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UCLA FRENCH DEPARTMENT PUBLICATIONS AND DISSERTATIONS

Eric Gans, *The End of Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985)

This book is the second in a series of publications in "generative anthropology" begun with *The Origin of Language*, which was published by University of California Press in 1981. The title uses the word "end" to mean "purpose"; a projected third volume on the modern era will attempt to show in what sense we can speak today about "culture" in its specific Western form as coming to an end.

My main task in this book has been to present as rigorously as possible the foundations of generative anthropology, which can be defined as the study of man based on an *originary hypothesis*. Instead of viewing the emergence of man as an essentially evolutionary process, this theory attempts to reconstruct an *originary scene* in which man discovered/invented language, and from which all the significant cultural categories (religion, ethics, the esthetic, the economic, etc.) can be derived. This volume makes some modifications in the hypothesis as developed in the preceding work. It presents an outline of Western cultural development through the examination of the twin sources of our heritage: the Hebrews and the Greeks. After discussing a number of anthropological issues related to the formation of "high culture," the book offers analyses of several fundamen-

tal texts, including biblical passages and major texts of Greek literature, notably Homer.

Jean-Claude Carron, *Discours de l'errance amoureuse: Une lecture du canzoniere de Pontus de Tyard* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1986, 189 pp.)

Ce travail tente de déterminer les conditions de la manifestation poétique d'une pensée amoureuse dans le contexte historique, social, culturel, intellectuel et littéraire de l'époque. Il s'agit d'une analyse à la fois textuelle et intertextuelle mettant en évidence les conditions et les limites de la cohérence interne d'un ensemble signifiant singulier.

Je lis les *Erreurs amoureuses* comme une tentative « unique » de produire un discours poétique amoureux capable d'assumer l'héritage médiéval et pétrarquais ainsi que le néo-platonisme contemporain. Dans un premier moment, je mets en évidence la conception « positive » de ces erreurs et leur poétique.

Je montre ensuite comment la « cohérence » philosophique du texte est soumise aux exigences rhétoriques d'une parole de désir adressée par celui qui dit JE à un TU absent. Manifestations d'une multiple errance amoureuse, l'âme, l'esprit, le cœur, le corps, la voix et le poème lui-même « se meuvent » dans l'espace de désir ménagé et entretenu par cette absence. Je consacre la seconde partie de mon étude à ces « mouvements », appuyant mon analyse sur l'épistémologie et la physiologie traditionnelles, autant que sur leur fonction littéraire.

Les notions de discours et d'errance renvoient, thématiquement et formellement, à une coïncidence entre la quête amoureuse et l'entreprise poétique. Composé de trois livres publiés entre 1549 et 1555, le *canzoniere* de Tyard est enfin interprété comme le « discours errant » d'un amour qui se veut droit et sans faute.

Sara E. Melzer, *Discourses of the Fall: A Study of Pascal's Pensées*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986)

'Pascal's blood flows in my veins,' wrote Nietzsche. Indeed, Pascal's blood flows in the veins of contemporary culture. In *Discourses of the Fall*, I argue that the *Pensées* of seventeenth-century

philosopher and scientist Blaise Pascal present one of the major dilemmas that structure contemporary thought. This dilemma centers on the relationship between the notion of an absolute origin—God or transcendent truth—and human discourse, which undermines the very possibility of knowing or representing an origin.

Both Pascal and Nietzsche, like many modern thinkers, believe that humans are trapped in language, cut off from knowledge of an origin or truth. My study focuses on the historical Fall, which Pascal views as the root cause of our imprisonment in language. I argue that for Pascal the historical Fall away from God brought about an epistemological fall—a fall from truth into language. This fall, however, has paradoxically placed us in a position where we are incapable of saying whether a fall, in fact, ever took place. A fall implies an origin away from which we have fallen. But, if we are fallen and trapped in language, how can we gain knowledge of an absolute origin, God or truth, which by definition lies outside language?

The *Pensées* weave together two incompatible logics of language's relation to an origin. On the one hand, they adopt a perspective of certainty based on the traditional notion that we can transcend language to know God or truth. But on the other hand, they present an opposing perspective of uncertainty which questions whether we are not trapped within human representations of God or truth. For Pascal, neither logic is more rationally defensible than the other. Both are rendered equally uncertain owing to the inescapably rhetorical nature of language in a fallen world.

Figures condemn language to say something other than it appears to be saying. Since figures always state something other than what they directly mean, they cannot point with certainty to a prefallen state or God. This inadequacy of language, however, may be the very sign of our fallen nature, which would refer indirectly to God. The figural nature of language thus puts humans in a state where all discourses on the fall are caught between contradictory logics.

The *Pensées* throw the reader back and forth between certainty and uncertainty about what Pascal is saying and, in this way, force one to realize that only a wager, not discursive logic, can bring certainty. Reading the *Pensées* dramatizes the vanity of our quest for rational truth and the need to escape into a nontextual realm of the heart.

By showing that the *Pensées* can be best understood in terms of an aporetic, fallen discourse, this study integrates the contradictory

currents that, for centuries, have divided the readings of this seminal text.

Ruth Anne Gooley, "*Basia*" and "*Baisers*:" *Metaphor in French Renaissance Poetry* (Ph.D. Dissertation: Marc Bensimon, Chair, UCLA, 1986)

The kiss poems created by the Dutch poet Johannes Secundus became important in sixteenth century French love poetry, the field of meaning of these kiss texts ranging from a simple fascination with erotica to a more comprehensive exploration of a cosmic world view. Like any image in French Renaissance poetry, which most often assigned meaning through a metaphorical process of analogy, the kiss has implications that, although linked to its primary function as an erotic stimulus, take on a larger meaning in the context of Renaissance thought. This system that ordered its chaos through a complex relationship between Amor and the world he created from the originary egg misunderstood the Platonic search for knowledge whose ultimate state of amorous furor resulted in an ideal vision of the beautiful and the good. As a result, French Renaissance poets tended to confuse amorous madness with that attributed to poetic production.

This notion of poetry is explored through close textual analyses of poems whose central image is the stereotype of the kiss, ranging from texts of the neo-Latin poet Johannes Secundus through Ronsard and other Pléiade poets, as well as individuals such as Scève, Labé and D'Aubigné. Interested in the kiss as a means of exploring the bases of poetic thought, the dissertation links the kiss to a more general theory of poetics, wherein love becomes a symbol of poetic production. If the kiss thus becomes a metaphor for the creative act, this is due to poetry's essentially self-reflexive nature; interested in its own ambiguity, poetry draws from images such as the stereotype of the kiss in order to explore its own essence.

Carol Anne Hofmann, *Forgetting in Film and Fiction by Marguerite Duras* (Ph.D. Dissertation: James Reid, Chair, UCLA, 1986)

"Forgetting" is a thematic constant in Marguerite Duras' work. It also describes the relationship of the reader to her often ambiguous and elusive texts.

In this dissertation I attempt to define a "forgetting" which is uniquely Durasian. To do so, I propose models of two distinct kinds of forgetting: "forgetting-as-repression" and "forgetting-through-remembering." In my first chapter I explore "forgetting-as-repression" in *Le Ravissement de Lol V. Stein* and *Agatha*, setting it up as a counterpoint to "forgetting-through-remembering." The latter is examined in chapters II and III using *Le Vice-Consul*, *Le Ravissement de Lol V. Stein*, *L'Après-midi de M. Andesmas*, *Hiroshima mon amour*, *L'Amour* and *India Song*.

"Forgetting-as-repression" is in many ways analogous to a classical notion of mimetic language where the sign is seen as referential (representing/replicating in a perfectly stable, self-identical manner that which it "signifies"), for a repressed memory is at least theoretically a stable phenomenon with no room for change. Durasian "forgetting," however, has no such possibility of timeless integrity. For Duras, memory is an endless and fleeting repetition/variation of itself. Like the language she uses, memory in a Durasian world puts into question its own referentiality.

I bring this Durasian "forgetting-through-remembering" into focus through comparison with models of "forgetting-through-remembering" taken from Sigmund Freud (repetition-compulsion/mastery) and Melanie Klein (mourning). Although Durasian "forgetting" has much in common with these models, hers is essentially a "refus" of the kind of integrity and closure Freud and Klein seek. There is no hope of "mastery," no hope of resolution of mourning in Duras' world. Instead Durasian "forgetting" is an endless state of mourning, a ceaseless process of remembering and repetition. It is a repetition-compulsion of desire and ever-elusive "memory," in the end an acquiescence to this repetition and to a hopeless yearning for the "impossible."

Karen Ann Harrington, *Women in Les Fleurs du Mal: Imagery and Imagination* (Ph.D. Dissertation: Hassan el Nouty, Chair, UCLA, 1986)


The diverse role of women in *Les Fleurs du Mal* is a paradigm of Baudelaire's imaginative process. They attest to the underlying notion of contradictions as a principal element through which Baudelaire posits the conflict of the self in the world. Often viewed as an extension of the poetic self, women provide a comforting reassurance. As "other," they are paradoxically perceived as an obstacle to be subdued or overcome. Considered an intermediary between the poetic self and its surroundings, women are never fully appreciated for themselves but rather as an adjunct to Baudelaire's poetic vision.

Our study examines the relation between the treatment of women and Baudelaire's imaginative faculties, revealing how his poetry is motivated by its inherent ambivalence. We shall focus on a comparative perspective, differentiating the role of women according to their absence and presence. These criteria establish a frame of reference which illustrates the dynamics of Baudelaire's imagination. Through contrasting views, the function of women's absence and presence can be construed as a metaphor for the poetic act, conveying the poet's vacillating attitudes.

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Ce serait le moment de philosopher et de
rechercher si, par hasard, se trouverait
ici l'endroit où de telles paroles dégèlent.

Rabelais, *Le Quart Livre*

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CONTENTS

Foreword	v
Discourse and Disoccultation:	1
An Interview with Timothy Reiss <i>Thomas F. Bertonneau</i>	
Baudelaire et Mallarmé: «La Chevelure»	17
Exploit(ation) de la femme? <i>Charles de Bedts</i>	
Montaigne Couturier: Représentations	31
et Intertextualités dans «De l'amitié» <i>Scott Carpenter</i>	
Reviews	39
UCLA French Department Publications	43
and Dissertations	

