet wants us to see it — is based on this rift which produces enclosure and holds the poem back from the kind of meaning towards which it aspires. The reality perceived as 'out there' ('la nature') and in which the poet hopes to experience some form of revelation or contact, appears responseless. It is barely capable of movement or significant messages: 'La grande nature ne frémit guère dans mon rêve'(RM I38), even the tone and extent of 'le cri', 'appelle', 'confondre' are contrasted here by the modesty of 'frémir'.

The solipsistic side of the poem then exacerbates the oscillation between all-embracing communication and the weaker, barely audible message of the poem. Enclosure induced by solitude weakens the voice. But the world is also rendered dumb by the poet's internal sensing of his predicament.

The poem is seen by Frénaud as transmission and gift (at its most powerful as 'un charme') when the festival of giving ceases to be possible he becomes ironically a 'donateur de rien à moi-même'(IP 209)

where the meaning in the act of donation has again been drained away. Surprisingly this is at the centre of a childhood evocation 'Nuit enfantine' where the child's relationship with the world and festival have broken down, movement outwards into any kind of plenitude is no longer possible.

This point where meaning and contact break down, where the self is left echoing within the poem (itself a work of art bearing a frame and limits which make it echo internally) indicates the desire for a more intense form of communication, a release of exchange between reader and poet.

The Origin

An area beyond the self, beyond the present of the text suggests itself where true meaning seems possible; this is the structural component 'l'origine' which we may see in the section 'La Patrie': 'Mon pays d'enfance,/ Oh! si loin de moi!'(RM 48). It is the device of a fertile and positive origin, 'le pays perdu'. This may also figure as the naïve festival of birth which draws men together; within the world where the poet must 'porter un cœur vide', love's integrating power seems possible as an origin :

> Pourtant l'amour est le berceau.
> Il nous appelle, il nous dépouille.
> De l'un par l'autre, il nous fait naître.
>
> (IP 2IO)

The childbearing thrust of love replaces many of the exalting epiphany-type experiences here by producing a kind of unity between partners. Each is forced into being born from the other, separation is broken down, the individual is reduced ('dépouillé') and possession (the Romantic's 'social evil') dispelled. Heat is generated 'Il nous embrase'(Ibid) to enhance the positive tone. The multiplicity of separated selves is taken up and destroyed in the ecstatic movement of love through the poem: 'et nous embrase' (Ibid).

There is an impression of real resolution of conflicts and contradictions in this otherwise bleak poem as its title states 'Noël interdit'(Ibid). Anaphora seem to pulsate through the stanza, repeating the causal 'il - nous' relationship which sets up a clear framework for the unity of two individuals. Love then is possibly this origin and unifying pole at the centre of the poet's universe 'toujours avance, toujours au centre'(Ibid). The search for love then is the search for a fertile and warm origin which has been in some arcane way already known, and which one will re-cognise.

However, isn't this merely a trope alluding to the cultural referent of the good origin? In fact the poem cannot sustain any such moment of fantasy, it is forced to shatter its own carefully constructed

origin: 'Je suis là dans la même peau,/ seul en moi-même divisé,'(IP 2I0) for this cultural structure for nostalgia and return denies the dialectic of the quest which invents itself. By a parallel one can claim this points to the idea that discourse is not retrieval of some hidden and vitiated meaning which the habit of language has clouded, but is an ongoing process of reinvention. Of course the ideal country may only be guessed at in the origin, the beginning alludes to it :

> Enfin la vraie patrie, celle que l'on n'atteint jamais... que pourtant j'avais attendu sans y prendre garde depuis l'origine...
>
> (LSF 26)

Here the poem carefully cocks a snook at itself in the contradictory 'Enfin... que l'on n'atteint jamais' as though the structures of his questing consciousness, obtainment, expectation, memory, carelessness, are unable to control the experience, whereas the poem's language is ironic enough to redeem the error. Balancing this out are multiple moments of lucidity: 'Où est mon pays? C'est dans la détresse.'(IP I37)[I] and most striking in

I/ Michel Deguy does a much more obvious job in debunking the temptation 'l'origine' has for him, though he treats it less organically than Frénaud:

> Poésie—
> Se convertir à l'origine, irrécupérable pourtant, dont notre langage quotidien en sa

/...

contrast to the origin as structuring element is the intention to create the roads of his own quest: 'La route ira je ne sais où,/ je la conduirai si je puis.' (RM IIO).

Love & Meaning

In the illusory sense then love is a centre, an origin capable of producing fertility. Yet, in terms of the poems and language rather than in its conceptualised images, it produces fertility in a different way, via its uncentring potential.

Despite a prevailing sense of separation, Frénaud narrates moments of contact with the loved one and the sense of unity this creates. In these situations he is both narrator and narrated. However, the personality implicit in the pronoun 'je' is not

/... demi-lucidité est la métaphore. Elle renverse la métaphore. Elle restitue le mouvement premier de venue de sens, elle tente de coïncider avec le premier transport de l'être au cerveau. Elle aime à prendre à rebrousse-pente les inclinations de notre langue, les tendresses premières venues, les familiarités enfouies avec les choses, cette première habitude qu'est la nature, les privautés inconscientes parce qu'elles "vont de soi"; tout le simple est reconsidéré comme dérivé lointain d'une aube où il fut contracté — sans contrat.

Cette folle croyance: qu'ici lové dans la matrice du monde, attentif, il pourra naître; que cela va sourdre; et que la vérité en mots simples viendra.
(Michel Deguy: Poèmes de la Presqu'île I36)

stable. Language has no certainty. The poem 'Je ne t'ai jamais oubliée'(IP 23) would seem to introduce a clear vow never to forget the mistress. Yet it develops a series of contradictory messages :

> Dénoué de l'assaut de mon désir
> dans ton égarante image,
> dénué par les faux aveux du temps,
> par les fausses pièces de l'amour racheté,
> par tous ces gains perdu,
> libéré de toi maintenant,
> libre comme un mort.
>
> (IP 23)

The poem's predominant referents are contingency and lies: almost each line seems to contain one of these types of semantic imbalance. In a sense these might also refer to aspects of language: 'égarante image', 'les faux aveux', 'les fausses pièces'; language which attempts to mediate something of reality. The loss of love then has vitiated communication through language and the poem. Negative attributes and distortions are listed as though part of the desire never to forget. 'Libéré de toi maintenant' suggests the separation is desired and was hoped for. The poem's words are distorted ('chantourné') by the internal emotional effects of an absence; for it is evident that the woman, not the subjective poet, is 'libéré'. Furthermore this liberation contradicts the poem's drift which is a vow never to forget. Language then contains conflicting movements at this amorous disjuncture. It can barely

control them and words would seem to be under the woman's power: 'Par ton pouvoir ordonné à me perdre/ jusqu'au bout de mon silence.'(Ibid). Expression itself then is negated by this enforced loss of contact. Love then is also a destructuring element, pushing the poet through the mysterious zone of the word's opposite, a breakdown of messages and meaning.

The possibility of 'l'impérissable amour' a stable emotional centre, would seem to suggest a structuring form within the poem :

> Mais le vœu d'impérissable amour après l'exal-
> (tation,
> les délices, l'égarement, la lenteur morose des
> (journées,
> à la fin s'est brisé contre notre différence
> et nous sommes séparés désormais,
> sinon déjà exclus.
>
> (IP I83 - I84)

The idea of 'l'impérissable amour' is to make love exist outside or in spite of Time. It is expressed through 'le vœu' which stands alone without possessive adjective 'notre' or 'mon', as though distinct from the two lovers. The vow is also an expression of hope, it has special power, attempts to secure future events through the magic of saying, and thereby dominate time. It is also morphically close to 'la voix' and the voice of the poem, the desire to overcome silence. Time's presence, however, runs through the whole stanza, breaking up and articulating at the same time. On the grammatical

level they link prepositions; in terms of meaning they move towards the final state of separation: 'après' (which determines four nouns) 'la lenteur', 'des journées', 'à la fin', 'désormais', 'déjà'.

Words also begin to act in a strange way. There is an anagrammatical word-play in 'contre notre'. 'Différence', in the emotional context here makes a strange echo of 'indifférence'. The break is double : 'brisé' and 'séparé'. The culminating 'exclusion' made temporally ambivalent via 'sinon déjà' (suggesting it has sneaked upon them) is not defined, we are not told from what it is they are excluded.

The poet himself, the 'je' which permeates the poems, is also dissipated and disturbed 'je vais en me défaisant'(IP I84). He persists in an action which dislocates his existence, and so loses the power of expression, the ability to love which is also the faculty of clear communication with the other. He is merely outward without intelligible meaning: 'telle figure obscurcie, je n'ai plus de pouvoir?'(IP I84). His power for forming the world into words, into communicative moments is no more. The 'figure' may refer to the possibility of metaphor and synapsis of two different forms. But it is mainly that he is without expressive energy since he had perceived 'ma parole dans ta voix' (Ibid) an expressive interpenetration, the breakdown of interior and

exterior kinds of speaking. His ability to mean (cf Heidegger's identification of meaning 'bedeutung' with being) so too does the world, the how of things: 'le monde n'a plus de sens'(Ibid); the 'frémissement' whose absence characterised the sense of solipsism is perceived again, though it is more clearly semantic: 'Nul appel ne m'éprouve, nul signe ne me porte en avant'(Ibid). In this negative phase then, the overreaching thrust of love upsets and dispels meaning.

In the poem's oasis of italics, it may disturb the forms of language in a positive way:

> Dans l'éclat de l'unité que lui composent
> couleurs et taches tout à coup s'harmonisant,
> chacun se dresse nu, il s'avance vers l'autre.
>
> (IP I82)

Syntax and meaning are disrupted here. These lines become intentionally ambiguous. Does 's'harmonisant' refer to 'couleurs et taches' or to 'chacun'? The uncertainty of 'tout à coup' was discussed above as a key element in these lines. It can refer to almost any part of the phrase. What becomes the main point of focus is the immediacy and suddenness of 'l'éclat de l'Unité'; but also that within this suddenness amorous contact takes place.

Control & Extent

Control and extent are important structuring elements linked in Frénaud's poetic view of things.

Excessive giving or excessive retention, total opening, total enclosure, are repeatedly considered as elements threatening to the poet's consciousness, his ability to formulate the world in terms of language. If the nourishing river which enhances the situation of the island and irrigates it ('l'arrose') should become 'l'inondation', the poet is menaced, interior and exterior are broken down in a negative and uncontrollable way.

Alternatively, restriction may be excessive within the poet himself rather than the situations he perceives. In his moment of giving the poem he may be 'paralysé par le sentiment du si peu'(H I7). The poem itself then is not extensive enough, and results in a kind of stasis and preclusion. Yet it may also be perceived as a strange thing in that it makes a qualitative leap from its state as a 'valeur' to 'un charme', an object capable of total alterations: 'Singulier patrimoine, le poème, s'il vaut à la façon d'un charme.'(H I7).

Multiple and totally different conflicting elements and themes affect the poem when they are out of control: 'ENFIN LA GRANDE, L'INNOMBRABLE, SE RASSEMBLE.'(SR/DTD 40), the uncertain sorceress who lurks beneath the surface of Roman grandeur threatens via her uncontrollable number which consciousness finds it hard to grasp. An adverb phrase like 'autant

de' ironically points to a negative uncertainty and indifference to number: 'en droite possession comme autant de fumées,'(H 9). Within an imagined Christian/ Pagan fertility rite there is a structured and well-governed fertility: 'Le double role nourricier de la vache'(H I27). Its nourishing and donatory aspect is concentrated in the spectacle of the rite: 'c'est jour de sa fête'(Ibid) which suspends reality and shapes our perception in a positive way. The cow is governed by its role and the nourishment theme, so often excessive in Frénaud's poems, is under control and given another structural retention because it is 'double' as opposed to the menacing and boundless multiplicity of 'l'innombrable'.

The elected space for quest or discovery and recognition, the exterior into which the poet allows his internal reactions to transmit themselves, where he hopes to discover 'le secret' must also arrive at the correct point in a scale of extent:

> Et les villes trop connues perdent leur prestige... amies trop habituelles pour être bouleversantes.
>
> (H 63)

The epiphany also depends on this balance between 'trop' and 'trop peu': 'au cours du mouvement souverain nous sommes encore si peu CAPABLES.'(IP 237).

Dialectic[I]

This dialectic I would rather call a movement of opposites, a kind of oscillation. But it does seem to have a dialectical role in that it manoeuvres the poems and the whole collection of texts away from tautological mimicking or from facile representation:

> Unité en mouvement, préalable et foncière, comment ne bousculerait-elle pas, en même temps que notre vieil appareil logique — identité, causalité — la démarche d'un esprit qui progresse en niant et assume lentement sa conquête. Evénement étrange ! Ce qui était transcendant par rapport à la conscience s'est incarné, le contingent se trouve nécessaire. Le toi et le moi se tiennent confondus un instant avant de s'opposer à nouveau et derechef de se confondre. Alternance et concomitance d'une décomposition et d'une réinvention du monde et de l'homme mêlés, le poème s'avance comme une bataille de San Romano tissée d'éclats hostiles et singulièrement accordés.
>
> (IP 240 - 24I)

This can be seen in action within the text as one reading

I/ This notion of a dialectic is central to Frénaud's composition. Above all perhaps it is associated with the appearance of 'l'être' and the unstructuring power this has, paradoxically in its swift appearance and disappearance producing 'la lenteur dialectique' and 'le retard logique' :

> En prenant pied dans la conscience l'Etre n'y surgit que pour disparaître. A travers le formidable tumulte qu'a produit son irruption, ont retrouvé aussitôt leurs droits la lenteur dialectique, le retard logique, nos pouvoirs-limites dans le monde du temps et de la séparation.
>
> (IP 242)

seems to give way to another or suggest another: identity and causality break down. The poem suggests a picture of fertility and dispersal :

> Montagne aimée des abeilles et du vent
> de mon souffle mort, recomposé autour de toi
> pour pénétrer par la bouche ouverte.
>
> (RM 37)

Woman and the natural order on a first reading seem to be identified in this outward development of the world, where the mountain attracts bees (a kind of 'emmiettement' of the original solid structure which is the mountain) and 'vent' takes us further out into free movement. There is a dispersal of the mountain's energy via love (really the love the poet feels for his woman); there develops a dialectic between the static, solid mountain, the diminutive and dynamic bees, and the intangible unsubstantial but necessarily dynamic wind. However, the evidently fertile element 'les abeilles' seems to develop subtly via this dispersal-structure into the distorted image of 'le souffle mort'.

There is also a development towards 'bouche' via 'souffle', and therefore focusing on the sexual opening which is tantalisingly 'entrouverte', only half open, holding back the outward movement. The pattern is internally wrought with conflict then since where 'abeilles' and 'souffle' imply fertility, the latter is totally altered by the adjective 'mort'.

This morbid element proposes a parallel reading of 'vent' and the whole dispersal-structure as negative and sterile. The progression to overall dispersion in 'abeilles' and 'vent' is reversed in the word 'recomposé' which, following the comma, seems to suddenly re-articulate the poem, or to hold back the old development. At this point the partner, 'l'autre' who has such affective power, ceases to be a landscape considered from afar, and becomes the intimate 'toi', a penetrable mouth with the sexual and murderous connotations this act of penetration has.

This oppositional progression and swinging back and forth which the poem attempts to maintain also extends to large determining concepts like 'l'être', 'l'unité','le néant'. Unity is 'l'Unité-du-monde-en-mouvement'(IP 238) or it is arrived at via 'le violent va-et-vient unificateur'(Ibid).

The guiding form in each chapter of this study is separation, a state which affects all areas of the poem, the emotional being that the poet is, the attempt at communication which the poem is, and the attempt to reach 'l'Unité' or 'l'être' :

> L'être qui violemment "pilote" le monde, le défait et le régénère, l'homme en est, s'il en constitue un instant précaire, une partie obscurcie, dans le malheur de la séparation. Son positif est infirme, mais son manque est absence. Sa vocation à la /...

> divinité, c'est le poète qui la réalise[I]
> quelquefois et qui la lui remémore.
>
> (IP 243)

Being is not simply a structuring unknown force, but something which undoes the world, it is explicitly an agent of dislocation and disturbance. What characterises man within this pattern is his separated status and resistance to illumination. Yet separation is not solely on this metaphysical level. It filters through into the attempt at love and communion, into the region of relationships between 'soi' (the poet or poem as an integral being) and 'autre', reacts dialectically with their desire for unity and 'confondement' to produce

I/ This idea of Being 'running through' the poem and working as its foundation can also be seen in the work of Jean-Claude Renard :

> ... en cherchant sans cesse à devenir l'équation d'un langage et d'une réalité, le poème permet aux choses d'apparaître dans un espace auquel elles n'appartiennent pas et de se situer par suite au même niveau... c'est-à-dire d'être dans la parole du poème (où les choses ne sont plus tout à fait des choses et les mots plus tout à fait des mots) libres de se comparer et de s'associer à l'infini pour constituer un univers qui n'existe que dans le poème, mais demeure toujours possible au-delà du poème.
>
> C'est pourquoi le propos de la poésie n'est pas de se transformer en silence, mais de parler sans cesse assez profondément pour nous rapprocher le plus possible du point où la parole devient inutile parce qu'elle cède la place à l'être.
>
> (J-C Renard: Notes sur la poésie p50)

the poem's oscillation or vibration, its movement between poles :

> Et pourtant nous serons, vous et moi, séparés —
> Mais aujourd'hui est joie: UN SEUL comble son (ombre —
> Et qui pourrait nous voir, maintenant? qui sommes nous? —
> (IP 54)

Here, as in the numerous examples examined throughout these pages, the tension between distance and unity which the poem's discourse puts into action in a carefully articulated way, is also present in the short expression 'vous et moi' where the grammatical 'vous' form unleashes emotional and textual significations.

Yet the poem moves outwards into other structuring themes which imply other meanings and refer to these themes within other poems. Man is 'un instant précaire', he is caught in time which permits him to perceive his separation and the hope and possibility of overcoming it. He is 'ombre' and 'obscurcie' or impediment which prevents clarity, implicitly preventing the message and its appeal to consciousness. In unity, the state of being UN SEUL is also desired,a kind of communication in which the self disappears and the writing/communication alone remains without adulteration. In the construction of 'le château et la quête du poème' this point of self-resolution is noted :

> ainsi se trouve-t-il délivré du déchirement, dans la mesure où déchirement signifie séparation et entrave, pour participer à la violence des contradictions dans l'Unité; c'est la Réalité dans laquelle il s'est intégré qu'il exprime.
>
> (IP 234)

It might be interesting to note here an affinity between Frénaud and Jacques Dupin who also perceives the need for a kind of self-loss and resolution of conflicts both internally and externally :

> On est écorché vif, il faudrait être anéanti. Pour entendre, pour répondre...
>
> Entendre, ou sentir... ce qui gronde dans le sous-sol, sous la feuille déchirée, sous nos pas. Et voudrait s'élever, — s'écrire. Et attire l'écriture, lui injecte son intensité, son incohérence... Ce qui crie et bat dans le sous-sol.
>
> (J Dupin: Dehors 25 - 26)

Like Frénaud, Dupin sees a link between message, understanding, communication and the loss of self, the emergence from the self's contradictions and separation: 'si près de sortir, d'être hors de soi'(Dupin: Op cit. 26).

The sign depends then to an extent on separation being overcome. But for both poet's the message is always in an unknown beneath, a secret place linked with dislocation and violence ('sous la feuille déchirée') but also, and paradoxically within the ordinary and the close-to: 'sous nos pas'.

The epiphany, sign, or meaning, hides in the prosaic, and we must move towards it by a series of steps: 'tes pas après tes pas, les secrets du changeur/ de toujours obscurcis.'(LSF I90). There is a strongly suggestive cross-over of tropes here and we could point perhaps to the common tradition in Rimbaud and Baudelaire which develops away from a specifically situated kind of sacrality to the possibility of the sacred everywhere during the modernist period; to a more active relationship between the artist and his elected areas of special significance.

Yet both poets also introduce a dialectic between articulated and unarticulated expression 'crie et bat', and like Frénaud, Dupin uses word-play here to increase the complexity of what he is saying, 'crie et' anagrammatically alludes to 'écrit' and the text's development, the very activity in which he is engaged.

However, I would like to suggest that what makes Frénaud's text work and validates the poetic enterprise is the state of separation. It is a relationship of tension with something that is lost, just out of reach, 'l'être', 'l'unité', 'la mère', 'la fiancée', 'la sorcière', which motivates the poems, increases their potential for signification. The poem is a continuation (not a stasis) within the multiple forms of being separate. The loved one is intensely experienced when she is most distant :

> Mais que ce soit toi ou moi qui s'y tienne, de la tour (ou de l'arbre?) les larmes continuent à tomber dans la mer, elles ont formé, elles ne peuvent pas se retenir de former la mer, pour rendre la distance à ta maison infranchissable, nos vœux pareils n'y peuvent rien, n'y pourront rien les points d'appui, la complicité des bêtes et des anges, et nous resterons séparés comme chacun l'est de lui-même, toi et moi, qui étions destinés à devenir ensemble un seul et le même avec le tout... sans pouvoir plus nous rejoindre, bientôt sans plus savoir nous souvenir, dénués qui nous demanderons ce qui s'est perdu, interdits et tâtonnant, toujours, à travers la nuit longue des larmes de la nuit.
>
> (H 28 - 29)

It is the desperate 'bonne continuation' with its moments of hallucination and illumination, its crumbling monuments and peaceful clearings, battles and quests, which the poem articulates and makes livable.

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