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Einstein on the Beach: The Primacy of Metaphor

CRAIG OWENS

> If, as is frequently and strikingly attested everywhere today, boldness in theater proclaims, rightly or wrongly, its fidelity to Artaud, the question of the theater of cruelty, of its present nonexistence and ineluctable necessity, has the force of an *historical* question. Historical not in its possible inscription within what we know as the history of theater, not because it would mark a stage in the development of theatrical forms or because of its place in the succession of models of theatrical representation. The question is historical in a sense that is both radical and absolute. It declares the limit of representation.
>
> Jacques Derrida, "The Limit of Representation," from *L'écriture et la différence.*

Across those differences which segregate the dominant attitudes towards performance in our century into either expressionistic or analytic modes,[1] there appears a single commitment which may be associated with neither: a challenge to the structure of representation which has been identical with that of theater ever since Aristotle characterized dramatic poetry as mimetic. This identification of tragedy with the imitation, rather than the immediate presentation, of action posits a fundamental dualism at the heart of the theater. Performance and text, representer and represented, are (it seems irrevocably) split. Theatrical representation establishes itself in that rift which it alone creates between the tangible physical *presence* of the performer and that *absence* which is necessarily implicated in any concept of imitation or signification. The imitated action (the theatrical signified) is situated outside of the closed circuit established by the copresence of performer and spectator. Thus what is represented is always an "elsewhere." As a result, while the performer is in fact both a presence and a

1. "There are, in the contemporary renewal of performance modes, two basic and diverging impulses which shape and animate its major innovations. The first, grounded in the idealist extensions of a Christian past, is mythopoeic in its aspirations, eclectic in its forms, and constantly traversed by the dominant and polymorphic style which constitutes the most tenacious vestige of that past: expressionism. . . . The second, consistently secular in its commitment to objectification, proceeds from Cubism and Constructivism; its modes are analytic. . . ." Annette Michelson, "Yvonne Rainer, Part One: The Dancer and the Dance," *Artforum*, XII (January 1974), 57.

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signifier (for an absence), we always regard him as the latter, as a representative for something else—the actor as perpetual stand-in.

The major innovations in performance of the last fifty years have been addressed to this rift, either to exaggerate it (Brecht) or to annihilate it (Artaud). Both strategies shift from *re*presentation to *present*ation. Since the presence of the performer is anterior to, and a necessary condition for, any theatrical representation, the impulse which animates that shift might be characterized as modernist, a reduction to that which is unique and absolutely fundamental to the theatrical situation. Modernist performance abandons representation by establishing identity between representer and represented. The performer no longer stands for anything other than himself. (The resurgence of interest in dance at the beginning of this century was a manifestation of the same impulse. According to Yeats' formula, dance has always eluded any such dualism.)

Since the structure of representation is identical with that of verbal language—a system of signs which always substitute for nonpresence—the ambition to overturn an entrenched theatrical representationalism has frequently manifested itself in programs which would radically alter, if not eliminate, the use of speech on stage. The nonverbal spectacle is its offspring. Yet the overthrow of representation cannot be restricted to nonverbal modes, since an identical impulse has also animated the poetic theater of our century. Thus, modes traditionally conceived as antithetical become complementary. In Artaud's polemical writings on theater, it is the conjunction of the nonverbal and the poetic that constitutes the very possibility for the revivification of theater.

While Artaud's modernism is apparent in his move to disestablish the author—"the theater, an independent and autonomous art, must, in order to revive or simply to live, realize what differentiates it from text, pure speech, literature, and all other fixed and written means"[2]—it does not follow that he meant to eliminate speech from the stage altogether. If the theater was to be reconstituted outside of verbal language, the author to be replaced by the director and the stage to become the locus of research into alternative languages of gesture and scenography which would "always express [thought] more adequately than the precise localized meanings of words,"[3] it was simply that the *authority* of the spoken word was to be undermined. Artaud advocated the overthrow of all hierarchical rankings of theatrical languages, which had assigned speech a position of preeminence, and reduced the *mise en scène* to a subsidiary role. The theater of cruelty was to be characterized by a plurality of equipollent voices: spoken, musical, gestural, scenographic. If in the spectacles he envisioned "the spoken and written portions will be spoken and written in a new sense,"[4] still, the sensuous, physical side of language—everything which characterizes its poetic use—was to be retained:

2. Antonin Artaud, "Letters on Language," *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. M.C. Richards, New York, Grove, 1958, p. 106.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

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> But let there be the least return to the active, plastic, respiratory sources of language, let words be joined again to the physical motions that gave them birth, and let the discursive, logical aspect of speech disappear beneath its affective, physical side, i.e., let words be heard in their sonority rather than be exclusively taken for what they mean grammatically, let them be perceived as movements, and let these movements themselves turn into other simple, direct movements as occurs in all the circumstances of life but not sufficiently with actors on the stage, and behold! the language of literature is reconstituted, revivified, and furthermore—as in the canvasses of certain painters of the past—objects themselves begin to speak.[5]

Artaud's ambition was thus more than the revivification of theater; it was nothing less than the complete reanimation of poetic language. Or rather, one necessarily implicated the other.[6] This poetic aspect of his enterprise extended to his instructions for the manipulation of scenic elements:

> The language of the theater aims then at encompassing and utilizing extension, that is to say space, and by utilizing it, to make it speak: I deal with objects—the data of extension—like images, like words, bringing them together and making them respond to each other according to laws of symbolism and living analogies: external laws, those of all poetry and all viable language, and, among other things, of Chinese ideograms and ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs.[7]

That Artaud's prescriptions for the stage should constitute an *ars poetica* suggests a historical filiation with a number of modern poets who also identified the stage as an appropriate locus for research into intensifying the purely physical, *i.e.* sonorous, movements of language. Mallarmé wrote *Igitur* for the stage. Eliot identified the poetic moments of tragedy as those at which the language reflects back into itself, becomes aware of itself as a theatrical presence. Further, in a passage reminiscent of Artaud's proposal that words be perceived as movements, he suggested that if verse drama were to be given new life, it might look to nonverbal modes of performance such as the Mass and the ballet for paradigms. Both poet and *metteur en scène* would transform language into an entirely material event. And Valéry, describing his own work for the stage as a concatenation of music and architecture, called the resultant genre "melodrama": "I found no other term to describe this work, which is certainly neither an opera, nor a ballet, nor an oratorio." Like Eliot, he drew a parallel with religious liturgy: "To my mind, it must and does bear some resemblance to a ceremony of a religious

5. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
6. Susan Sontag has stressed the importance of this strategy for Artaud: "The function that Artaud gives the theater is to heal the split between language and flesh. . . . Artaud's writings on the theater may be read as a psychological manual on the reunification of mind and body." *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1976, pp. xxxv-vi.
7. Artaud, pp. 110-1.

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nature." Yet he reiterated its poetic nature: "The action, limited and slight as it is, must be further subordinated to the meaning and poetic substance of each of its moments."[8]

Like Valéry's "melodrama" (which it resembled in several respects), Robert Wilson's recent spectacle *Einstein on the Beach* (in collaboration with composer Philip Glass) resists assimilation to any of the conventional genres of performance. Although *Einstein* was identified as an "opera", and while its score might be anatomized accordingly into arias, duets, choral passages, and ballets, the production lacked the correlation between music and dramatic action that defines that genre. Glass occasionally incorporated concrete aural references to the visual subject of a scene into his score, but his insistence on structure and logical progression only emphasized the independence of music from action. One was reminded of that disjunctiveness between sound and image which Cunningham brought to the dance. Action exhibited a similar autonomy: *Einstein* progressed as a sequence of highly allusive visual images that appeared to succeed one another according to an internal logic of association. They centered on the figure of Einstein. Habits of his dress and personality; mathematical and scientific models and instruments; the products of technological progress, such as trains, spaceships, and atomic explosions, coalesced to form a complex portrait by association. From scene to scene, the spectator's sense of both scale and duration was altered, perhaps in demonstration of the central hypothesis of Einstein's thinking (that dimension and velocity are interdependent). Because of the frequent arbitrariness of the selection of the images, no detail being too insignificant for inclusion, as well as the freedom with which associations were made—organization was neither chronological nor thematic—Wilson's work has been compared with dreams. If the space evoked in *Einstein* was dream-like, one important difference must be noted. Wilson's images, unlike those of dreams, are not open to interpretation. Dream-images are the *mediated* representations of dream-thoughts; hence, their interpretability. Wilson's images are, on the contrary, immediate, presentational, resistant to analysis. This is supported by the subsidiary function assigned to speech and spoken texts in all of his works. For language is, above all, the medium of interpretation.

With *Einstein,* Wilson carries ambivalence towards language one step further. Even the published "text" for the production is nonverbal, a series of 113 charcoal sketches made by Wilson himself and reproduced in a book which assembles musical scores, spoken texts, and choreographic diagrams. Arranged as a sequence of cinematic stills, these atmospheric drawings chart *Einstein*'s division into four acts, nine scenes and five *intermezzi* (hinges or "knee-plays") and describe three basic scenic motifs: a train, a courtroom, and a field of dancers over which a spaceship passes. This pictographic text proceeds from and extends

8. Paul Valéry, "History of *Amphion,*" trans. Haskell Block, *Collected Works,* New York, Pantheon, 1960, vol. 3, p. 220.

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Wilson's ambition to mount a spectacle which cannot be contained within verbal language:

> Wilson shuns recipes and this is why to write about him, who is always so loath to express judgement [sic] or opinions, is to risk incapsulating him in one of those airtight wrappers of culture towards which the whole of his work is directed, if not as an accusation at least as an alternative. To translate into words its expressive complexity means, in a way, to prevaricate on both the author's and the public's emotive participation. To single out a particular linear development or a new definition of theatre in his work is to misrepresent its underlying premise, *the attempt to reconstruct on the stage everything which life systematically shatters.* [italics added][9]

Wilson's theater does not intend to provoke articulate response; rather, it argues the poverty of those systems through which such a response might be formed—primarily language, but also all processes of logical thought according to which we parse, analyze, literally come to terms with experience. The ambition to stage a semblance of the unanalyzed, amorphous continuum of sensory data which is subsequently segmented by the formative action of language ("everything which life systematically shatters") involves an implicit argument that the activity of language upon that continuum is a violation of its integrity. Language inevitably produces an endless string of synecdoches which, in spite of their intention to signify, will never reproduce the original unity which is prior to all analysis, all logical thought.

This argument about the synecdochic character of language is hardly new, yet it seems to have exhausted little of its authority. While it has both psychological and philosophical ramifications—Merleau-Ponty, for example, has written that speech "tears out or tears apart meanings in the undivided whole of the nameable"—it also underpinned the revolution in linguistics which dates from the beginning of this century. Saussure's now-famous discussion in his *Cours* of the arbitrariness of the sign was rooted in the distinction between "form" and "substance"; the latter was considered a nebulous continuum anterior to language:

> Without language, thought is a vague, uncharted nebula. There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language. . . . Phonic substance is neither more fixed nor more rigid than thought; it is not a mold into which thought must of necessity fit but a plastic substance divided in turn into distinct parts to furnish the signifiers needed by thought. The linguistic fact can therefore be

9. Vicky Alliata, *Einstein on the Beach*, New York, E.O.S. Enterprises, 1976. This attitude, so clearly hostile to the enterprise of criticism, has infected those who have written about the production: nearly all of the published accounts of *Einstein* to date have been content with simple description. For such description, which is not attempted here, see in particular, Barbara Baracks in *Artforum*, XV (March 1977), 30-6; and Susan Flakes in *The Drama Review*, 20 (December 1976), 69-82.

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> pictured in its totality—i.e. language—as a series of contiguous subdivisions marked off on both the indefinite plane of jumbled ideas . . . and the equally vague plane of sounds. . . . Language works out its unity while taking shape between two shapeless masses. . . . *Their combination produces a form not a substance.*[10]

While Saussure's intention was simply to restrict linguistics to the analysis of form, and despite his recognition of the fundamental unintelligibility of the prelinguistic, the effect of his formulation is nonetheless to uphold a traditional distinction between what is thought and what is expressed in language.

Saussure's notion of substance as a shapeless mass was interpreted by the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev as purport: an unformed mass of physical or psychical data which, while common to all languages, is nevertheless schematized differently by each.

> It is like one and the same handful of sand that is formed in quite different patterns, or like the cloud in the heavens that changes shape in Hamlet's view from minute to minute. Just as the same sand can be put into different molds, and the same cloud take on ever new shapes, so also the same purport is formed or structured differently in different languages.[11]

Hjelmslev cites as an example of purport the color spectrum, a mass of objective, physically measurable data which is segmented differently by different languages:

> Behind the paradigms that are furnished in the various languages by the designations of color, we can, by subtracting the differences, disclose such an amorphous continuum, the color spectrum, on which each language arbitrarily sets its boundaries. While formations in this zone of purport are for the most part approximately the same in the most widespread European languages, we need not go far to find formations that are incongruent with them.[12]

If thought is conceived as a shapeless mass, just as on the (pre-) phonological level sounds form an indistinct continuum, then both the plane of content (the signified) and that of expression (the signifier) will require, according to Hjelmslev, description in terms of both form and substance. While the analysis of form belongs in both instances to linguistics, that of substance lies outside its domain: "The description of purport . . . may in all essentials be thought of as belonging partly to the sphere of *physics* and partly to that of (social) *anthropology*. . . . Consequently, for both planes both a physical and a phenomenological descrip-

10. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, New York, McGraw Hill, 1966, pp. 112-3.
11. Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, trans. F.J. Whitfield, Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1963, p. 52.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

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tion of the purport should be required."[13]

Wilson undertakes such a description in *Einstein on the Beach.* A phenomenological description of purport would presumably aim to recover that unity which underlies the constantly changing appearances of things (including linguistic objects) as they surface in experience. In Husserl, that unity is understood to be a function of (synthetic) consciousness, of a transcendental subject. *Einstein* implies both that aim and that understanding. Each of three motifs (train, trial, and field) is broken up into a set of images which, since homologous, may be reintegrated. The locus of this process of reintegration is the consciousness of the individual spectator. Structure is thus inborn, that is, emerges while the work is performed as the spectator spontaneously apprehends the relations obtaining among images. Thus, coherence is not a result of any logical sequence of images (the series train-trial-field repeated three times) as program notes suggest, but resides in intuitively grasped similarities among images derived from a common motif. This is clearly demonstrated in Wilson's text. The train, as it appears in Act II, its observation deck receding into the night, reappears as a building in Act IV. This relationship, rather than the individual images in isolation, is the subject of these two scenes and makes them a unit. Similarly, the sharply delineated triangle of light projected by the locomotive's headlight in the opening scene is congruent with that which streams from an elevator shaft in the final scene—a visual linking of end with beginning. And the fluorescent bed in the center of the courtroom during the trial scenes in Acts I and III becomes, in Act IV, a column of light which slowly ascends into the flies and which, in turn, is reminiscent of the strip of light which painted itself down the backdrop in the first scene. These images do not function as isolated signs; instead their conjunction reveals patterns of interrelationship which make *Einstein* a complex, resonant experiential unit, or gestalt.

To the extent that Wilson generates a unified field through visual means, his theater is nonverbal. Nevertheless, the techniques according to which his imagery is manipulated can only be described as poetic. Here poetic does not mean evocative or allusive, but indicates a particular process of establishing relationships between images. Wilson's manipulation of images is primarily analogical, that is, metaphoric. Metaphor, based exclusively on purely material or sensuous features, has been isolated by the linguist Roman Jakobson as the fundamental structure of all poetic texts. If the two poles of language are selection and combination, the first based on equivalence (metaphor), the second upon contiguity (metonomy),[14] Jakobson characterizes poetry as the transference of equivalence from the pole of selection to that of combination.[15] In poetic language,

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–8.
14. On this twofold character of language, see Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," *Fundamentals of Language*, The Hague, Mouton, 1971, pp. 90–6.
15. Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," *Style in Language*, ed. T.A. Sebeok, Cambridge, M.I.T., 1960, pp. 358 ff.

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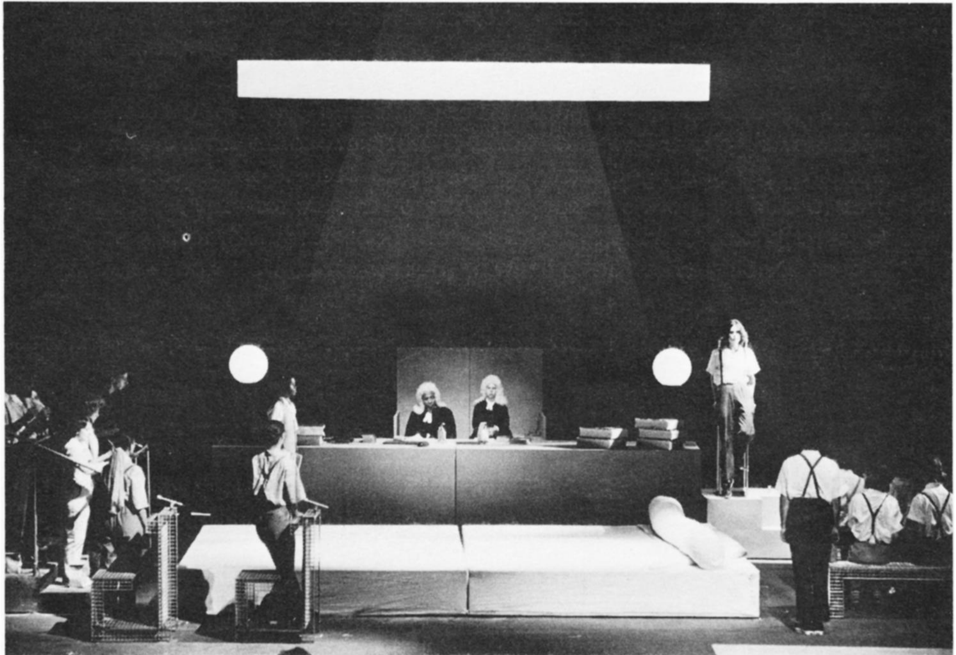

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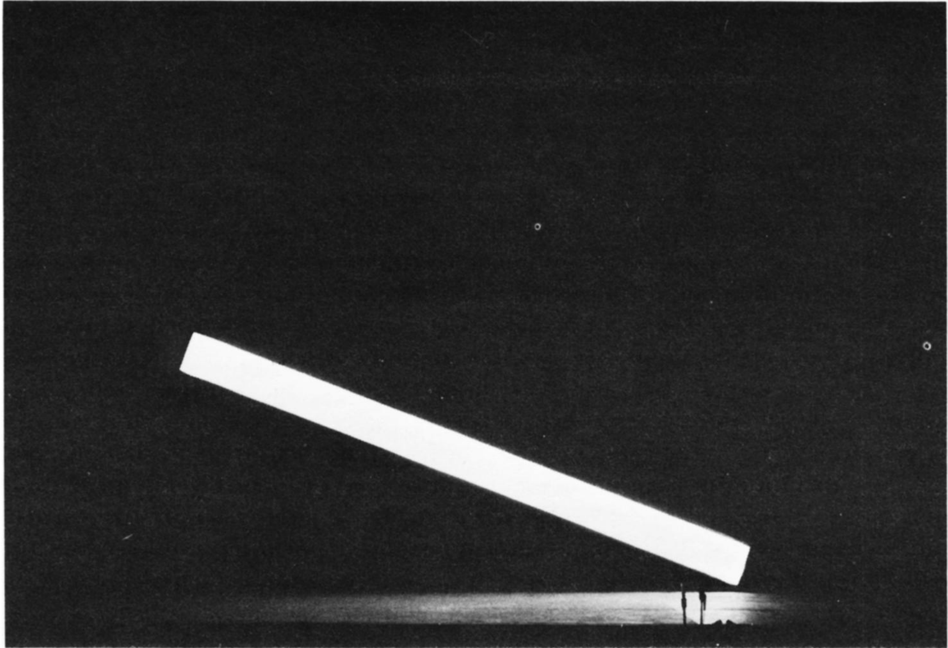

Robert Wilson. Einstein on the Beach, *1976. Act I, scene 1; Act I, scene 2; Act IV, scene 2. (Photos: Babette Mangolte.)*

words are combined into rhythmic, alliterative, or rhymic sequences because of their equivalence as pure sound. In this way, new semantic relationships are established—or lost ones restored—on the basis of purely physical parallelisms.

It follows from Jakobson's characterization of metaphor that the poetic image must of necessity transcend the constraints of the signifying chain (what one might call the metonymic force) in its movement toward meaning. Metaphors are never context-sensitive. They do not reach out to other, contiguous elements of the chain that might determine their meanings. Two images standing in a metaphoric relationship are unaffected by those pressures from without which would have us perceive them as somehow absolutely different because of their different positions in a linear, *i.e.* horizontal, sequence. Rather, the proper direction of the metaphor is vertical, each metaphor appropriately located in a set of equivalent images. The principle of equivalence or congruence that characterizes that set and confers significance on each of its members becomes a kind of transcendent center toward which each metaphor gravitates.

If *Einstein on the Beach* describes a linear time span (roughly the lifetime of Albert Einstein), it nevertheless remains a resolutely nonlinear work. Events do not preceed or follow one another according to any (temporal) logic. As a result of their metaphorical aspect, Wilson's images resist falling into any meaningful linear sequence. The imposition of a logical scheme (train-trial-field-train-trial-field, etc.) only emphasizes the arbitrariness of *Einstein*'s temporal structure. The circularity activated by that formula effectively checks any linear development. In an analogous way, a recursive treatment of spoken texts works to neutralize the

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ordinary directionality of spoken language. A single text is repeated again and again, its final word being nothing more than a cue to the speaker to begin again, until that linear time in which all narrative and all spoken discourse operate is effectively suspended.

Since metaphor works to suspend the temporalizing effects of the signifying chain (its syntactic or syntagmatic dimension), it has frequently been associated with a corresponding motive. Metaphor reveals an atemporal principle of similarity (be it a result of divergence or convergence, that is, of homology or isomorphism) that constitutes the possibility of any relation of images whatsoever. That principle has, in varying contexts and to different ends, been identified as a law, a form, an essence; yet whether one grants it regulatory or ontological status, it remains that with which poetry has been principally concerned. The poet has been continually charged with the responsibility of uncovering that which renders all relationship possible. It is thus, through its metaphoric base and not its thematic content, that poetry participates in the investigations of metaphysics.

Yet this motive is operative only within a particular attitude towards language, the primary characteristics of which have been identified and analyzed by Jacques Derrida:

> *To concern oneself with metaphor—a particular figure—is . . . to presuppose a symbolist position.* It is above all to concern oneself with the nonsyntactic, nonsystematic pole, with semantic "depth," with the magnetizing effect of similarity rather than with positional combination, call it "metonymous," in the sense defined by Jakobson, who rightly underlines the affinity between symbolism (not only as a linguistic notion, but also, we should claim, as a literary school), Romanticism (with a more historical—that is, historicist—orientation, and more directed towards interpretation), and the prevalence of metaphor. [italics added][16]

Certainly the arguments that everyday language is essentially synecdochic and therefore in need of rehabilitation, and that it is the function of poetic metaphor to restore language to its supposedly primary nature, may be traced to a specific body of theory articulated at the end of the 19th Century: the poetic of the French Symbolists, particularly as enunciated in the critical and theoretical writings of Stéphane Mallarmé. According to Mallarmé, the revolution in poetry, which he dated to Verlaine, was involved in a return to "certain primitive resources in language."[17] Fascinated with speculations concerning the primal symbolization processes of mankind, he sketched a theory of the suggestiveness of words rooted in "a belief that a primitive language, half-forgotten, half-living, exists in each man. It is a language possessing extraordinary affinities with music and

16. Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology," trans. F.C.T. Moore, *New Literary History*, VI (Autumn 1974), 13.
17. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Selected Prose*, trans. Bradford Cook, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1956, p. 35.

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dreams."[18] This primitive language was conceived as a pictographic idiom of hieroglyphs which was the predecessor of the more abstract medium, verbal language, with which philosophic and scientific systems have been erected and which corresponded to a particular state of the world which preceded the deployment of time.[19]

For Mallarmé, the poet's task was to recover that data of pre-history. Poetry sprang from an impulse to restore to objects their original resonance or complication which logic and language had stripped from them. And metaphor (rhythm, rhyme, etc.) made that restoration possible:

> The poetic act consists of our sudden realization that an idea is naturally fractionized into several motifs of equal value which must be assembled. They *rhyme*; and their outward stamp of authenticity is that *common meter* which the final stress establishes.[20]

This conception of language remains tacitly operative in the texts of phenomenology and gestalt psychology (in which the task of reassembly and reintegration remains primary). It also persists in at least one other contemporary discipline—the structural anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Whereas phenomenology would dispense with the identification of that data with prehistory (each of us has access to it in the raw material of perception), Lévi-Strauss emphasizes its link with the primitive. His descriptions of *la pensée sauvage* center upon metaphor, which is isolated as the primary vehicle of myth:

> The effectiveness of symbols would consist precisely in this "inductive property," by which formally homologous structures, built out of different materials at different levels of life—organic processes, unconscious mind, rational thought—are related to one another. Poetic metaphor provides a familiar example of this inductive process.[21]

> Thanks to the myths, we discover that metaphors are based on an intuitive sense of the logical relations between one realm and other realms; metaphor reintegrates the first realm with the totality of the others, in spite of the fact that reflective thought struggles to separate

18. Wallace Fowlie, *Mallarmé*, Chicago, Phoenix, 1962, p. 264.
19. The neo-Platonic base of this theory of language has been discussed by Gilles Deleuze in his writing on Proust, which embeds the novelist within a decidedly Symbolist tradition: "Certain neo-Platonists used a profound word to designate the original state which precedes any development, any deployment, any 'explication': *complication*, which envelops the many in the One and affirms the unity of the multiple. Eternity did not seem to them the absence of change, nor even the extension of a limitless existence, but the complicated state of time itself (*uno ictu mutationes tuas complectitur*). The Word, *omnia complicans*, and containing all essences, was defined as the supreme complication, the complication of contraries, the unstable opposition. From this they derived the notion of an essentially expressive universe, organized according to degrees of immanent complications and following an order of descending explications." Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard, New York, Braziller, 1972, pp. 44-5.
20. Mallarmé, p. 39.
21. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Jacobson Schoepf, New York, Basic Books, 1963, pp. 201-2.

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> them. Metaphor, far from being a decoration that is added to language, purifies it and restores it to its original nature, through momentarily obliterating one of the innumerable synecdoches that make up speech.[22]

If, as Lévi-Strauss claims, the poetic and the mythic are essentially analogous functions, then they themselves stand in a metaphoric relation and must be conceived as a single function. If the techniques according to which myth reproduces an original, pre-discursive unity or totality are primarily poetic—*i.e.* intuitive rather than logical and rooted in metaphor—then it follows reciprocally that the "purpose" of poetry will be to create myths. Here, Lévi-Strauss rearticulates the operation prescribed in all of the great texts of literary Symbolism: those of Mallarmé, Valéry, and Eliot, and certainly of Artaud.[23] And the word which best describes that operation, *mythopoesis,* becomes profoundly tautological.

Einstein on the Beach, an essentially metaphoric structure, cannot be isolated from this poetic motive. Because Wilson participates in this mythopoeic impulse, his attitude towards language may be ascribed to a particular linguistic and poetic position and his formal strategies assimilated to a specific performance tradition, itself identified by its argument about language. Elsewhere, he has been quoted to the effect that Einstein was chosen as central figure because he exhibited characteristics of both thinker (physicist, mathemetician, representative of the analytic) and dreamer (musician, visionary, representative of the idealistic).[24] Accordingly, Wilson's desire was to synthesize those divergent modes of performance (analytic, expressionistic) noted at the beginning of this essay. Hence, his collaboration with composer Philip Glass and choreographer Lucinda Childs, both of whom have previously worked in an analytic mode. Still, this synthetic ambition is profoundly mythopoeic, an inductive reintegration of previously distinct orders; and Wilson's desire to transcend the polarity of contemporary performance modes remained wholly contained within one of its terms. As a result, the profoundly intuitive character of the frame provided for the work of Glass and Childs qualified and at times subverted the objective nature of their styles. (At the same time, the strength of Wilson's images seemed diluted by the presence of antithetical material.) Had *Einstein* achieved encyclopaedic status the claims that have been made for it would be justified. As it is, Wilson's work, which has so frequently been hailed as totally innovative and without precedent, remains enmeshed in a particular tradition, the coordinates of which have already been mapped.

22. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked,* trans. J. and D. Weightman, New York, Harper & Row, 1969, p. 339.
23. "The true purpose of the theater is to create myths." Artaud, p. 116.
24. "According to Wilson . . . what triggered the fusion was the subject itself, Albert Einstein, a mathematician, but at the same time a dreamer. . . . It is the contradiction, the interplay, and the harmony of dreams and mathematics that form the central tension of this work." Flakes, p. 70.

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