

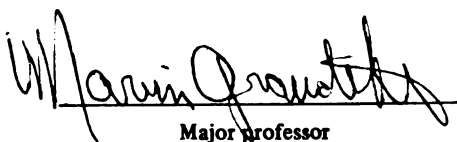
REASON CONCEIVED AS REPRESSION:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY
OF NORMAN O. BROWN

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
R. MICHAEL HOWEY
1972



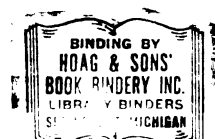
This is to certify that the
thesis entitled
REASON CONCEIVED AS REPRESSION: AN
EXAMINATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF
NORMAN O. BROWN
presented by
R. Michael Howey

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for
Ph.D. degree in Education


Major professor

Date February 4, 1972

O-7639



ABSTRACT

REASON CONCEIVED AS REPRESSION: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF NORMAN O. BROWN

By

R. Michael Howey

In his works Norman O. Brown attempts to provide the reader, and perhaps all humankind, with a basis from which to begin recreating a new and, in Brown's opinion, more exciting world. His work is meant to be ultimately ineffable but to provoke change and not merely provide explication.

He began the work, which is his search for a poem, by examining the printed works of Sigmund Freud. Brown's revelations were made public in Life Against Death. Afterwards, he wrote Love's Body, his only other elongated tract. Since the publication of Love's Body, Brown's work has been more in the form of poetry, although his printed work still retains footnoting as a vestige of the well-documented work he previously accomplished.

Since Brown's condemnation is of the Western historical culture and the formal-logical law of

contradiction which has perpetuated it, his body of thought includes a basis for the refutation of the culture. This basis is found in a discussion of Freud which leads Brown to perceive the anal characteristics of society as necessary to the continuation and progress of Western culture. The psychoanalytic viewpoint placed upon history as a whole becomes, in Brown's hands, a condemnation of the very culture upon which that history is based.

Brown would call any life-giving process, including education, an eroticization of the body. Brown's use of violence as a term leads to the realization that he considers what has been developed as culture to be a very rigorous denial of the body of man. To Brown the primary urgency in education is to regain what has been denied, which he sees to be essentially a union with the environment and mankind as a whole.

This union would then lead a man to go beyond culture, into a world which is not existent, but which Brown feels could be. This world is yet a vision and Brown's work shows he is attempting to see it clearly. His work becomes a working out of some premises of that world.

Brown sees that humankind has been pure as a child and that there has been a world which is not the

R. Michael Howey

expression of anal cultural characteristics. But this world is known in infancy or before. The child is seen as leading the way back which is the way out of cultural domination. Education becomes reeducation in this picturing of the world.

REASON CONCEIVED AS REPRESSION: AN
EXAMINATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY
OF NORMAN O. BROWN

By

R^V Michael Howey

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Secondary Education and Curriculum

1972

6741613

Jacquelyn

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express appreciation to all those people who aided me so greatly in the preparation and production of this work. Especial appreciation is expressed to my Doctoral Guidance Committee: Dr. Marvin Grandstaff, Dr. George Barnett, Dr. Albert Cafagna and Dr. Dale Alam.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. ANALITY.	15
The Imposition of Civilization on Life: An Introduction	15
The Effects of Personality (The Human as Cause).	22
The World as Excrement	24
Carnal Knowledge	32
Obscene Violence is Authoritarian	39
Violence is Excrement	43
Beyond the Warp and Woof of History.	48
Brown's Call for History's End: A Post Historical-Post Cultural Community.	50
Summary Without Synopsis	55
III. EROS AS EDUCATION	58
Introduction	58
Art and Psychoanalysis	60
Obliteration of Ideology	67
Education as Therapy.	69
Brown's Theory of Dream.	74
Symbol as Reality.	77
The Pun	78
Metaphor	79
Symbolism.	80
Education as an End to History	86

Chapter	Page
IV. THE CHRISTIC-DIONYSIAN VISION	92
Introduction: The Vision.	92
Books of Death	96
West and East,	101
Christ, Freud, Bacchus.	105
The Peaceful War.	110
Play is the Way	116
BIBLIOGRAPHY	123

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Norman O. Brown began his search for a poem in a formal way through an in-depth study of Freud in 1953. Yet it was in 1948, "almost six years before writing a line, he began incubating Life Against Death."¹ He put faith in Henry Wallace's Presidential efforts in that year, and became very disillusioned at its failure. Analogous to those political activists who lost faith in the ability of government to effect change after the Chicago Democratic Convention of 1968, Brown became aware of the "need to re-examine the nature and destiny of men in 1948."² Brown enters Freud with a non-political bias, therefore it is not surprising his work differs from the Socialist-minded neo-Freudian revisionists. Brown was what he calls "'a typical Thirties radical . . . inspired and kept alive by

¹Thomas Morgan, "In His Little Known Book Life Against Death, Norman O. Brown Pushes Beyond Freud to the Possibility of a Society Without Self-Repression," Esquire, March, 1963, p. 105.

²Ibid.

simple political hope.'"³ His disillusionment was complete in 1948, and his work became a search for a personal inspiration that could replace "simple political hope."

The poem is the answer in Brown's work, and his work today reflects his total involvement in this poem. Life Against Death is now a cenotaph to Brown, and the transition from politics to poetry is being made more complete in his later work.⁴ This thesis on Brown is to discover and explain a poem. It is a critic's function as much as a philosopher's to discover the truth in a body of thought and clarify this. Yet it is my function in this paper to avoid criticism and clarify Brown's thought in a manner which retains the impetus of his body of works. Therefore, his thought will not be treated as if he has views with implications for education which are significant, but rather in the recognition that his work is an attempt to restructure the very basis upon which education occurs. My thesis is that Brown's body of thought is education, rather than that his work reflects a certain bias towards educational thought. Since Brown's poem is reflected in the chronological development of his work, the

³Norman O. Brown in interview as quoted in Morgan, p. 105.

⁴"Norman O. Brown's Body: A Conversation Between Brown and Warren G. Bennis," Psychology Today, IV (August, 1970), 45.

following exegesis will be, in its underlying structure, chronological. There will be little or no work expended on the period previous to his enlightenment through Freud. Somehow, Brown seems to attain a state known in Zen Buddhism as *satori* through going down into Freud, and empathizing with the poetry in Freud's work. And then he came back to tell the world what Freud is really all about in Life Against Death. Through creation and publication of this work, Brown begins to recognize that he has experienced something different, and is a different man because of this.

In 1962 he even says, "Nobody has been where I am now . . . so I will have to see it and say it for myself."⁵ In 1966 this self-statement became Love's Body, the second, and, up to now, last major work by Brown. In this work Brown has begun to reflect on Zen Buddhism and Oriental mysticism in more detail. It does not seem merely coincidental that he would have been drawn to this work through recognition that he had experienced a mystical moment in his study of Freud.⁶

⁵Norman O. Brown in interview as quoted in Morgan, p. 135.

⁶Thomas Morgan points out that Brown's mother was herself a mystic. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume Brown had some experience with mysticism before the writing of his works. Morgan, p. 135.

Love's Body could be read as the personal development of a man toward that state of Nothingness that is the mystics' moment of creation, Ex nihilo poetica. (The last chapter in this development is "Nothing"!) The world Brown foresees is nothingness--pure spontaneity of men running wild. Repression is seen as being a personal problem, yet seemingly demanding a political solution. Yet there remains a strong feeling in Love's Body for non-political collective action. Through constant use of footnotes there is in this work an undercurrent of the logician, and the work itself is not yet pure poetry. Therefore, a second part of the dissertation will be a description of the embodiment of Brown's logical analysis of society. At this point, however, Brown's work sometimes leads beyond even the well-documented aphorisms of Love's Body. He begins to poeticize in a much purer manner. His work itself becomes non-political. A process that began in 1948 is still causing turmoil in 1970. He has become, as he says, "'more attuned to the sensual speech of art and less attuned to the logomachy of professors.'"⁷ The classics professor, like John Andrew Rice, founder of Black Mountain College, breaks forth into a more natural ambience. "'My nature hikes, he says, 'have become a necessity.'"⁸ The grip of authority is being lost

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

in the body of spontaneous action which Brown is trying to bring onto earth.

The final part of an appropriate exegesis of Brown's body of thought will have to consider the very vision which Brown has. Since that vision is of nothingness and silence, little can be said of the forms of society therein called into being. Brown himself says, even as early as Life Against Death's publication (the following quote paraphrases):

that anyone who extracts a "new position" from the book has read it superficially. The book doesn't take a final position, he maintains, but rather intends to drive one on.⁹

Thus Brown is to be explained, but not subjected to a critical analysis of the "culture" he intends to create. Instead, it is that he intends to go beyond culture and allow each man to recreate the world for himself.

It is my intention in the following work to allow the reader to follow the pattern of Brown's thought, rather than to give a precise delineation of how Brown would change a particular school habit, how he would react to a particular educational reform, or to compare his work to any educational reform system.

Rational exegesis may well demand that Brown's work be reinterpreted into prosaic terms but this denies the very force that Brown possesses. His search is into

⁹Ibid.

mysticism, and an attempt to meld it to politics.¹⁰ But as John Senior points out in The Way Down and Out, "Mysticism is the form occultism took in Christendom, as yoga is the form it took in India."¹¹ Therefore, there is reason to base the search that Brown has on an occult basis--a reason that is backed up substantially by Brown's foremost speech on education, "Apocalypse."¹² The work of Brown does not seem to be lonely work as he implies. Rather it is work done with the company of anyone who has at any time experienced a moment of artistic break from "reality." Therefore, his writing could be seen to be the extension into philosophical realms of the moments that cause any creation to be initiated. An initiatory drama, such as Love's Body, his "A Homage to Propertius"¹³ elucidates a strong feeling from those who read it. It is not irrelevant to say that Brown is shocking. (He relates in Esquire of a woman who verbally attacked him for trying to change too many things.) If he is not shocking he is irrelevant. Yet, as Senior points out about Symbolists, "What the vision brings is not something other than what

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹John Senior, The Way Down and Out: The Occult in Symbolist Literature (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), p. xvii.

¹²Norman O. Brown, "Apocalypse: The Place of Mystery in the Life of the Mind," Harper's Magazine, May, 1961, pp. 47-49.

¹³Brown, "A Homage to Propertius," Caterpillar #13, IV (October, 1970), 92-102.

we ordinarily see, but the acceptance of the rightness of things as they really are, as we have not ever before been able to see them."¹⁴ Brown does not force us to discover anything new, but attempts to allow us to create everything anew on our own. This is therapeutic, but also very upsetting. His work moves into the realm of Symbolist poetry because he desires to reform the world, not merely inform it. Yet this reformation is not structured--for the world is already structured in a beautiful way. There is "the drama of the insistent present"¹⁵ which Brown sees as the real issue. It is presently relegated to the world of the imagination, which is the reason that poetry is necessitated. Senior points out that the occultists realized the knowledge which the philosopher merely desires and cannot seem to find in the forms of reality.¹⁶ As Brown's work is artistic it leads us beyond forms, so that the reformation is itself the acceptance of what is. Yet this is the very Hell most educators attempt to avoid in their process of bringing out of the child what he could be. What is becomes shrouded in the forms and structures of institutional delights in the symbolic artists' conception of the world.

¹⁴Senior, p. 196.

¹⁵Norman O. Brown, "Psychoanalysis and the Classics," The Classical Journal, LII (March, 1957), 241.

¹⁶Senior, p. 198.

Brown's call for the youth to be visionaries, to accept birth and death as a process, places him directly in what John Senior depicts as the Symbolist camp. His work is a call to mystery, and as it has developed, it has become much more mysterious. He purposefully has made himself untrustworthy to a following,¹⁷ and is often quite enigmatic on the most historically and philosophically important points. Zen Buddhism, as a reflection of what Aldous Huxley calls the Perennial Philosophy, provides a reader with a non-literary style that aims at much of what Brown attempts. His work is too literary to be properly designated Zen--yet there is a feeling of the importance of spontaneity and direct action in both Brown and Zen. Brown nowhere claims to have known a Zen experience, yet his work does apply psychoanalysis to the Perennial Philosophy Aldous Huxley describes in his book by that title.¹⁸ The hypothesis has been suggested to me that Brown's work fits well into the field of Zen Buddhism--and while a detailed study of his footnotes, bibliographies, and various references may indicate a knowledge of this now popular form of occultism, it is still important to remember that Brown's road to this form of occultism is through psychoanalysis and books, rather

¹⁷"Norman Brown's Body," Psychology Today, p. 45.

¹⁸Aldous Huxley, The Perennial Philosophy (New York: Harper and Row, Harper Colophon Books, 1945).

than a master. It is that Brown has seen the same world found in Zen's enlightenment--that world which John Senior sees as the occult.

In this paper, I am not able to affirm or negate the world of Brown. It is precisely that I write from an unenlightened source that I cannot divine the sources of Brown's vision. Yet as a philosophical tract, this paper does feel the rhythm of Brown's work, and does discuss the merit of his being labeled an artist rather than a philosopher. Categorization such as this is within the scope of a philosopher. That Brown displays a vision in his writing is appropriately discussed in a dissertation; that Brown's vision is acute and sensitive is not applicable discussion. Therefore judgment of the world beyond culture which Brown perceives is impossible in this paper; but I hope that I will have shown that Brown does perceive this world and that he finds it already exists.

To again use John Senior's presentation of an occult maxim as a stepping off point of a discussion on Brown, "The use of traditional forms without the content is mere decadence."¹⁹ In "From Politics to Metapolitics" Brown states that "The real action in Love's Body . . . is to find an alternative to systematic form,"²⁰ but that

¹⁹Senior, p. 203.

²⁰Brown, "From Politics to Metapolitics," in A Caterpillar Anthology, ed. by Clayton Eshleman (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Anchor Books, 1971), p. 17.

"all these systems have immortal longings on them/that is why they are dead/born dead/representing from the hour of their birth the dead hand of the past."²¹ This gives us a hint at the nature of the world of Brown's vision if only in a negative way. Yet Brown himself does not design the world--he leaves this to others. (John Cage and Buckminster Fuller get prominence in the immediately aforementioned poem.²²) Yet we can perceive that this world will be void of the funeral home, especially with a series of Greek columns to remind all of the Victorian age when everything was so settled, so permanent, so immortal. This world seemingly will be void of the partitioned home which blocks members into their separate worlds. The hint is that the occult maxim is heeded. Brown envisions a world in which tradition demands content, in which an environment exists because it is alive rather than because it heralds back to an older form of life style. Hospitals which restrain the "mentally ill" would be found nowhere, especially not with the now prevalent Gothic architecture which reminds all of the permanence of the condition of those within--gnarled and cold and dank. No form would be eliminated--but all forms would be contentually acceptable. (I am here reminded of some of Lewis Mumford's work. The United Nations building would have to be justified on its unifying capacities,

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 13.

rather than on economic feasibility.) Lightness would prevail, space would be needed so one could literally run wild in his environment--monumentality would be requisite to emit man's monumental spiritual/energetic releases. Fuller's idea is to cover vast areas with one geodesic dome and thereby reduce the need of any other architectural structures. Paolo Soleri designs all industry underground--automated and out of sight. Soleri's energy development is produced by easily-built sites, away from population, which use natural sources without disrupting the natural rhythm. In the following paper there will not be a development of this world. It is much too dangerous to suggest that Brown's work leads to a favoring of Paolo Soleri over Ian McHarg who suggests that man learn to live at one with the environment, and that he has a place in this nature.²³ Soleri homes man away from nature so he will have a nature to run free in. These are much too dangerous grounds to tread upon in a work of this design. As Brown's work approaches poetry, these points become even less clear. That Apollo holds his love and his laurels at once is intriguing²⁴ but one is justified in asking "What then shall we, as men and not gods, do to reclaim our natural lands?" Brown would point to the

²³Ian McHarg, "Man and Environment," in The Urban Condition: People and Policy in the Metropolis, ed. by Leonard J. Duhl (New York: Basic Books, 1963).

²⁴Andre Gide, The Counterfeiters, trans. by D. Bussy (New York, 1961), pp. 83-84, quoted in Brown, "Daphne," p. 107.

fact that we are gods, and when we realize this there is no longer any problem. This still leaves many quite empty. Apropos to this situation is a poem. Yet that reduces no problems--unless. But so far very few Symbolist poets have been successful. And their success is limited. (Jerzy Kosinski, author of Steps and The Painted Bird, all quite Symbolist in approach, taught a class at the University of Michigan. He quit, saying that the students didn't know enough to even ask the right questions.) The metapolitics of Jerry Rubin aim at effecting a feeling on the part of the American public, rather than drawing out a vote or support. But he seems to follow what happens rather than create it. It is indeed difficult to discover that "little mosquito biting a big public behind"²⁵ into action and difficult indeed to find a mosquito which doesn't die after its first bite. And it is even more difficult to find someone who uses the medium of language to effect a feeling in people.

The artist who is continuous, in other words, the artistic life, is indeed difficult to discover. Perhaps compromises with the bureaucratically dominated society expend enough energy and time for the artist in man to die. Milton Mayer, in On Liberty: Man v. the State,²⁶

²⁵Joyce Cary, The Horse's Mouth (New York: Harper and Row, Perennial Library, 1944), p. 247.

²⁶Milton Mayer, On Liberty: Man v. the State, Center Occasional Papers (Santa Barbara, Calif.: The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, December, 1969).

makes a convincing argument that one simply can't make do without the structure of the state. The compromises that are necessary may well be enough to destroy the possibility of an artistic life. Brown, indeed, suggests in all of his work that we must be constantly "Overcoming this world, abolishing it,"²⁷ which is total rather than partial: "The true sacrifice is total, a making holy of the whole; the false sacrifice sacrifices a part. . . ."²⁸ The work of Brown therefore leads us to believe that the necessary compromises we daily face are not so necessary at all. The description of compromise as necessity is inadequate if we consider Brown's work. This indicates an inability of any paper, including this one, which is a compromise of the body to necessity to correctly epitomize Brown's work. More importantly, if the sacrifice must be total, then any dissertation will not be able to be poetical (in Brown's sense); but, being necessarily a compromise, cannot possibly give the reader the feeling of totality which Brown claims.

Brown considers repression as psychological rather than political or economic. It is a personal problem in the sense of the very meaning of person, and it seems as insoluble without a total involvement of what we know as

²⁷Norman O. Brown, Love's Body (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1966), p. 233.

²⁸Ibid., p. 174.

the person. This is spontaneous, therefore unpredictable. The Utopian vision of Brown is necessarily incomplete, and his work is still a search for that vision. The in-depth study of Freud drew him to conclude "The 'magical' body which the poet seeks is the 'subtle' or 'spiritual' or 'translucent' body of occidental mysticism, and the 'diamond' body of oriental mysticism, and in psychoanalysis, the polymorphously perverse body of childhood."²⁹ The equation of the body of Christianity, mythology, and oriental religion with the body of psychoanalysis led Brown to a study leading to Love's Body, searching for the total revolution of mankind into a world without repression of the body. This necessitated a new form of communication, body to body rather than person to person. Love's Body is aphorism, yet is not yet revolution because Brown still aligns to the person of past authorities to make his point. Yet there is a magic to the work, a poetry, which captures the intellectual as well as the physical man. In this sense his work is totally involving. After this, his work becomes more and more pure poetry--and the intensity of his search for a poem seems to increase and magnify.

²⁹Idem, Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), p. 313.

CHAPTER II

ANALITY

The Imposition of Civilization on Life: An Introduction

When reading Brown it is important to bear in mind he believes, and supports his belief,¹ men have somehow denied their unity with the cosmos and that this denial has caused neoteric man to be insufficient to his possibilities. Brown conceives of the healthy individual as a harmonious unity with the whole of existence, yet finds individuality presently expressed in "the struggle of the mind to overcome the split and conflict within itself."² Therefore, the struggle within the mind is felt to have cosmic implications, and therapy of the individual "fulfills itself only when it becomes historical and cultural analysis."³ To Brown the individual is ultimately significant only as he gains an open acceptance of the world, of nature. In Brown, education is integral

¹Brown, Life, "The Disease Called Man," pp. 3-10; and Brown, Love's Body, pp. 184-90.

²Brown, Life, p. 321.

³Ibid., pp. 170-71.

not only to the development of the separate homonoidal organisms, but as the very definition of its significance. The openness to the world is what makes the existence of mankind itself significant, as well as each man. Brown warns that this openness is not furthered by the development of reasonable, or clearly explicable, differentiating categories imposed upon the world, but is the acceptance of things as they really are. It is here, in Brown's conception of reality, that an investigator of Brown's theory of education is imperated to clarification. Brown feels that, since man himself is the conceptualizer, the whole of man can never be discerned through the conceptual processes. The very search for salvation, or wholeness with the cosmos, is felt to be the salvation, or therapy, of each man. Brown accepts the apparent contradiction of individuality in unity and in doing so posits a paradigm for the education of all mankind.

Reason, Brown explicates in his works, cannot suffice to fully describe the human animal nor can it save the animal from the ravages of civilization. Furthermore, reason needs be suspended in order to describe, and thus set to utilization, the great human potentialities which for a myriad of excuses have been bound. Salvation is shown to be in erotic, playful, behavior which appears to the civilized world as a Dionysian fury or a

schizophrenic madness.⁴ Brown's works can be read as attempts to allow us to realize that it is reason which is merely a tool and that the venture into the unconscious (intuition) is the rebirth of man--the fulfillment of his previously bypassed possibilities.

Brown views human education as a search for something lost, rather than a groping for the unknown. Discovery becomes rediscovery. Therefore, the methods of the search must be those of the goal for the search is the goal which is the making conscious of our repressed selves (salvation). Brown's later works reflect this symbolist/surrealist presumption. Through Brown we can envision all human life as a return to childhood rather than a development to civilization which he feels imposed itself upon the human animal.⁵ In saying "The rents, the tears, the splits and divisions are mindmade, they are not based on the truth but on what the Buddhists call illusion . . ."⁶ Brown shows his belief that civilization diverges while nature, or truth, has a therapeutic value.

Brown enjoins that the repletion of the rents caused by the "illusions," "maya," is to be found in love

⁴John Bleibtreau, The Parable of the Beast (New York: MacMillan Company, Collier Books, 1968), p. 63.

⁵Jose Ortega y Gasset speaks of culture opposed to life in a manner similar to Brown, Jose Ortega y Gasset, The Modern Theme, trans. by James Cleugh (New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1931).

⁶Brown, Love's Body, p. 81.

which is bodily rather than genital. Therapy is salvation to Brown for the human is seen as "knowing" his own salvation through his body. Brown quotes Freud in pointing out that "'The ego is first and foremost a body-ego,' 'the mental projection of the surface of the body'"⁷ . . .

"loving the function of mediating between the body and other bodies in the environment."⁸ Therefore, the ego which we consider to be hidden deep within ourselves is really at the border of, is really our unity with, the cosmos. Brown feels that the ego properly understood and felt will provide man with the opportunity to live rather than merely understand and appreciate life. Through an understanding of Freud, Brown posits that in childhood the human, protected by a prolonged infancy, knew love and was at oneness with nature. Thusly seen, the human condition is a steady decomposition of energies battling a steady, continuous attempt of repressed love to return. Using Freudian terminology, Brown finds the infant "polymorphously perverse."⁹ In other words, he finds the infant is participant in an environmentally dynamic ecosystem¹⁰ in that his erotism is natural and accepted. It

⁷Sigmund Freud, The Ego and The Id, p. 31, as quoted in Brown, Life, p. 159.

⁸Brown, Life, p. 159.

⁹Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁰Rene Dubos, "Man Overadapting," Psychology Today, IV (February, 1971), 50-53.

is therefore from the outside impositions of society that the decomposition of erotism is perpetrated. Brown's poem is not that of a dying world living out a pattern of effectual doom, but is the expression of a dynamic that must be lived. We can thus better comprehend the sense of urgency we feel in reading Love's Body since its author is found to feel that this dynamic is even life.

Brown recognizes that Freud inevitably concluded that therapy will be unsuccessful since Freud had a "metaphysical vision of all life sick with the struggle between Life and Death."¹¹ But Brown states that, more appropriately, only at the human level do these polarities become differentiated into conflict, "But if man has revolted from nature, it is possible for him to return to nature and heal himself."¹² Throughout his writing Brown emphasizes that the adult human condition has been brought on by the steady divergence of the human with his natural body--by interference, noise. Brown states that "childhood is the state of nature"¹³ and that man, even if not prodded on by books and formal educative apparati is committed "to the unconscious project of overcoming the instinctual ambivalence which is his actual condition and of restoring the unity of opposites that existed in childhood and exists in animals."¹⁴ It is Brown's feeling that, in infancy,

¹¹Brown, Life, p. 82.

¹²Ibid., p. 83.

¹³Ibid., p. 84.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 85.

libidinal stimuli are not displaced from the erogenous zones of their occurrence.¹⁵ Infancy is found to be a "pre-ambivalent" stage of human existence--occurrences are all erotic and non-sublimated.¹⁶ Society is thought the de-eroticization of the body, and technology considered the successful sublimations which rationality perpetuates. The search for salvation, which we have shown to be considered the process of education, is thus the search for the resurrection of the body.¹⁷ Brown feels we must come as children before God to be saved and comprehends man as in search for the "Human Form Divine."

Brown senses a happiness and joy divine in the child which distinguishes its condition from that of the adult. Life Against Death (1959) is a reasonable explanation of the causes of this distinction, inspired by the works of Freud. Love's Body (1966), however, is the adult Brown becoming as a child. (That Brown is, as Theodore Roszak claims, "Dionysus with footnotes"¹⁸ is an absolutely appropriate description of Brown the adult, who knows something, searching to become as a child--not become a child. The

¹⁵Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 313.

¹⁸Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counterculture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition (New York: Doubleday and Company, Anchor Books, 1969), p. 115.

search is not for a primitive, childish religion based on superstition, but for a poem.¹⁹⁾

The world, since dominated by adults, has become prosaic to Brown.²⁰ It is not perceived by him as the joyous exuberant expression of unification of the wholeness with the world, with all that is or could be. Brown delves into the search for his poem in *Love's Body*. It is a book, published, which should not have been published in the sense that we then assume Brown's experience has been frozen and can be explained. It is an example of what Brown desires to avoid--the freezing of men's actions, the transference of action to causality through the effects of civilization--in this case print technology. Yet Brown is therein perceptive about these very faults. He warns that the human being should not be transformed into a utile item rather than being an expression of all past and future in the present moment. As he says, "The boundary line between self and external world bears no relation to reality."²¹ Brown finds that under the influence of civilization the individual becomes a person--"persona, a mask." The Person is not part of reality, rather only a part of reality acting

¹⁹Brown, Love's Body, p. 254.

²⁰Anais Nin emphasizes that only prose which is poetic will cause people to be what they should be, thus causing change. Anais Nin, The Novel of the Future (New York: MacMillan Company, Collier Books, 1968), pp. 165-201.

²¹Brown, Love's Body, p. 143.

as all reality. Brown conceives of a person as a cause, as historical fact, rather than an expression of all facts--which is Brown's conception of the true individual. Aphorized by Brown, "Personality is not innate but acquired."²² Man cannot live up to his possibilities as long as he hides behind the mask of personality which keeps him diverged from his natural "pre-ambivalent" unity with the cosmos. Brown's educational theory would be senseless to one not comprehending, at least on a prehensile level, this trend in Brown.

The Effects of Personality
(The Human as Cause)

Brown's position is that personality acquisition is the placement of an illusory world upon the child, repressing his erotism. Self-identity (as the search for education) is found to be the denial of the individual's dynamic relation to the cosmos. It is seen as an attempt to fixate the individual as a distinct set of stimuli and responses within the environment. The educational philosophy of Existentialists (such as VanCleve Morris) depends heavily upon the Existential moment of awakening.²³ But Brown makes us aware that this occurs only when the individual is deprived of his erotic body, and Morris's

²²Ibid., p. 94.

²³VanCleve Morris, Existentialism in Education: What It Means (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 135.

"responsibility" is nothing more than regaining the lost body, brought on by guilt for having lost what one loved. Reading Brown one concludes that the inculcation of values through didactic rhetoric, be it fiery or benevolent (religious or scholarly), is less opprobrious since more apparent (transparent) than the attempt of others more radically tendered to bring out the personality of the learner as a distinct and self-identified quantity.

Brown:

If the mechanism of sublimation is the dream, the instinctual economy which sustains it is a primacy of death over life in the ego. The path which leads from infantile dreaming to sublimation originates in the ego's incapacity to accept the death of separation, and its inauguration of those morbid forms of dying--negation, repression, and narcissistic involution. The end result is to substitute for the reality of living-and-dying the desexualized or deadened life. This conclusion, so shattering to the hope of finding in sublimation a "way out" and therefore omitted in the encyclopedias of psychoanalytical orthodoxy--is squarely faced and stated by Freud in The Ego and the Id: "By thus obtaining possession of the libido from the object-cathexes, setting itself up as the love-object, and desexualizing or sublimating the libido of the id, the ego is working in opposition to the purpose of Eros and placing itself at the service of the opposing instinctual trends."²⁴

The crisis of self-identity is therefore found to be inherent in the search for the distinct self. It is only in a confluence with the environment, the cosmos, that Brown understands the individual to be real. An equation is implicit in Brown. Therapy is transference is the

²⁴Brown, Life, p. 173.

search for the androgynous existence is the polymorphously perverse body is endless. Interference exists as that which reasonably destroys or blocks awareness of this relationship. But Brown sees that the acceptance of this equation through faith in nature is therapy itself.

The World as Excrement

The world Brown sees about him is anal erotism displaced. "Swift does not hate the bowels," he points out, "but only the human use of the bowels."²⁵ If Brown's stance is taken, the child must be viewed as accepting his anal erotism, but as frozen in his anal explorations by the subtle displacement of the anal functions away from the body and into the external world, forming culture--away from his initiation and discovery. Furthermore, the symbolic acts of anality will be viewed as interfered with and displaced into cultural products showing play, gift, property, weapon, reason as all anal.²⁶ Civilization is to Brown the excrement of men. It is found the non-fertile atmosphere of a "second-best substitute for the original."²⁷ Civilization is envisioned the symbol of the symbol and man caught in civilization is seen as removed from his body. (The resurrection and not the erection of the body is called forth.) The method of this separation of the body from the

²⁵Ibid., p. 190.

²⁶Ibid., p. 191.

²⁷Ibid.

man is explained as the overemphasis of a part of the whole, a part heading the body--the part heading the body--the (corporate) body headed.

In a bold proclamation, especially considering Brown's avowed faith in psychoanalysis, he states, "Psychoanalysis stands or falls on the expansion of the idea of sexuality to comprehend the entire life of the human body."²⁸ Furthermore, "Monarchy is the constituent form of all corporate bodies, including the body physical."²⁹

The instituted corporations of civilization are necessarily hierarchical in Brown's thesis for they are the body repressed--the human body denied action. This is nothing less than action taken from the whole body and placed into a part. Therefore, Brown's implications here are consistent with those of Marshall McLuhan. Technological developments are shown as extensions of a part of the body ruling the body,³⁰ and (here he goes beyond McLuhan)

²⁸Brown, Love's Body, p. 126.

²⁹Ibid., p. 127.

³⁰Marshall McLuhan posits the hypothesis that electric media are the nervous system of the body extended. Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media (2nd ed.; New York: New American Library, Signet Books, 1964). This is to say that what Freud referred to as the "body-ego" (supra, p. 18) is considered to be extended in electric technology. Brown's position, though he does not state it, would be that the context of the development of electric media is a denial of its very possibilities, and

are hierarchical by concept. Brown perceives that this allows the head to rule the body and reduces the range of the environment so that the body is consequently reduced. Transaction of the body and environment is denied by the, consequently, logical extensions of the part of the body. All corporate bodies are monarchies; Brown shows that hierarchy and not democracy³¹ is the necessary style of institutions. Perfected civilization is the head erected--reason supreme. (Brown feels no qualms in speaking of the head of the body as the head of an institution; after all, "psychoanalysis must regard language as a repository of the psychic history of mankind."³²) The process of civilization rolls on to its frightening end, Brown warns, "and since the dialectic of sublimation in civilization is cumulative, cumulatively abstract and cumulatively deadening, Freud's intuition that civilization moves toward the primacy of intellect and the atrophy of sexuality is correct."³³ The head will rule all. Politics reach perfection only when the head is all and the polymorphously perverse body is negated.

that it will never be appropriately developed until man is at one with his body. Brown's position tenders that we humans could hardly understand what is an extension of our bodies if we don't understand or feel our own bodies.

³¹Brown, Love's Body, p. 26.

³²Brown, Life, p. 197.

³³Ibid., p. 173.

His critique of civilization thus has a strong pungency of anarchism, or at least of a hatred of political activity. It would not be as strong an odor if Brown were at all unrelenting in his initial belief that "It is the distinctive achievement of man to break apart the undifferentiated or dialectrical unity of the instincts at the animal level."³⁴ The goal for Brown, we must remember, is salvation and not amelioration and that he feels man is distinctively in need of salvation. It is more in the tradition of Kropotkin who found anarchism as the only mode for the beautiful expression of human grace that Brown's anarchism can be posited than in the work of Proudhon and Bakunin who find revulsion at present forms of government as the mandate to anarchism. Brown finds that man is uniquely saved; that it is within himself and not legislated from without that salvation occurs. At this point one could digress to an interesting essay on Brown's relation to Marxist philosophy, but it would be counterproductive to an effort to describe Brown's discovery of the anal presuppositions controlling modern theories of education.

He continues his damnation of civilization by pointing out that the denial of the polymorphously perverse body occurs when man is merely his extension in the part substituting for reality, and that reason is the

³⁴Ibid., p. 84.

development of technological procedures to replace man's relationship with the environment. Reason is excrement.

It is at this point that Brown (Romulus) and his Remus (Herbert Marcuse) differ most sharply. To Marcuse technology provides a means of freedom for man--beyond the state of necessity into the state of freedom.³⁵ (Brown would contend here that Marcuse's goal is a state, not poetry which is stateless.³⁶) Marcuse believes that technology can be used to supply the needs of mankind, not in a modest way, but in a way which captures the genius imagination of mankind.³⁷ Therefore, man must submit to the repressive technology long enough to provide the products of needs satisfaction in order to then and (Marcuse adds) only then be free.³⁸ Norman Brown rebuts that "the issue here is the same question of alienated (compulsive) labor."³⁹ Brown's position here is clarified if one considers that life is (as John Bleibtreau states in a

³⁵Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1955), pp. 180-202.

³⁶Brown, Love's Body, p. 16.

³⁷Herbert Marcuse chastises Paul Goodman for being too modest in his demands upon technology and the "system." Herbert Marcuse, "Liberation from the Affluent Society," in Dialectics of Liberation, ed. by David Cooper (New York: MacMillan Company, Collier Books, 1968), p. 176.

³⁸Marcuse, Eros, p. 142.

³⁹Norman O. Brown, "A Reply to Herbert Marcuse," Commentary, XLIII (March, 1967), 83.

biological tract very similar to Brown's poem)⁴⁰ a rhythm of accented and unaccented moment signs, and that technology always interferes with this rhythm, as it always tends to unaccent every moment. If technology is to be used, Brown is there to warn that it is always the monarchy of the head over the body and is repressive. In Life Against Death Brown discusses the possibility of work to redeem; that is, that "the abandonment of the illusion that work redeems signifies a disillusionment with the dreams of infantile narcissism, a strengthened capacity to endure harsh truth . . ."⁴¹ Brown discovers that work in a non-narcissitic environment is excrement, the self-punishment of man in a secularized environment. Furthermore, the secular environment which man, according to Marcuse, must tolerate and perpetuate to its end, is shown by Brown to be "demonolatry." Marcuse points toward archaic communities as examples of non-repressive societies, but Brown feels that even at this stage man was already "Instinctively committed to create an economic surplus"⁴² and "instinctively committed to non-enjoyment, self-repression, and compulsive work."⁴³ This is brought upon man not by his alienation from his work, but by his guilt for having committed the primal crime (of destruction of his father.)⁴⁴ This results, Brown shows,

⁴⁰John Bleibtreau, pp. 3-83.

⁴¹Brown, Life, p. 272. ⁴²Ibid., p. 261.

⁴³Ibid. ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 271.

in the "archaic consciousness" which is that of sociability through an attempt to pay off the debt to the father. Brown states that "Archaic gift-giving (the famous potlatch is only an extreme example) is one vast refutation of the notion that the psychological motive of economic life is utilitarian egoism."⁴⁵ Therefore, even an economy which is based upon repressive labor that would not be considered by Marcuse to be superfluous is driven by guilt. It would not appear feasible to Brown that a compromise is possible at this point, a compromise Marcuse makes in accepting a certain amount of repression as necessary.⁴⁶ Labor, though, is integrally connected with time. As Brown states, "Time is a schema necessary for the expiation of guilt"⁴⁷ and the time domination of technology, since imposed from the head, is that guilt reified. It becomes obvious that Brown is looking for a way out of the trauma of guilt, a trauma which Marcuse tacitly accepts. His "way out" is found in the postulation of non-repressive work--work which is bodily necessary. Labor becomes that which the whole man does, since the whole man only acts out his necessities. Marcuse's call to a society progressing towards an eroticization is replaced by Brown with an Apocalyptic vision of man becoming whole. Marcuse desires

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 263.

⁴⁶Marcuse, Eros, p. 40.

⁴⁷Brown, Life, p. 277.

the rational progression to the libidinalization of man, while Brown feels that the whole man, the eroticized body, alone can perceive what the goal is. It is impossible, Brown's philosophy here tenders, to aim towards the goal without first being healthy. A homeopathy is required. It is only through being healthy that one becomes healthy according to Brown's view. Marcuse therefore attacks Brown for being too "symbolic" in his interpretation of reality, while Brown cajoles Marcuse to see that "the real meaning of technology is its hidden relation to the human body, a symbolical or mystical relation."⁴⁸ Romulus and Remus have departed, not to reach different goals, but to reach the same goal by different paths. Brown's way is the goal, while Marcuse feels that we can take progressive steps towards that goal.⁴⁹

Brown's work stands as a warning that technology cannot be used to effectively bring to man his needs for it is in the technology of denial that man has lost the

⁴⁸Brown, "Reply to Marcuse," Commentary, p. 83.

⁴⁹Marcuse does attempt to face the problem of creating a new consciousness in a people who do not yet possess this consciousness. He frankly admits this is a dilemma. Herbert Marcuse, Five Lectures: Psychoanalysis, Politics and Utopia, trans. by Jeremy J. Shapiro and Shirley M. Weber (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 99. The position taken in this paper is that Brown feels the unconscious in all men is basically free and that the "way down" into the caverns of each man's mind will provide the "way out." That therapy becomes the end of psychoanalysis in Brown's work is herein tendered.

body he so desperately needs. The rhythm of the machine is not the rhythm of man, but Brown, seeing this, would not deny that work itself need always be repressive. In Life Against Death Brown searches for a new type of science which will fully express the needs of the body of men. In order to meet truly human needs we cannot stipulate a rational progression while we ourselves are alienated.

Carnal Knowledge

Brown exhorts, "The human mind was born free, or at any rate born to be free, but everywhere it is in chains . . ."⁵⁰ The chains Brown sees are rationality and they hold man back from his own knowledge. When the mysteries of the universe are placed at the disposal of rational discourse they are to be evaluated and judged, which Brown finds as a sickening process of demystification. Knowledge is carnal; it is pure communication between human bodies; and, Brown further points out, it is inexplicable in language. Western man⁵¹ has groped for the security that definite statements allow and in this process has developed a logic which imposes an order upon nature. Brown calls this the logic of contradictions, and his work

⁵⁰Brown, Love's Body, p. 13.

⁵¹Eastern man is herein opposed. For a discussion of this type of opposition see Thomas Merton, Zen and the Birds of Appetite (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1968), pp. 99-138.

can be appropriately read as an attempted reformulation of Western logic. (In an article "Animadversions upon Professor Brown's Apocalypse," J. E. Grant damns Brown because he calls for a mystification of man in nature rather than for a four-fold vision of Divine Humanity.⁵² I feel that Brown implies in Love's Body that man has created a one-dimensionality of thought by denying his body and that he must see the world in himself, see that he is the world, in order to become Divinely Human. He also implies that the order man imposed upon the universe in the name of rationality is itself inadequate and must be attended to allow man the freedom of his godliness. That Brown is not a visionary himself cannot be a condemnation of his call to vision. After all, as Meier points out, "the god (of healing) who is himself sick or wounded"⁵³ is an important motif of life, and Brown does see civilization as sick and himself as part of civilization, even though he is attempting to part ways.⁵⁴

Brown places great importance on the idea that the body denied, sublimated to the head (of the penis) creates

⁵²J. E. Grant, "Animadversions Upon Professor Brown's 'Apocalypse,'" The Noble Savage, V (1962), 12-18.

⁵³C. A. Meier, Ancient Incubation and Modern Psychotherapy, trans. by Monica Curtis (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1967), p. 131. (Parenthetical phrase mine.)

⁵⁴This is not to say that Brown's call is not for individuals with vision, but that he himself is not a visionary.

the eternal struggle of Life Against Death. Rationality is sensed as uncreative, and perhaps as beyond the sickness of imperfection, therefore is not sensed as curative. As Meier points out, "What works in medicine is irrational" ⁵⁵

Brown realizes that the "Disease Called Man" is never to be cured through rational procedures. Rational thought is conceived as eliciting nothing new or miraculous, and cures, like education, are always miracles. Furthermore, rationality in its fixation on the intelligible and repetitive is felt to be the very negation of miracles, and to be the excrement of the creative powers. Brown is interested in showing that the residual of creativity is what becomes habituated while the creative remains constantly inexplicable and humanly expressed in irrationality. Simply, Brown feels that mystery discovered is no longer mystery. ⁵⁶

In this view civilization is what is residual since it can be learned and studied and dissected and analyzed (it is analytical-anal residual of the creative body.) Knowledge is carnal in Brown's vision and becomes trivialized as it becomes analyzed. That rational knowledge can be obtained by experts is felt to be part of its

⁵⁵ Meier, Ancient Incubation, p. 28.

⁵⁶ Brown, "Apocalypse," Harper's, p. 48.

excremental nature, and Brown espouses the fact that experts "possess" this knowledge as proof of its wastefulness. It is within the realm of intellectual expertise that Brown sees the head coming to completely dominate the body, and he fears the justification of this process through the reasonable explication that the head can rationally know more than the body and its responses are therefore more valid than the body's responses.⁵⁷ Brown believes that knowledge as rational is trivial, desexualized knowledge. It is nothing more than rational, sane, cold conceptions of the environment being spliced up and dominated by men. It is, Brown continues, the anal/penile sublimations of the human ego acting as the entire body. The non-bodily ego, Brown insists, is the tool of excrement especially as it is expressed rationally.

The knowledge received of the rational ego is always false to Brown, and "The mystery of meaning remains forever inviolate; there is not literal truth."⁵⁸ Brown states that the trivial "event remains trivial for those who do not have eyes to see"⁵⁹ meaning that an irrational vision is needed to see the truth. Truth is therefore conceived as trivialized by rationality's expanded sense of importance. Thereby, he feels, truth is made as foolish.

⁵⁷Brown, Love's Body, p. 199.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 238.

⁵⁹Ibid.

Brown says that "the original sense is nonsense; and common sense is a cover-up job, repression"⁶⁰ and also says "Truth riding a donkey; as foolishness."⁶¹

It is not rational to think of "infinity in a grain of sand" yet this is precisely the truth which Brown knows to be in creation. He sees that rational knowledge is a lie, the biggest lie. He sees it is the lie that one man has more knowledge, and access to knowledge, than another. This lie implies that mystery is inferior to, or different than, reality. Love's Body is, if nothing else, the discussion of mystery as real, imagination as the only true thought,⁶² and that only through imagination can man be resurrected. Brown does not leave the reader empty-handed, but points to the hands (the body) as holding whatever truth there is. He sees rationality is the head erected-idolatry.⁶³ Culture, he reminds mankind, is gained from the active attempt of the human consciousness to alter reality so as to "regain the lost objects"⁶⁴ and "has the essential quality of being a 'substitute gratification'; a pale imitation of past pleasure substituting for present pleasure, and thus essentially desexualized."⁶⁵ Remembering

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 245.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 245.

⁶²Ibid., p. 226.

⁶³Idem, Life, p. 277.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 163.

⁶⁵Ibid.

that Brown believes fantasy is "a hallucination which cathects the memory of gratification"⁶⁶ one knows that it cannot be used by Brown to satisfy the bodily union with the world. Rational culture thus is seen to be a fantasy world of second best substitutes for reality. In denying rational culture Brown feels that he has not robbed man of anything significant.

Brown's denial of epistemology as an intellectual process is not complete until he shows that the body sexual is denied, or destroyed, by culture. Thereto we find throughout his writing arguments such as what follows:

"Fantasy is also the mechanism whereby the ego constructs the pregenital and genital organizations . . . fantasy has the power to alter the body."⁶⁷ Culture is the sublimation not of the reality of the polymorphously perverse body but of infantile sexuality "organized by fantasies into sexual organizations."⁶⁸

It is apparent from lines of argument such as these that Brown regards rational knowledge as fantasy, as being a reflection of a world which is the sublimation of a sublimation, as being a reflection of an organized and certain world which is obviously not a human and polymorphously perverted world.⁶⁹ True knowledge (as opposed to rationality) is found to be symbolism and not syllogism.

⁶⁶Ibid.,

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 164.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 165.

⁶⁹Meier's study of incubation shows this to be an important aspect of the mythology of medicine. Meier.

"Culture," Brown states, "the products of sublimation is, in Plato's words, 'the imitation of an imitation.'"⁷⁰ Brown feels that he has not invented true knowledge as a construct of his own personal vision but that it has been known by the child. It was the child's entire life and was his primary relation to the environment. In fact, the child was his own environment. This life, which has been known by the child, is seen to be destroyed by fantasied sexual organizations imposed through the fear of separation into an individuated being in an environment which once was the expression of its entire body. Brown argues that this is a false fear, but it is reified and reinforced by the cultural rationality. It is, after all, reasonable to assume that the body is a separate entity in the environment.⁷¹ It is reasonable for the body of men to lay themselves before the heads of men. It is reasonable to strive for the particular skills which will allow one to qualify as a legitimate member of the culture. All of this Brown sees as a reasonable, but unreal, life that men lead under the reign of authority. He blames Freud

⁷⁰Brown, Life, p. 165.

⁷¹Petr Kropotkin discusses the impossibility of distinguishing unique cultural artifacts, especially the ownership of these physical items. Petr Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread (New York: Vanguard Press, 1926), p. 7. Brown does not seem to be familiar with Kropotkin, but that this view here discussed can be extended to the realm of all relationships, including economic ones, is important for the present consideration.

for being equivocal on this point, and does not desire to equivocate.⁷²

Obscene Violence is Authoritarian

Brown finds all authority as repressive, and, conversely, all repression as authoritarian. This begins, he says, with "The primal crime" which "is an infantile fantasy created out of nothing by the infantile ego in order to sequester by repression its own unmanageable vitality (id)."⁷³ Therefore, "The ultimate problem is not guilt, but the incapacity to live."⁷⁴ Rationalism is inadequate to the solution of problems, and it is in "blessed madness" that Brown finds the body alive. Education which does not lead to this madness is unreal to life (a point I shall discuss in Chapter III). Rationality is seen to tell the body that it is unmanageable, and must be sequestered. It is seen to tell the body technologies must exist to complement the body so as to fulfill the capacities the body of men cannot exercise. Brown implies this is a lie, a fantasy world made up of make-believe rulers and denied vitality in the mass of men. It is a violent and deadly world of waste. Here Brown is seen to show violence is excrement. It is seen as the result of the body's most wasteful projects. Therefore violence is also the freedom

⁷²Brown, Life, p. 165.

⁷³Ibid., p. 270.

⁷⁴Ibid.

of "blessed madness." It is the quintessence of the dialectic of Life Against Death which is the opposites united in One.

Brown declares that the body must declare war on violence, must declare the peaceful war. Truth, which must inevitably control violence, is found by Brown to be elusive since "The true psychic reality, which is the unconscious, cannot ever be translated into words."⁷⁵ Rationalism, since it is the attempt to explain existence, is felt to be the power of words over reality, over truth. To Brown truth, we remember, is always carnal. Therefore authority is always the negation of the body towards the head (what Brown describes as the anal/penile displacement upwards to the mouth) and is the desire to put into words what is known only in silence. The battle which Brown sees is the endless struggle of the head to destroy the body by desexualizing the involvement of the body with the cosmos. This is to submit the body of men to the desires of the few. In outlining the development of Homo sapiens Brown attempts to display we are always and everywhere developing the tyrant and Homo economicus is the form of acquiescence. This is seen as the Western dream played out through the bodies of all men. But it is an unreality (what Roszak calls the "Myth of Objective Consciousness")

⁷⁵ Idem, Love's Body, p. 257.

posing as the reality. It is felt as violence to the body, and Brown furthermore feels that only through the fire of the return of the body can this be avoided. In political terms, which Brown astutely avoids, this is an anarchy of the mass of men. In educational terms, which Brown always avoids, this is an anti-intellectualism. In military terms this is the war which Eros itself wages.

In Life Against Death Brown seems to suggest that the forms of acquiescence are part of reality posing as the substance of reality,⁷⁶ but in his later book, Love's Body, he senses that it is an unreality substituting for the reality.⁷⁷ Yet he suggests it is always and everywhere violence: the vitality of life sequestered and the institutions which are the excrement of society demanding the creativity of the people of that society.⁷⁸ At this point Brown seems closest to becoming a visionary. Culture is envisioned a fantasy and what we come to see as reality, our everyday existences, is sleep. The body is still repressed, but not destroyed, and is always tending to become polymorphously perverse. So Brown, believing this,

⁷⁶ Idem, Life, p. 322.

⁷⁷ Idem, Love's Body, p. 266.

⁷⁸ Many of Brown's critics feel that he is implying all institutions are excremental, and this is often their point of contention. Richard Noland, "The Apocalypse of Norman O. Brown," American Scholar, XXXVIII (Winter, 1968), pp. 59-68. Sidney Morgenbesser, "The Vision of Norman O. Brown," review of Life Against Death, by Norman O. Brown, Harper's Magazine, November, 1966, pp. 138-40.

perceives Nirvana is not ecostatic but is constant erotic play sought by the body.⁷⁹

An adjunct to this position, which is significant to those who educate in an institutional setting, seems to be that Brown finds institutions as negating the body's attempts to pleasure. Politically speaking, Brown has accepted Marx's vision that men are everywhere denied common union. It is, accepting Brown's view, unfeasible for an institution to exist which does not do violence to the body's freedom. The institution, still carrying out Brown's implications, is the infantile fantasy dominating the ever-surging adult reality, which we earlier saw Brown felt to be an unconscious strive to polymorphous perversity. That institutions must work to exist does not justify their existence is a conclusion which can be reached if we, as does Brown, feel that they are based upon a fantasied need. Rather, all institutions have become exemplars of a fetish. In Brown's words a fetish is "a non-existent penis."⁸⁰ By producing a commodity, the institution has rationalized its existence, no matter whether that commodity is meant to become obsolescent (as is the case with manufacturers) or meant to suppress vitality (as is the case with schools.) Brown's quote, "Work is . . . a punishment for the Fall,

⁷⁹Brown, Life, p. 104.

⁸⁰Idem, Love's Body, p. 78.

which is falling asleep,"⁸¹ must be seen as referring to all work sensed as work. (In our discussion of Brown's relation to Marcuse, Brown was shown to feel that work need not be repressive, but this is true only if the working individual is so integrated with his activity that he does not label it. Just as a child who would label his activity "play" would not be engaged in that spontaneous activity we call play, so an adult who would label his activity "work" would not be engaged in that spontaneous fulfillment of human needs which we call work.) Institutions, which Brown considers necessarily hierarchical, are shown as the negation of the erotic impulse to play which is to integrate the activity of the organism and its environment.

Violence is Excrement

Brown feels communication is itself educative for he feels that in the true union of man with the universe, and other men, the excrement is burned through and passed away. Brown shows knowledge to be transparent; excrement is inevitably dirty and opaque. Brown implies that truth cannot be institutional, for institutions, which are cultural manifestations, are themselves the very negation of the human body. Warfare is the result of excrement dominating the body which is equated with the strive of the body to create a head. As Brown says, "Violence

⁸¹Ibid.

vindicates."⁸² He feels it is the rational solution to the struggle to separate out what was previously united. In other words, to Brown it is the ultimate fantasy. Brown's vision is again muffled at this point. He feels that warfare is fought according to rules when fought between parts of the whole body, for the body itself is otherwise destroyed. Yet Brown does call for another war, a war with violence of peace. He tells us, "The new warfare is total: it seeks an end to war, an end to brotherhood."⁸³ It seems that what Brown calls forth is either atomic war, which fulfills the criterion of totality, or absolutely peaceful existence. The dualism is sharp, but Brown does not recognize it in his own writings. Simply, the first alternative is not considered. It seems an ultimate contradiction that apocalypse could be the moment of absolute repression, of the head completely dissolving the body and all its possibilities to communicate with the cosmos. (It is interesting to note here that we put faith in leaders as we feel they would carefully reason before "utilizing" an atomic warhead, while of what use it could be evades me.) Brown apparently has not recognized his own pun in the "end to war." The "end to war" is the destruction of all or is it the pacific reconstruction of All in One?

⁸²Ibid., p. 18.

⁸³Ibid., p. 19.

To Brown the pure excrement is violence. Brown calls for the purity of violence in a new peaceful war, which is the "end to war." The anality of war does not seem to be fantasy, yet Brown insists that all sublimation is fantasy. In Brown the body sexualized would be the end to history which he sees is "Time and Space integrated into that point like unity."⁸⁴ Integration is the culmination of an infinite amount of bodiless points (moments) into a body (time). Thus reality can be created from the unreal, which is equivalent to "infinity in a grain of sand" (Brown). His scatology of violence is not formally developed, but his analysis reveals that violence is not real, being the fantasy of the child destroying what is not perceived to be his self to once again regain the unification of the subject and object, to make All in One. Yet we have seen Brown considers all division unreal fantasy, which is not knowing how to live. In other words, Brown believes the body cannot be destroyed but can only be repressed.

How, then, can we qualify the apparent dualism in Brown, violence as constructive, yet everywhere destructive? The process of regaining the body, he reminds us, is necessarily violent in that the parts which dominate the whole will exert their influence tremendously when upheaval

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 262.

begins.⁸⁵ To him, "Both science and poetry ought to be in some condition of permanent revolution."⁸⁶ He feels that the imagination cannot conquer the sublimations of the body without somehow destroying these sublimations. In Brown's writing, violence is, precisely, the tool of the body, rather than the enervating forces of the bureaucratic institutional superstructures which keep men from their violent poems. The body is seen as constantly struggling to be one with itself. Therefore, violence is found to be the excrement of the purely functioning body. It is necessary to have violence. (Thus Brown's call for a "permanent revolution" and not a revolution leading to some absolutely perfect moment.)

Brown's position is clarified if we remember that he feels the body does know how to live, but that civilization thwarts its liveliness at all exits. Violence therefore must occur, but the body should be unified. In other words, he believes there would be no political struggles if the world were sane (unified) and not completely neurotic.⁸⁷ Brown reminds his readers that what is normal is not what is naturally human, but is the body being denied to the head. Brown describes this as authority dominating the masses, the genital organization erected

⁸⁵"Norman Brown's Body," Psychology Today, p. 47.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 47.

⁸⁷Brown, Life, pp. 3-10.

plunging into the depths of excrement, necrophilia without love. (Perhaps a metaphor here would clarify--The body erected is rigor mortis, death over life.)

Brown does call for the peaceful war, and he sees the end to violence as the end of the body struggling. Therefore, the search is for the androgynous body which is found in perfection in excrement. Brown insists that the contradiction must be accepted, the very posing of the situation as dualistic must be denied, "poetry and dialectical thought . . . unite the opposites and transform this world in a deeper sense."⁸⁸ Brown warns us that the logic that tells us the apocalypse could be holocaustic is itself desirous of the holocaust ⁸⁹ and that the human body is violent from the necessity to resurrect, and that human energy unified with nature must be creative.

The "end to violence" is not a pun in Brown's writing. It is not part of his poem but should be considered his poem completely. Brown's view is that the "end to violence" is revolution is an ongoing process of the entire organism and its environment which will lead toward man's unification with God. Education can be perceived as pacific education. In an interview, Brown points

⁸⁸"Norman Brown's Body," Psychology Today, p. 47.

⁸⁹Robert Brustein suggests that when we ask, "What is it?" we have committed ourselves in favor of whatever "it" is. Robert Brustein, Revolution as Theater (New York: Liveright Books, 1971), p. 105.

out his frequent usage of "This is the end."⁹⁰ He is very conscious of the possibilities of "end" as a tool of poetry, and yet he leaves himself open to the charge (which we made) that he is not aware of his own pun. It is rather that he feels the pun has ended and feels the paranomasiac wonderland of imagination is not alive in the pure excrement of violence. There is not a developed eschatology of violence in Brown's work, unless one considers that violence is the excrement of the real body and is discarded as quickly as the body has become erotically alive again⁹¹ (in Bleibtreau's terminology, as soon as the moment sign is again accented.)

Beyond the Warp and Woof
of History

The body alive and functioning is envisioned by Brown as beyond the trials and errors of history. Brown longs for a "post-historical community" which is beyond (or without observance of) the illusion which he feels dominates the present. An importance of this being that it is the visionary spirit of the body gaining its oneness with the cosmos. History is seen as the head exalted over the body, the integrative process disrupted, and the Whole giving up its powers to the part thereby causing the body

⁹⁰"Norman Brown's Body," Psychology Today, p. 47.

⁹¹Brown, "Psychoanalysis and the Classics," Classical Journal, p. 242.

to lose grace. (The first effect of civilized man can be seen to be his awkwardness and clumsiness.) History is found to be the excrement of creativity. It is Euclidean space attempting to dominate time. Brown feels that history is the story of events, but never the truth of events. Brown does not bother to point to the impossibility of describing an event as separate from anything else that was, is, or could be. Instead, as he aphorizes, we find "infinity in a grain of sand." History is exposed as the rational explication of the necessity of rationality. To Brown it is a nightmare of fantasies about fantasies. In other words, he finds that history is the body forgetting how to live and trying to remember through vicarious experience. C. Wright Mills describes the role of celebrities in modern society as individuals who are to keep the body of men from contacting their own sexuality through the provision of a vicarious life, thereby reducing the possibilities of revolution.⁹² In such a way Brown represents historical characters those individuals who keep the body of men from contacting their own present sexuality through provision of a vicarious, therefore fetishistic, life with which the body of men can feel a oneness. The possibility of revolution is reduced accordingly.

⁹²C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 71-93.

Brown's Call for History's End: A Post
Historical--Post Cultural Community

To Brown history is the numerical serialization of events, a giving of individual identity to experience. This process is therefore the very denial of the process of experiencing. Events are perceived as historical as they are separated from their own milieu and are developed as phenomena of the rational, intellectual, world. In a paper presented in 1956 Brown expostulates, "that the essence of our time is the superannuation of political and economic problems as such and their transformation into psychological problems."⁹³ Brown feels that history is ended as man concerns himself with unification, rather than with the world of politics and economics. Brown's post-historical community is beyond rational culture, for the reality is lived rather than sublimated. Brown is certain that as man concerns himself with psychological problems, the political-economic element which forms culture will fade into the background and eventually become non-existent, for it is a fantasy anyway. Correlatively, Brown sees that imagination will be vitiated only as bodily experiences are realized in themselves rather than as they are analyzed and drawn from the environment in which they occur. It is reasonable to want experience definitive and usable for

⁹³Brown, "Psychoanalysis and the Classics," Classical Journal, p. 242.

the prediction of the future, but, Brown points to the words of Mommsen, "you cannot learn to realize the life of the past except by the experience of the present . . ." ⁹⁴ Brown's vision finds that reason is repressive as it demands experience be confined, and that, therefore, history exist. Furthermore, he perceives that history is serious while humanity is playful. The pun and the metaphor destroys history, and poetry sings of the death of history, and the world is anti-historical as it is alive.

Brown says, "I don't want to be a leader." ⁹⁵ He sees history as the erection of the head over the body, and culture as being nothing without history. In this vein, Brown proposes, "The original sin is not sex but progenation." ⁹⁶ He does not descry sexuality as progenation, or fecundity, but as the development of the erogenous primacy over the domineering head of the body. As Marcuse calls for a "genitofugal sexuality" ⁹⁷ (and Brown admits his debt to Marcuse ⁹⁸) Brown desires to show that the flight must be into the entire body. He relegates history to the excrement of the body, which is violence. (It is not a counter example of Brown's position then, that a great share of historical literature is concerned

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 241.

⁹⁵ Norman Brown's Body, " Psychology Today, p. 45.

⁹⁶ Brown, Life, p. 36.

⁹⁷ Marcuse, Eros, p. 190.

⁹⁸ Morgan, p. 105.

with wars and conquests. That history is economic and political in the main seems to vindicate Brown's discussion of the excremental dominance of history, re, "Filthy Luchre," Life Against Death.)

In order to comprehend the plausibility of Brown's post-historical community, we must consider the role of vision in Brown, for it is the visionary experience which he feels is repressed by history and, we must assume, will be loosed in the post-historical community. As he feels time does have a flow, a rhythm, Brown feels "the dynamic of history is the slow return of the repressed."⁹⁹ This is itself made possible by an "irruption of fresh material from deeper strata of the unconscious made possible by a large scale transformation in the structure of the projective system (culture)."¹⁰⁰ What is sublimated is found by Brown to be history as economic and political and it is a dominance of the rational over the body and is itself violence. The transformation in structure will be, therefore, to create a culture which is irrational, which is an anti-culture. For this to be true the anal sublimations must themselves be "thassal" or else the cultural world need not be transformed in order to be made free. Brown does not miss this point. In discussing Protestantism Brown states:

⁹⁹ Brown, Life, p. 230.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

The inquiry confirms the theoretical postulate of a close connection between anal fantasies on the one hand and the death instinct on the other. While orthodox psychoanalysis is accustomed to the notion that the anal organization is also the sadistic organization, its notion that the anal organization is essentially a sexual organization, and the implication that in it Eros somehow takes sadistic forms underestimates the role of the death instinct in the anal organization and in the formation of the sexual organizations altogether. To put it another way, the whole theory of sexual organizations . . . should be revised in terms of the death instinct."¹⁰¹

Brown feels that rational culture is death to the body. Furthermore, he feels the human drama is that excrement is non-creative and that it is destructive. He feels, and his writing is very sensuous at times concerning this subject, that the body constantly fights death and is continuously attempting to revolt against the reality of the projective system (a fantasy) which is culture. Herein, history is sensed as the perpetuation of culture and is the attempt to reify experience apart from the experience itself in order to make it a part of the hierarchy of rational knowledge. Brown knows reification becomes the experience and the true relationship of the body and the environment which was the experience is lost as trivia. The head once more dominates the body. But in repression, Brown reminds us, the repressed is not lost forever but is recurringly attempting liberation. This is explained by Brown in what he calls the "psycho-analytic" fact that man has known his own body and he

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 231.

seeks it again. Brown sees rational repression as murder-- actual carnal murder. As Theodore Roszak says "And if we cannot bring ourselves to murder, then we shall not be able to dissect."¹⁰² Brown sees that visionary experience is lacking in the world and calls forth visions. As he says, "I am trying to make history poetic again."¹⁰³

Brown feels that his attempt depends on the bodily meaning of poetry. He believes that the return of the body is a poetic or visionary experience. "The original meaning of poetry . . . is actual making or doing, a bodily gesture"¹⁰⁴ (Brown). Brown not only feels that this is possible, but that it is imminent. His optimism on this subject is glaringly exciting. He states that "Surely the Second Coming is at hand, when your young men shall see visions."¹⁰⁵ Reading Brown, one feels the human drama is nearing its abolition; that the fire is presently burning through and Eros is about to be released and the body will survive. Brown sees that the expiation of guilt is the present human drama (we attempt to make our excrement creative) and this cannot suffice to bring forth the body. Brown discovers the real drama in the fact that men do not know how to live, proven by their attempts to

¹⁰² Roszak, p. 254.

¹⁰³ "Norman Brown's Body," Psychology Today, p. 47.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

make excrement creative. Brown's work presents the primal crime as culture (the leaving behind of wastes) and as history (the study and glorification of these wastes).

Summary Without Synopsis

In Education and Existentialism Van Cleve Morris suggests that a person has an existential awakening to his personal responsibility for action. Not regarding the difficulties Brown would find with the term "person," Brown would suggest that at this stage the body no longer sees play as an end which gives life intrinsic value but, using his words, "it represents a definitive victory for the aggressive component over the love component."¹⁰⁶ The body, Brown points out, is caught in its own ambivalence between play and control which is induced and heightened by the specter of separation so that, as Brown relates, "the sexual organizations appear to be constructed by anxiety, by the flight from death and the wish to die; the distribution of libido in a life not at war with death is polymorphous perversity."¹⁰⁷ The polymorphously perverse body is ingenuous and furthermore is the reduction of cultural anxiety. If Brown is taken seriously the human drama is ended by the body no longer struggling with the

¹⁰⁶Brown, Life, p. 121.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 116.

head which occurs when the psyche is distributed to the entire body rather than the cultured genital/anal sexual organizations. Therefore the post-cultural body is that of play and liveliness. Brown quotes Brinton with approval "'Boehme answers by calling the perfect state "play." In "play" life expresses itself in its fulness'"¹⁰⁸

As the body regresses to anality, play becomes control and reason comes to dominate sexuality. The true human drama, as presented by Brown, is irrational, poetic, and not the present ratiocinations of guilt expressed in social welfare programs and benign institutionalization of needs (distributions) which we presently find. It is in search of a physically apparent reification of some form of progress that Brown sees the guilty head peregrinating. And this is also seen as precisely the cause of our inability to live. Brown understands that we have sought too much to deny the life within us and attempt too much to make all life dead. Present day man, Mr. Antrobus, to be sure, searches for a "solution" which indicates some sort of dissection of the whole has been perpetrated. Brown witnesses man's development of fantastic and complex structures to handle what are the most human situations. Brown points to the irrational as the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 33.

perspective which is the most human, and rational culture as death itself. Brown will not accept education as the drive for enculturation, for culture is seen to be the death of any lively world whatsoever. The "end to violence" is no pun to Brown, but is the apocalypse of all men which is their divinity. Brown finds the search for God, the strive for grace, is the human story and as such is post-historical.

whi

sin

con

sig

bee

dis

it

des

zat

tha

edu

whi

Bro

fai

ati

CHAPTER III

EROS AS EDUCATION

Introduction

Since Brown considers the unified body, the body which is one with the cosmos, as the healthy body, and since Brown's conception of disease as cultural has been considered, the theorization of unification by Brown is significant for present consideration. The pathology has been presented, and the rectification of the diagnosed disease is imminent. The uniqueness of the cure is that it is the education of the diseased element. Brown's description of the anal characteristics of present civilization, "'The Disease Called Man,'" leads one to recognize that the cure for the disease is considered in itself educative. It is the formation of a new man, a renaissance which goes beyond mere rational knowledge to action. If Brown is correct assuming man is a disease of his own failure to live, then education must be vivifying, erotic.

John Dewey conceived of education as an enculturation, as the growth of immature beings into the knowledge

and customs of society.¹ But Brown proposes that Dewey's view is merely an enhancement of man's sickness, that it is in the "immature" and undiseased that we can and must learn to find life. Dewey called for a "progressive" form of education and, in this chapter, I hope to show that Brown's position calls for education to be an erotic recorporealization of the body in a dialectic process which will lead to a community beyond culture.

"The learning is to be unlearned; the simplicity to be acquired"² Brown aphorizes. He feels we are constantly losing something, we are constantly failing to live, as we are enculturated, instrumentalized. Brown does not discuss education as such in his writing, but it is my thesis that in Brown education is erotic rather than definitional or taboo functioning. If we talk about education being expansive, then we must, Brown enjoins us, be prepared to carry this out to the limits. We must, his hypothetical enjoiner continues, be prepared to understand education as therapeutic to the "'Disease Called Man.'" "As long as man is caught within boundaries he will never be free, or truly educated" seems to be the maxim derived from Brown's position.

¹John Dewey, Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education (New York: MacMillan Company, The Free Press, 1916), p. 3.

²Brown, Love's Body, p. 236.

The scope of the following survey is Brown's writing which conveys the meaning behind the phrase (that I have coined) "Education as Eros." Nowhere in his writings has Brown specifically delineated the parameters of the term "education" and I hope to show this is directly related to the fact that in Brown's writing "education" has no boundaries. In other words, I hope to show that to Brown it is precisely the conceptualization of "education" as a term that destroys the possibility of education.

Art and Psychoanalysis

Brown finds all men Adams in Paradise. The Garden is Delightful and man is a lover, a furious tempestuous lover wanting nothing (for he is all) feeling pain in his pleasure and his pleasure's pain.³ The body of men is negated in history (Brown's position as earlier discussed) since history is the manifestation of our decorporealized bodies. Education thus must be considered re-education. Love is a return to love. (It is not merely a memory of love which is the putrification of the aspects of love without the attendant furies of love.) And dialectic is a unifying of opposites. The matter of machines is instrumentality and Brown points out that "Personality is not innate, but acquired. Like a mask it is a thing, a

³Idem, "Homage," Caterpillar, p. 101.

fetish, a fetishistic object or commodity."⁴ Brown's stand is that revitalization cannot be found in the development of an individual personality which fits into the cultural structure for that is "a mask," a mechanical acting out of a role which is not one's own. "Dehumanization" is the term Brown finds useful. Brown is pointing to man qua more than man. The assumption is that man is a phenomenon unique and at one with the rhythm of life. (It is felt that life has a current which is erotic and lived in infancy and, therefore, all events are recurrences.) As Brown says, "Real history is the history of renewals."⁵

"Heroic individualism" becomes in Brown's work the identification with the past as a "life destiny." Brown states that "The historical personage offers a continuous performance and achieves a continuous existence . . ."⁶ rather than being a part of the rhythmical cycle. Brown asserts that personality is a technological repression and is a placement of a part of life as the whole of life.⁷

⁴Idem, Love's Body, p. 94.

⁵Ibid., p. 203.

⁶Ibid., p. 100.

⁷Brown talks of the plays of the Greeks as childish if compared to the nature and "political" actions of the Romans. The Romans are seen as making the tragedy a "life destiny" rather than the "cyclical recurrence of a temporary role." Love's Body, p. 100.

Brown's conception of life is that life is no concept at all; rather that humans are to develop from the personal to the supra-personal. (Using Brown, we must consider man is not in search of self-definition as most group therapists claim,) Believing that in the cycles of natural recurrence ("periodicity") we find life, Brown states that we will find:

the whole story from Genesis to Apocalypse in any event; in any metamorphosis. Therefore it is important to keep changing the subject. . . . It is important to keep changing our mind.⁸

Brown is seen to accept as fact that we are preceded by our own essence. This forces us to avoid, if at all possible (which it always is), the acquisition of personality. Brown's description of person is the Person as Instrument, the Person as dehumanized man. (What Paul Goodman is wont to call personnel.)

Yet, if we follow Brown, if this constant reorganization of mind and avoidance of history (which is the constant change of subject) is to occur consciously, it will apparently be fruitless for it is man's consciousness that will be directing him and Brown has been shown to feel that this is a diseased "second best substitute" for the real man. The "ingenuous" existence of which Brown speaks must be presumptionless, or, using a

⁸Ibid., p. 94.

Phenomenologist's term, "presuppositionless." Brown calls for men to realize their oneness with the universe in their essential energy, which is, as he says,

a mode of consciousness that can be called, although the term causes fresh difficulties, the dialectical imagination. By "dialectical" I mean an activity of consciousness struggling to circumvent the limitations imposed by the formal-logical law of contradiction.⁹

This is the erotic sensibility which Brown is convinced all men possess already for "if beyond labor at the end of history there is love, love must have always been there from the beginning of history and it must have been the hidden force supplying the energy devoted to labor and to making history."¹⁰

Brown drives to find All in One in that all men "arrive at the idea that life and death are in some sort of unity at the organic level, that at the human level they are separated into conflicting opposites."¹¹ It is on the organic level that Brown discovers man unrepressed, and it is this repressed animal which has lost its organismic unity with the world which develops the "formal-logical law of contradictions" and denies the love which is the source of his power and unity with the cosmos. To Brown, we live a second-best substitute for our own potentialities. Brown quotes Blake, "'Energy is the only

⁹Brown, Life, pp. 318-19.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 17.

¹¹Ibid., p. 101.

life . . .'"¹² We are beyond the materialistic confines of reasonable assumptions at this stage of Brown, and into the mystical world of a new mode of consciousness, new to the body of men. (Brown does write about men who have gained this naive mode of consciousness throughout his work, especially in Life Against Death.)¹³

The convergence of all men in Energy is an important theme in Brown. ("Exuberance is Beauty" is another Blake phrase Brown uses fondly.) He poeticizes:

My utopia is
 an environment that works so well
 that we can run wild in it
 anarchy in an environment that works¹⁴

This erotic sensibility is not effected subconsciously for he feels "psychoanalysis tries to reach the unconscious by extending the conscious, art represents an irruption from the unconscious into the conscious."¹⁵ He finds that under present conditions men are not exuberant for "Our normal orderly responsible selves, dominated by the reality-principle, are sustained by a constant expenditure in psychic energy devoted to the maintenance of the repression of our fundamental desires."¹⁶ Since consciousness is dominated by repressive

¹²Ibid., p. 312. ¹³Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁴Idem, "Politics," Caterpillar Anthology, p. 13.

¹⁵Brown, Life, p. 62.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 63.

energy, the psychoanalytical vision of man is to be considered, in Brown's terms, as the method to tap the unconscious to allow an artistic "irruption" to occur thereby changing that very consciousness. His terminology in this realm is confusing, but only because he is not speaking from the "normal orderly responsible" point of view. In Love's Body he finds that "The true psychic reality, which is the unconscious, cannot ever be put into words . . . therein, precisely, lies the distinction between unconscious and pre-conscious."¹⁷

The physical manipulation of material to provide the fulfillment of certain basic needs will fail, Brown warns, as long as man negates his very needs in a mode of consciousness which denies the energy loosed by the artistic expression. He feels:

Art as pleasure, art as play, art as the recovery of childhood, art as making conscious the unconscious, art as a mode of instinctual liberation, art as the fellowship of men struggling for instinctual liberation. These ideas plainly fit into the system of psychoanalysis.¹⁸

The call is plainly for man to go beyond his present diseased self into a transcendent self, one which is gained through an acceptance of the loss of reality. Since Brown feels "Imagination is a better artist than

¹⁷ Idem, Love's Body, p. 257.

¹⁸ Idem, Life, pp. 65-66.

imitation . . ."¹⁹ we can readily observe that the energy drawing the unconscious into consciousness is imagination.

At the organic level, Brown discovers an ineffable unity and the "dialectical" of which he speaks "would be the struggle of the mind to circumvent repression and make the unconscious conscious."²⁰ Therefore, imagination itself is placed upon an organic level and is the very essence of the resolution of any antinomy between psychoanalysis and art. That education, if it is at all critical, is therapeutic in Brown's thought will be clear if we consider that he feels psychoanalytic thinking

has a double relation to the dialectical imagination. It is, on the one hand (actually or potentially) a mode of dialectical consciousness; on the other hand, it contains, or ought to contain, a theory about the nature of the dialectical imagination.²¹

(We have just discussed what parameters Brown feels this theory takes.) In other words, education is bimodal, a process/product which is life/death rather than the oppositions of life and death. It is an effort to consciously create a being which is constantly Becoming. Which is, in other words, consciously escaping consciousness.

¹⁹Idem, Love's Body, p. 262.

²⁰Idem, Life, p. 321.

²¹Ibid., p. 319.

Obliteration of Ideology

Brown's educational theory is implicit in his "mystic" dialectic conception of consciousness. Education is seen to be the development of a new sensibility which is a higher form of consciousness which is, precisely, consciousness turned in on itself. Brown's search for the erotic polymorphous perversity of the body is brought through reality only by an artistic irruption of unconscious into consciousness. The educative process is therefore the avoidance of the strangling effects of enculturation (which bring out the "'Disease Called Man'"). Education is most appropriately the process which has its end in its own abolition for it is a turning of the consciousness towards the truth which is nothing more than that consciousness pure and simple. Brown finds that at this point man has discovered his own divinity which is the sharing of this mode of consciousness with all mankind.²² Brown poeticizes this point:

"The real thing is perishing
long drawn-out dying"²³
"Must culture be corrupt?
Must civilization be vulgarity?
Not so in ancient time . . ."²⁴

It is that we have known man before as incorrupt, and erotic, and we again can and must know him so. Brown's

²²Idem, Love's Body, pp. 230-31.

²³Idem, "Homage," *Caterpillar*, p. 97.

²⁴Ibid., p. 95.

poem is that the world is not excrement, but that the cultural configurations are. Man can be purified by turning his awareness in on himself to discover his essential Oneness with the cosmos, with all that exists or could exist.

Brown emphasizes that by educating a man to understand nothing he will discover everything. We all have within us the experience of our own bodies and the matter/process of again finding this is the conception of education in Brown. Thwarting the "polymorphous perversity" of playful youth towards more "constructive" or useful goals has no place in Brown's educational fund.

Ideology is insanity in Brown's mysticism for ideology is seen as the imposition of part of reality (at best) as the whole of reality upon a body which is happy and playful. Ideology which is the perpetuation of negation, Brown says, is "the basic mechanism for producing this desexualization of life, this holding of life at a distance . . ."²⁵ Our vulgar behavior is chastised by Brown. He sees that when we perpetuate a certain ideology what we are in effect doing is negating the very possibilities which life could find in playful activity. Play is shown as the very denial of the failures which are our lives, and the training in ideology is shown as destructive to the player himself.

²⁵Idem, Life, p. 172.

In a conversation with Warren Bennis in Psychology Today Brown uses himself to example his belief that the tendency of ideology is to ruin the need for truth (which is polymorphous). Life Against Death is a book written of personality, published by an expert in history describing the effects of reason upon history, but always in a reasonable self-reliant manner. Brown collected a following and, as he relates to Bennis, he felt:

. . . in writing Love's Body some kind of obligation to undo what I had done in Life Against Death. I wanted to release any followers I had acquired or at least to confuse them. . . . I don't want to be a leader.²⁶

The ideology of Life Against Death had to be "torpedoed" by Brown, for he felt that he had imposed his own section of reality upon those who became his followers and that they should become confused so each might again play with himself in order to find his poem, rather than accepting the role of follower.

Education as Therapy

Brown's thought becomes flesh as it progresses towards a definitive statement of the role of education in the life of technologically dominated societies. Already it has been seen that the strive is towards a higher form of consciousness or towards a state of perfection, yet the way there is down through one's own mode of consciousness into the true essence of one's own being. It

²⁶"Norman Brown's Body," Psychology Today, p. 45.

was then I hypothesized that this produces a theory of education as a form of therapy with its own abolition as its end. The drama is, therefore, educational and we are faced at this stage of the paper with the fact that men simply do not live their own drama, but rather satisfy themselves vicariously and, even more often, not at all. Brown's approach to this problem has been to consistently reproach the role of reason as a guide to action within (what I term) the human drama. Life becomes a theater and all action is unreal as we place it in the realm of the social masses, into the hands of sociologists, neo-revisionist psychiatrists, public servants, or any other conceivable authority. Brown reminds the readers that "Revolution is Recurrent"²⁷ and that it is constantly within the reality of each man.

Brown sincerely feels that when we place the human at the hand of reason, which Brown believes can only be accomplished through authoritarian and not truly voluntary arrangements, we have interfered with the human's potential to act. Brown finds that men become dissociated from their bodies as they are forced to conceive of ideas as somehow distinct from corporealization. In Brown the body is the center of all action, and the poem is that which makes the word and deed one. Therefore, Brown's thought relevant to education comes to be flesh, because Brown is

²⁷Brown, "Reply to Marcuse," Commentary, p. 83.

constantly attempting to live the poem he calls forth.

(In his interview with Bennis, Brown becomes very defensive when Bennis suggests Brown might be a hypocrite in his life style.²⁸) Education is aphorism in Brown, it is word and deed as one.

Contending as he does that the life of the human is a rhythmic extension of the cosmos, Brown presents an unreasonable tenet as education. "In psychotherapy," Brown says, "nothing happens but an exchange of words."²⁹ But earlier he had emphasized,

Get the nothingness back into words. The aim is words with nothing to them; words that point beyond themselves rather than to themselves; transparencies, empty words.³⁰

We are to think that psychotherapy (which is a term, along with art, connoting "education") is nothing. Therefore, it is not the relationship of a master and pupil but a stream of consciousness among men aiming to "a play of light, an irridescence, in the empty air."³¹ Education is playful, irrational, behavior within Brown's contexts.

Reading Brown we must assume alienation is bodily. That is, alienation is conceived as the separation of the mind of man from his body, and is man's lack of consciousness of that body. Brown's writing on this subject

²⁸"Norman Brown's Body," Psychology Today, p. 46.

²⁹Brown, Love's Body, p. 263.

³⁰Ibid., p. 259.

³¹Ibid.

is, as one would expect, irrational (he is coming to be what he says):

Empty words; dissolve the solid meanings . . . consciousness penetrates the darkness; consciousness is an opening or void. . . . Admit the void; accept loss forever. . . . To see three truths with the same mind: things are real, unreal, and neither real nor unreal.³²

Psychotherapy (education) is the emptying of words, but also the search for the empty words. This is distinguished from schizophrenia only by the fact that one can accept the loss of the objectification of words.³³ To Brown, education is the meaning when we do not expect to find meaning and before we attempt to explain the meaning.³⁴ Education must become spontaneous for it is only in spontaneity that nothing is meant. Brown states " . . . there is no literal truth"³⁵ and assumes that when words have become empty we have attained a "primordial language" which is the acceptance of our own bodies as complete.

Consequently, Brown's theory of psychotherapy (education) can be seen as the process of killing what we commonly know as man and the resurrection of what he once was. This is the search for that pearl inside each man

³²Ibid., pp. 260-61. ³³Ibid., p. 260.

³⁴John Senior speaks of "moments" of occultism which are mysterious, but similar in all occultists' experiences. Senior, p. xiii.

³⁵Brown, Love's Body, p. 238.

which is his connection with all men. Educational theory which purports in any way to support the dominance of one man over another leads away from what Brown conceives psychotherapeutic. Brown's educational theory becomes the "negation of negation." In other words, Brown has denied the true usefulness of reason to unveil the mysteries. It is within these occultisms themselves that education must occur. Education is mysterious and Brown accepts that it can only be so:

The Western consciousness has always asked for freedom; the human mind was born to be free, but everywhere it is in chains, and now at the end of its tether. It will take a miracle to free the human mind; because the chains are magical in the first place. We are in bondage to authority outside ourselves . . .³⁶

It is clear now that Brown conceives all authority as mysterious, resting upon the bondage of the body of men. Envisioning that the body of man is kept away from the spirit of man by the bondage of Western consciousness (rationality) Brown knows it is only a mysterious process which will free men of these magical bonds.

Education transmogrifies unto freedom, and this is spontaneous interaction of man and his cosmic environment.

Even books themselves Brown discerns as capable of engendering the bondage of man to reason, compelling

³⁶Idem, "Apocalypse," Harper's, p. 49.

"us to see with the eyes of the dead, with dead eyes."³⁷

Alienation is not a matter of sociological displacement of guilt, but is a failure to live, a bondage. Education is seen by Brown, as I postulated earlier, as the negative process of unencumbering man of his cultural configurations which block him from his own true reality.³⁸

Brown's Theory of Dream

Brown's body mysticism is opposed to "Apollonian or sublimation mysticism" and his educational applicability will at once be conceived "impractical" or "utopian." Yet precisely in his consideration of irrational dialectics as educative lays the force of Brown's position. He is accused by many critics for denying reality and inserting nothing, for being a nihilist.³⁹ Yet it is precisely this type of thinking on the critics' parts which Brown sees as the sickness of our society.⁴⁰ He finds that we too often place "fantasies" in place of reality, which is

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸A Zen poem, with drawing, is brought to mind here-
 "Cucumber
 Unaccountably
 Cucumbering"

Paul Reys, "Cucumber," in The World of Zen, ed. by Nancy Wilson Ross (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1960), p. 261.

³⁹Noland, pp. 59-68. Also, Herbert Marcuse, "Love Mystified: A Critique of Norman O. Brown," review of Love's Body, by Norman O. Brown, Commentary, XLIII (February, 1967), 71-75.

⁴⁰"Norman Brown's Body," Psychology Today, p. 46.

imaginative, creative. He delegates reality to the human spirit precisely in its creative capacity, which is its capacity to overcome boundaries. In fact, we have now to consider the position Brown takes concerning the substitution of "fantasies" for realities of the imagination in order to fully appreciate the dialectic process of education he promotes.

As he says, "The primary issue is in the imagination. Polymorphous perversity turns out to be a poetical rather than a literal thing."⁴¹ It is not in the physical, literal, world Brown finds reality. As Richard Noland, a critic, points out, Brown is attacking literalisms of all kinds.⁴² We are in a society, Brown warns, in which tendencies for "abstraction from the reality of the whole body and substitution for the whole reality are inherent . . ."⁴³ Brown does see reality as bodily and culture as decorporealization. It is only by going beyond culture, Brown declares, that we can hope to discover the fact that, as Alan Watts says, "the world outside your skin is as much yourself as the world inside."⁴⁴ We are

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Richard Noland, "Norman O. Brown and the Future of Man," Massachusetts Review, X (Summer, 1969), 541.

⁴³Brown, Life, p. 236.

⁴⁴Alan Watts, The Book on the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are (New York: MacMillan Company, Collier Books, 1966), p. 124.

not, then, speaking from the midst of a real world when we attack him on the grounds of impracticability. He draws out the distinction more clearly,

A social order based on the reality-principle, a social order which draws a distinction between wish and deed, between criminal and righteous, is still a kingdom of darkness. It is only as long as a distinction is made between the real and imaginary that real murders are worth committing.⁴⁵

Brown's reply to the critics conjecturally would be that they have attacked him from within "the kingdom of darkness" and are tightly bound there. This is a massive dose to take, but we must realize that Brown perceives the only "Reality is not things (dead matter or heavy stuff) in simple location. Reality is energy, or instinct; Eros and Thanatos . . ."⁴⁶ There is then, in Brown, a radical split with his major critics, and there is seen a sickness as involved in the considerations of fantasies as reality.

"The hidden psychic reality contained in the unconscious," Brown points out, "does not consist of fantasies, but of action at a distance, psychic streams, projects, in a direction: germs of movement, seeds of living thought."⁴⁷ Imagination is action itself, and, Brown

⁴⁵Brown, Love's Body, p. 152.

⁴⁶"Simple location" is a phrase taken from the work of A. N. Whitehead. N. O. Brown, Love's Body, p. 155.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 157.

continues, "In the deepest level of the unconscious we find not fantasies . . ." ⁴⁸ Brown envisions that the dream is based on "fission, duplication" and is not an acceptable base of that poetry which is word and deed as one.

Symbol as Reality

(Brown's Presentation of Language as Analysis versus Language as Freedom)

Since Brown believes "the reality disclosed by the imagination is not the literal but the symbolical or mystical body" ⁴⁹ a discussion of Brown's usage of symbols is imperative. The most obvious importance of the symbol is its relationship to language, and Brown is not remiss in presenting a theory of symbolical language.

That we recognize "that everything is symbolic" ⁵⁰ is essential to our development towards that new sensibility for which Brown searches. That education is, under Brown's handling of symbolism, the envelopment of the mind/body of man in mystery, rather than intellectual clarification, is important to comprehend. The connection of Brown's elucidation of this point and the meaning of education become integrally wrapped up in the theory of symbols which he presents. It is through a discussion of symbolism in Brown that I hope to clarify his truly radical break with even the rational definition of education.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 158.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 226.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 191.

The Pun

The pun is language producing flesh. Brown feels that we must construct a Dionysian ego which is distinguished as freed of "the boundary of repression separating the dream from instinctual reality"⁵¹ which is the Apollonian displacement of a part to control the whole, or abstraction.⁵² The pun makes havoc with formal logic for the pun has meaning in duplication and cannot be accurately defined. Brown projects, "Wisdom is wit; in play, not in work; in freedom not in necessity. A vast pun, as in dreams . . ."⁵³ Brown continues his argument that literature is the real lie, "To teach is not to tell, is not-to-tell."⁵⁴ Puns play and the "meaning is in the play"⁵⁵ so that:

meaning is a continuous creation, out of nothing and returning to nothingness. If it is not evanescent it is not alive. Everything is symbolic, is transitory; is unstable.⁵⁶

The pun is seminal to symbolism. It is the union of meanings which is the conception of no meaning. Through this position Brown has shown the pun to be revolutionary, to be that which is the creation of a new sensibility and simultaneously that sensibility in action.

⁵¹Idem, Life, p. 174.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Idem, Love's Body, p. 245.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 246.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 247.

Brown's work itself is riddled with puns (Love's Body) especially the work after Life Against Death, though his study of Hermes the Thief can be perceived as an attempt to explain the puns of meanings attributed to Hermes, and especially of the fantastic pun of Hermes as Apollo.⁵⁷ Yet this discussion has shown that the pun is only a conception of symbolism.

Metaphor

Brown feels that "The thing to be abolished is literalism . . . Truth is always in poetic form; not literal but symbolic hiding, or veiled . . ." ⁵⁸ In poetry the "antinomy of economics and love, work and play," ⁵⁹ which Brown suggests as the present human situation, is overcome.

The poet is he who finds the "worlds of beauty" and is not confined to the dualisms of love and hate, male and female, or even life and death. In this sense metaphor is metamorphosis. Brown states that:

The newness is the metaphor, or nonsense, saying one thing and meaning another. It is the legal fiction, which liberates the letter of the law and the tyranny of literal meaning.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Idem, Hermes the Thief (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1947).

⁵⁸ Idem, "Reply to Marcuse," Commentary, p. 83.

⁵⁹ Idem, Life, p. 57.

⁶⁰ Idem, Love's Body, p. 248.

To Brown the poet is more than a mere writer, for it is he who has through metaphor made knowledge carnal by "a copulation of subject and object, making these two one."⁶¹

Symbolism

In order to comprehend the power Brown posits which makes language carnal we need from Brown an explanation of the goal of language itself. Symbols, as puns and metaphors, are expressed poetically only in the exaggerations of aphorisms. Yet Brown sees this as also the very life of poetry:

A subterranean passage between mind and body underlies all analogy; no word is metaphysical without first being physical; and the body that is the measure of all things is sexual. All metaphors are sexual; a penis in every convex object and a vagina in every concave one.⁶²

(Sexual here is erotic and not genital.) Symbolism is shown to be Eros itself, and speech is polymorphous sexuality. Brown allows that the meaning is that "In puns, two words get on top of each other and become sexual; in metaphors two become one."⁶³ Words themselves, thoughts, Brown believes, are carnal. Language has as its goal, therefore, love which is dialectics. Brown postulates that to teach, to educate, becomes the power to make conscious our unconscious knowledge, to bring manifest the erotic sense of

⁶¹Ibid., p. 249.

⁶²Ibid., p. 250.

⁶³Ibid., p. 252.

reality.⁶⁴ Life itself is considered symbolic, and Brown believes that "the sexual organizations (all of them) are metaphors; a play or interplay of organs (Ferenczi's amphimixis) a play upon meaning; a play upon words."⁶⁵ But we are warned by Brown, "The meaning is not in the words but between the words, in the silence; forever beyond the reach, the rape, of literal-minded explication; forever inviolate, forever new . . ."⁶⁶ If the meaning of symbolism is not logical, or literal, then poetry must have its meaning in silence. Symbolism must be silence and also sexual, to which Brown agrees: "To recover the world of sentence, of symbolism, is to recover the human body."⁶⁷ But in order to recover the human body Brown feels we must be made:

conscious of our unconscious participation in the creation of the phenomenal world. . . . To become conscious of our participation in the creation of the phenomenal world is to pass from passive experience, perception as impressions on a passive mind, to conscious creation, and creative freedom.⁶⁸

Brown's theory of symbolism leads directly to his postulation of the divinity of humanity. If the word is sexual,

⁶⁴In another light, Brown states, "No place needs the transforming spirit of play more than the University . . ." Brown, "Politics," Caterpillar Anthology, p. 20.

⁶⁵Idem, Love's Body, p. 265.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 264.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 265.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 255.

and all men share the word, then all men are engaged in intercourse and the phenomenal world that results is the creation of all men.

Man as God and yet not conscious of his own divinity seems to be presented by Brown. But Brown finds this occurs because man is himself a contradiction, an animal which is unique because it is repressed. The problem of mankind is not the inability to conquer the political-economic bounds of reality, but to discover and exist in reality itself. Brown finds mankind entrapped in a "kingdom of darkness" which is the excremental waste of true reality which all men know at all times. Creativity is impossible in an atmosphere of excremental waste. The contradiction must be accepted that education is unlearning, or as Brown says "Things hidden from the wise and revealed to the babes. The learning to be unlearned; the simplicity to be acquired."⁶⁹ In Brown the reality principle must be abolished. According to Brown we must "Overthrow the importance principle; turn it upside down. Put down the mighty from their seats, and exalt them of low degree, and every throne a toilet seat and ever toilet seat a throne. Psychoanalysis, the visionary sansculottism. The distinction between the sublime and the vulgar is abolished; sublimation is swallowed up in symbolism. As above, so below; go high-low every time. The way up is

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 236.

the way down; the penis a symbolic head, and vice versa."⁷⁰ Each man must unlearn the wisdom of his body. As Brown continues, "Truth comes empty-handed; in its poverty is its strength."⁷¹ Education in Brown becomes reversal. It is the renunciation of the power principle of reality in favor of polymorphous perversity ("Symbolism is polymorphous perversity," Love's Body, page 250.)

The serious business of education becomes play. Brown wants to throw everything "Upside down." We are all divine,⁷² Brown tells us, and our play is itself truth. What we must do is accept the contradiction that we are in "The permanent revolution, the perpetual reformation."⁷³ We must no longer be fooled by appearances, but realize that "All power is an imposter, a paper tiger, or idol; it is burnt up the moment men cease to behold it."⁷⁴ We must become as dead men to the world to become alive to ourselves. In Brown's accounting all men are contradictions and are therefore unpredictable, and their play is their very reality as humans. The child knows more of reality,

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 236-37.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 237.

⁷²This position taken by Brown is occultist according to John Senior. Senior states occultists tend to believe that "Since man is the prototype, man is capable of realizing in himself all things. He is capable of becoming God because he is God without 'realizing' it." Senior, p. 36.

⁷³Brown, Love's Body, p. 235.

⁷⁴Ibid.

according to Brown, than does the adult, for the child plays with his world.

We are irrational man. Irrationality does not serve a function in Brown for it is the very denial of functionality.⁷⁵ Brown envisions education as an ephemeral, playful activity which is not bound by the logic of words and the boundaries of the physical world. Brown believes man creates that world and must become conscious of his creative, divine, powers. Brown says, "Truth will not stand or stay or keep; it is nothing to be had or hoarded or passed from hand to hand; it is no commodity or store of past labor; it is either new or not at all."⁷⁶

It is obvious that education, as conceived in the past, is completely reversed if Brown's tenets are accepted. Instead of the transference of the wisdom of the ages to the young, education becomes the transference of the wisdom (vision) of the young to the aged. Instead of somehow being a stabilizing influence on the culture, education becomes, in Brown's hands, the "permanent revolution." Instead of connotative/denotative form of words being the medium of education, aphorism becomes the form. "Words used not to interpret the world but to change it; not to

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 234.

⁷⁶Ibid.

advertise this world but to find another."⁷⁷ Furthermore,

Brown:

Aphorism is instant dialectic
 The instantaneous flip instead of the elaborate
 system
 only so do we have a form of intellect that is as
 easy
 that any child could do it,⁷⁸
 or, only a child can do it

Brown believes:

the point (of education) is first of all to find again
 the mysteries. By which I do not mean simply the
 sense of wonder, the sense of wonder which is indeed
 the source of all true philosophy, by mystery I mean
 secret and occult; therefore unpublishable.⁷⁹

(Parenthetical phrase mine.) The form of education is
 thus spontaneity, and the present style of education we
 know in the world is repressive, even if based upon volun-
 tarism.⁸⁰ Students must be seen as those who are sick and
 need help, the diseased who have caught the neurosis of
 all mankind. Brown's goal of education is therapy and not
 knowledge transfer of any sort. Schools become places of
 spontaneous interaction. Knowledge not put into words,
 which Brown's fiat, makes teaching become nothing. Brown
 cannot be applied adequately on a practical level because
 practical talk is prosaic and he speaks in aphorisms.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Idem, "Politics," Caterpillar Anthology, p. 18.

⁷⁹ Idem, "Apocalypse," Harper's, pp. 47-48. (Paren-
 thetical phrase mine.)

⁸⁰ Idem, "Politics," Caterpillar Anthology, p. 20.

Education is dialectics, reversal, love to Brown and not anything less than a loving, erotic, atmosphere will serve for education (therapy) to occur. When it does happen, it will be unpublishable; we will not be able to test it in any manner; we will not be able to obtain any knowledgeable results. Truth is always new, Brown prophesizes, and it cannot be judged by old standards. Mysterious knowledge, and here Brown is referring to occultism, must be revered for what it is if man is to come to a communion with the world in which he lives.

Education as an End to History

Brown, in Love's Body, is fond of equations. Education is Eros is Life is Becoming children is appropriate to both his style and his philosophy. If this is so, then Brown's position leads us to perceive education as the abolition of history.

Children are also unable to make the distinction fundamental for culture, the reality principle, and the serious business of life, between higher and lower functions and parts of the body. . . . Neurotic symptoms, with their fixation on perversions and obscenities demonstrate the refusal of the unconscious essence of our being to acquiesce in the dualism of flesh and spirit, higher and lower.⁸¹

Brown continues, "It is the same thing if we say that play is the erotic mode of activity . . . the ultimate essence

⁸¹Idem, Life, pp. 31-32.

of our being is erotic and demands activity according to the pleasure principle."⁸²

Brown knows playful activity is, as Huizinga points out, "'purposeless yet in some sense meaningful.'"⁸³ It is a "realistic necessity" to reorganize and transform "human society and human nature in the spirit of play."⁸⁴ Education is the denial of history and culture for Brown, since culture is that which represses play.

Brown points out, in delineating play as an educative process of infantile sexuality, that "play is that activity which, in the delight of life, unites man with the objects of his love . . ."⁸⁵ He feels possibilities of man are fully explored only in playful activity, and we must remember that Brown discovers man is a constantly creative animal which is presently defined only by its repressions. Education is therefore recognition of the body as the human being, and is not what Brown coins that "insane delusion" begun by Plato and Descartes, followed by secular humanists, "that the true essence of man lies in disembodied mental activity."⁸⁶ What is needed is "a

⁸²Ibid., p. 33.

⁸³Guardini as quoted in J. Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture (New York: Roy, 1950), p. 19 as quoted in Brown, Life, p. 32.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 34.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 33.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 34.

solution to the problem of repression . . . to change the human body so it can become for the first time an organism, the resurrection of the body."⁸⁷ Furthermore, Brown believes that "The resurrection of the body is a social project facing mankind as a whole . . ."⁸⁸ It is important to Brown that we emphasize the bodily sexuality of our existence, and come to the "dialectical" (or visionary) experience that there is no dualism between the mind and body. To Brown we must live this life. Brown berates the secular humanists for not really believing in the search for the end to this dualism because they lived practically committed to the life of the mind.⁸⁹

Brown insists that truth is unpublishable and that all men must live truth, must embody truth, for it to be meaningful. Men must play, must engage in spontaneous, bodily satisfying activity in order to become full as men. But this is purposeless activity in which culture is abolished to the tune of the constantly new song. It is Love's Body made manifest that is the goal of this social project. Brown states,

Repression and the repetition-compulsion generate historical time. . . . And conversely life not repressed, life below man and human life if repression were overcome, is not in historical time.⁹⁰

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 317.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 34.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 93.

The following discussion will center on the role of violence in the life of man, since it should be obvious that Brown sees man as a violated creature and consequently that some violation of present existence is needed to provide that world of visionaries Brown envisions.⁹¹ Brown feels that humanity is:

committed to treating as excrement not only its own body but the surrounding world of objects, reducing all to dead matter and inorganic magnitudes. Our much prized "objectivity" toward our own bodies, other persons, and the universe, all our calculating "rationality" is, from the psychoanalytic point of view, an ambivalent mixture of love and hate, an attitude appropriate only toward excrement only in an animal that has lost its own body and life.⁹²

Violence is thus that which is ambivalent and therefore deadening; it is the mistake of making aliment what is excretory. Violence, therefore, is that not necessarily inappropriate behavior for the human to engage in except as it is calculating "rationality." We do violence when we are engaged in spontaneous behavior, and Brown allows this form of violence.

It is when violence becomes ambivalent that it deadens life and is inhumane. In fact, Brown accepts that "Love is violence. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, from hot love and living hope."⁹³ ("Religion hid

⁹¹Brown states "Surely the second coming is at hand, when your young men shall see visions." "Norman Brown's Body," Psychology Today, p. 46.

⁹²Brown, Life, p. 295.

⁹³Idem, Love's Body, p. 180.

in War"⁹⁴) Brown discovers life only at that moment of violence, pure true violence. Birth and not Death. He says we must "Learn to love the fire,"⁹⁵ the fire which is the violent eruption of man from nothing. It is completely irrational and mad and therefore pure.

As shown, Brown feels that it is "calculating 'rationality'" which causes death in life, and it is in embodiment that violence is complete. "Total incorporation, or fusion, is combustion in fire."⁹⁶ True education becomes violent, becomes a war with the world. It is that we must, according to Brown, "Find the true fire. . . . The true teachers of peace are those who have the highest power, who can work miracles, who are masters of fire."⁹⁷ To Brown violence is anal if its way is not playful, and if it is playful it leads to the "total incorporation" of man which is his true humanity or peace. At this point education which is therapy must be:

To find the true war, the true sacrament. . . . To find the true fire. . . . Save us from the literal fire. . . . The real fire, the chariot of fire, the Fiery Chariot of his Contemplative Thought. The real fight, the mental fight; poetry, a sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, that consumes the scabbard that would contain it.⁹⁸

⁹⁴Idem, "Homage," Caterpillar, p. 13.

⁹⁵Idem, Love's Body, p. 178.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 176.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 181.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 183.

Brown believes that "Truth is error burned up."⁹⁹ Violence is always, and is what forms the body of mankind.

We have perverted violence to make war, and the war in which we fight and die is not a true war. Brown's discovery is that the true teachers will lead us away from the ambivalence of love and hate caused by rationality to the madness and purity of violent consumption in conflagrated ecstasy. Yet this demands all men be their own teacher since what Brown is calling forth is the "True Individual." It is here and now that incorporation is total, at the point when the individual discovers that he is part of the universe, that the universe is man, and that he creates that universe that the greatest violence is done to the person.

⁹⁹Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHRISTIC-DIONYSIAN VISION

Introduction: The Vision

Brown's "Christic-Dionysian vision" is replete with political innuendoes. Nothing could be much more ludicrous than a world which actually subscribes to the separation of Church and State--for Brown shows that the primal religious act is political. He feels that we must again have "mystical participation, but now for the first time freely; instead of religion, poetry."¹ Brown calls for man to become again free for he sees that today "Mr. and Mrs. Antrobus are getting nowhere."² He perceives our dance of life is getting us nowhere, and our "metropolis is necropolis"³ and that we have created an artificial environment which has as its prototype the tomb. We are, according to Brown, effectually dead. As he says, "Every house is a house of Hades. And every city a city of Dis. . . . We are dead."⁴ The resurrection is

¹Brown, Love's Body, p. 254.

²Ibid., p. 39.

³Ibid., p. 41.

⁴Ibid., p. 42.

necessary if we are to avoid the tomb and begin to get somewhere. What is needed is a real birth--a birth from the dream world we presently inhabit. Brown reminds us birth will be violent--will be fiery but not a hair will be singed.⁵ Brown feels that "Birth is bursting, the shell burst."⁶ This occurs in mad, spontaneous behavior which is guided by the god Dionysus. Brown feels Christ, the reborn body, has Dionysus, the twice-born spirit, as its god. Brown defines Christ as the body which is yet to be born--which arises when man awakens from the hypnotic trance (the dance of death) in which he is presently swathed. Dionysus is the spirit of that re-awakening. Brown sees it is in a form of madness indeed that men can come to find their body--but this is a body of a man. So when men become spontaneously mad, Brown feels they are coming towards the discovery of their unity.

Brown is aware that the Christ of whom he speaks is not the historical figure living approximately two millennia in the past. Rather,

the Jesus of historical commemoration can only be the ghost of Jesus . . . history reaches not Christ's flesh and blood. The Jesus of commemorative ceremony and historical reconstruction is the

⁵Ibid., p. 183.

⁶Ibid., p. 180.

passive, not the active, Jesus. The active Jesus can only be actively recreated. The historical reconstruction is a spectral image in a passive viewer.⁷

Brown's religion is suddenly political. It is a call to man to behave so as to extract in himself the divinity that is his. Men must be as Christ. This is the purpose of distinguishing religion and poetry. Religion, Brown feels, is based upon faith and "Christ the fulfillment, is not an abstract idea but a human body. All fulfillment is carnal."⁸ Fulfillment is here and now. Brown views the Church as a decayed institution perpetuating the sobriety of death, rather than allowing man to release himself in the playfulness of life.⁹ It is Brown's belief that the stately king is at once a religious idol demanding man's obedience through a process of faith. History is then discovered to be a serialization of the truly periodic essence of human life. Brown finds that man is trapped by a fearfully woven lie,

It is the star-inwrought veil of the heavens, God's garment, reproduced in the roles of God's representatives on earth, the priest and the king. The spinning sisters, at the humming looms of time, weave a mantle of pestilence and war, concealing the divine humanity.¹⁰

⁷Ibid., p. 200.

⁹Ibid., p. 229.

⁸Ibid., p. 222.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 79.

The lie Brown finds is the lie Rosa Millard most fears in The Unvanquished,¹¹ which is the unspoken lie which weaves intricacies and traps even the liar himself.

Brown knows man is the God whose representatives are the king and the priest, and yet feels man does not realize this. About the Big Lie, Brown agrees with Blake: "'It is Burnt up the moment men cease to behold it.'"¹²

Brown feels that a religious revival is necessary, but that it is done in the fire of spontaneous, playful, activity. As man is in search of his own body,

The true body is the body burnt up, the spiritual body. The unity is not organic--natural unity, but the unity of fire. . . . In the baptism of water we are buried with Christ; in the baptism of fire we are conformed to the body of his glory.¹³

It is therefore seen that Brown does not espouse the coming together of men in a place of worship, but that all men are divine and, so being, are one. The fire is the process of burning away the veil of the world. This veil Brown finds as a love of the letter and not the spirit. It is in the process of the sexualization of speech that men come to realize their unity. However, Brown views

¹¹William Faulkner, The Unvanquished (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1938).

¹²William Blake, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," The Complete Writings, ed. by G. Keynes (New York, 1957), p. 14 as quoted in Brown, Love's Body, p. 183.

¹³Brown, Love's Body, p. 183.

this process as continual and eternal. It is found to be the poetic process of creation.

Books of Death

Brown's Christian vision perceives man as a constantly elusive spirit which can create and is therefore divine. But the human situation is found to be tragic--a hero is coming undone. Brown most certainly blames the literal interpretations of the Bible as an element in this downfall.¹⁴ But in this style, which shows the most secular is the most sacred, Brown also sees the world of scholarship as an equal participant in the invidious process of the hypnosis of mankind. As he says "Literalism is idolatry; taking shadows for reality; taking abstractions, human inventions, unconscious projections of the human spirit, as autonomous powers; letting the metaphors go dead, and, then, when dead, bowing down before them, taking them literally."¹⁵ The purpose of Brown is definitely a form of anti-intellectualism--a search for a "Higher Logos." As he says,

To pass from shadows to reality is to pass from the external and material temple to the new temple, the true temple, which is the human body. . . . Literalism makes the world of abstract materialism; of dead matter; of the human body as dead matter. Literalism kills everything, including the human body.¹⁶

¹⁴Ibid., p. 229.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 222.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 222-23.

The real body, Brown continues, ". . . is the poetic body; the made body; Man makes Himself, his own body, in the symbolic freedom of the imagination."¹⁷ We must recognize that Brown feels that literalism is a very Protestant development,

The modern historical consciousness is Protestant literalism. The aim of modern historical science is to establish for historical events a single simple, solid, and constant, meaning--what really happened.¹⁸

Furthermore, "There is in both Protestant religion and modern scholarship a double standard (not the same thing as a two-fold vision): they combine self-effacing objectivity with self-asserting subjectivity, a principle of subjective intuition (Dilthey's verstehen)."¹⁹

Scholarship is not only inane, but dangerous. It is seen by Brown as a self-perpetuating blight on the human body's spirit, and as a negation of Love's Body. The principle of education, which is appropriately here drawn out, is that we can never hope to educate if we desire discovery to be a process of illumination of the meaning of an event, or series of events. Education is a "possession by the dead" if it is an attempt to delineate definitions or impose limits upon the human animal. The modern dilemma is that man is hypnotized because his body

¹⁷Ibid., p. 226.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 198.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 199.

is ripped from the symbol of its own activity. Brown feels that "Meaning is made in a meeting between the holy spirit buried in the Christian and the holy spirit buried in the letter of scripture; a breakthrough, from the abgrund, from the unconscious of the reader past the conscious intention of the author to the unconscious meaning; breaking the barrier of the ego and the barrier of the book."²⁰ "Every sentence is bilingual, or allegorical: saying one thing and meaning another. . . . Saying makes it so. Poetry, the archetypal fiat; or creative act."²¹

Brown is firmly convinced that man is constantly "Promising immortality or awaiting resurrection."²² Brown sees that one of the primary obligations of the scholars (or professors) is to fail to respect the tradition of literalism--to inculcate spontaneity and free association--to develop a new elliptical language. (Brown's latest works certainly aim at this.) He believes that "Literature is as collective as the unconscious; private authorship or ownership is not to be respected."²³ The scholar must give up his search for particular meanings of events. He feels ". . . the message is: Let's Play. Or, let's practice metamorphosis. Or, let's change the subject."²⁴ The

²⁰Ibid., p. 196.

²¹Idem, "Daphne, or Metamorphosis," in Myths, Dreams, and Religion, ed. by Joseph Campbell (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970), p. 93.

²²Ibid., p. 101. ²³Ibid., p. 109. ²⁴Ibid.

professor has the playful imperative from Brown. He feels the professor must not abide in the world of trivial knowledge, for that perpetuates the negation of Christ in the body of men. Brown believes the knowledge which claims to be private is unreal, and

Wisdom is in wit, in fooling, most excellent fooling; in play, and not in heavy puritanical seriousness. In levity, not gravity. The real deceivers are the literalists, who say I cannot tell a lie, or, hypotheses non fingo.²⁵

The educator is thus impelled by Brown "To seduce the world to madness,"²⁶ for "Wisdom is wit; in play, not in work; in freedom."²⁷ He does not feel that an educator can give out the meaning of truth as an opposition to untruth, but that "We stumble on the truth."²⁸ He believes "The doctrine of the unconscious, properly understood is a doctrine of the falseness of all words, taken literally, at their face value, at the level of consciousness."²⁹ Christ, our divinity which is locked "within the wall of paradise, which is the wall of the law of contradiction"³⁰ cannot be released except by a playful interaction with the environment until we have "The body that is identical with environment."³² The educator who locks himself in a

²⁵ Idem, Love's Body, p. 245.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 242.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 245.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 243.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 257.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 242.

³¹ Ibid., p. 253.

³² Ibid., p. 227.

serious world of "realism" and doesn't play with his body and his world is seen by Brown as lacking the ability to ever gain knowledge, since Brown feels all knowledge is carnal.³³ In reference to education on a collegiate level, Brown states that the necessity for poetry, which he connects with freedom, is most readily apparent, therefore most possible, in the most "serious" minded areas: "The most meaningful poetry can be made in those areas of thought at the university that are so aridly prosaic."³⁴ This would indicate that poetry is difficult in areas that are liberalizing, and that the implication for schools is that the experiments in liberality that aim at control rather than spontaneous freedom may well be the most difficult to poeticize. The work of Brown emphasizes "Meaning is new, or not at all; a new creation, or not at all; poetry or not at all."³⁵ In "aridly prosaic" realms anything is new, therefore poetry is always possible. In less arid realms newness is much more difficult--demands on the creator more--and Brown's concept of poetry would normally be missing. According to Brown we must be constantly on "the road of excess which leads to the palace of wisdom."³⁶

³³Ibid., p. 249.

³⁴"Norman Brown's Body," Psychology Today, p. 47.

³⁵Brown, Love's Body, p. 248.

³⁶Ibid., p. 187.

The concept Brown presents in "Only the exaggerations are true"³⁷ is more easily understood if it is considered that in a world which is not completely totalitarian one must go to extremes to find newness. Therefore, the professor, or teacher, who nears aphorism, the bodily language, has found what Brown refers to as "the form of the mad truth, the Dionysian form."³⁸ Brown's anti-intellectualism is more a form of the end of the intellect. He feels the poet is the wise man who has found "the mad form of the truth" and that "Intellect is sacrifice of intellect, or fire; which burns up as it gives light."³⁹ In the mad playfulness of the poet-professor Brown posits a true form of wisdom. This is the release of Christ in each man which Brown sees as the "supreme task of higher logic."⁴⁰ He insists the expert must throw down his crown. The political battle is, after all, seen as the battle for the unification of the body. This is the religious battle, and it is won only in the playground of poetry.

West and East

Brown's approach has been called "an emerging Christic-Dionysiac vision. . . ."⁴¹ So far, this thesis has presented the positions Brown takes regarding the

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., p. 188.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 242.

⁴¹Book review. Choice, Peter M. Darian, ed. (Chicago: Chicago Association of College & Research Libraries, January, 1967), p. 1007.

excremental nature of culture and the fiery rebirth of life in this culture--both important aspects of this vision. It is here placed, as in Chapter I, that his vision is not yet replete with those microcosmic interactions of potential and actualized awareness which formulate a definitive body of knowledge nor yet a finitely applicable coterie of mystical considerations. Even so, the relevance of Brown to Western thought is precisely in the totality of his criticism on that thought. He is fond of handling, in his works, the remote implications of technological and cultural development with an aplomb normally relegated to those who genuinely seek the private spheres of non-publication.

One who has reacted to Brown in public and who has presented the vision of the East in terms which the West can understand and assimilate is Alan Watts. Shortly after publication of Life Against Death Watts wrote Psychotherapy East and West.⁴² One could read this book as an interpretation and synopsis of Brown's arguments, even though Watts does not specifically state this is so. Watts' book serves as a simplification of the, indeed, esoteric and complex volume Brown created after his "meeting" with Freud. Yet there is more than simplification involved for Watts is attempting to somehow synthesize the approaches

⁴²Alan Watts, Psychotherapy East and West (New York: Ballantine Books, 1961).

of the two hemispheres--and forms of culture that today exist. Brown, on the other hand, does not seem at all interested in perpetuating the culture. In Life Against Death he had not dealt with this fact clearly and indeed could not foresee its consequences clearly. Since the public assessment of Life Against Death Brown has been a more avaricious precursor of all who would relegate the culture, no matter what form, to a subsidiary and, according to Brown, appropriately ineffectual role. Watts could not hope to develop a strong thesis of cultural synthesis from a consideration of Life Against Death. It is just because Brown has denied the situation of development through political and economic realms and emphasized psychological progress that his work mirrors Eastern mysticism. It is in the recognition that the purpose of those who are of the Oriental "Ways" is not the reinforcement of culture, but is the destruction of its influence over men, that Brown can be considered Eastern in his thought. Yet Brown, unlike Watts, perceives Eastern mysticism as not possessing a unique power over the realm of the knowledge of the true body. Brown understands much of the Western tradition as replete with the vision into man's true nature. His later work could easily be interpreted as the description of "Eastern" mysticism inherent

in the Western world.⁴³ Brown envisions an occidental mysticism, the Christic-Dionysiac vision, which expresses the "dialectical imagination."⁴⁴ From this realization Brown describes some "schools" of thought which have as their direct goal the "'conjunction of contrarities.'" He even includes poetry in this listing and also states that psychoanalysis is not only "a mode of dialectical consciousness,"⁴⁵ but also that it "contains, or ought to contain, a theory about the nature of the dialectical imagination."⁴⁶ It is against the Western cultural tradition of "formal-logical law of contradiction" that Brown works, and yet, even in Life Against Death, he finds aspects of that tradition which have repelled repression. It is therefore appropriate that Brown be read not as a synthesizer of East and West, but as a propagator of that tradition of the West which underlies and undermines all of the repression which culture can exert and educational institutions can perpetuate. It is towards the unconscious unity of each man in the West to which Brown speaks. Brown is attempting to cajole the Westerner out of what he senses is a hypnotic state of subservience to the cultural

⁴³ Roszak claims Brown has taken an "occult turn." Roszak, p. 116. Noland calls Love's Body a "symbolist poem" meaning that it reaches into the mystical tradition of Western literature. Noland, "Brown and Future," Massachusetts Review, p. 541.

⁴⁴ Brown, Life, p. 318.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 319.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

repression which Western man has formed. Yet Brown does not go directly to the Eastern schools to find examples of a new mode of consciousness for occidental man to immerse himself. Rather, Brown remains within the framework of Western culture and searches out for presentation what is truly erotic in its development, so as to show each man he can bring himself up through the repressive personality he has developed. By remaining within the tradition of the West, Brown's arguments seem more esoteric than a synthesizer (such as I have labeled Alan Watts). But, inevitably, his arguments are more relevant and more substantial to we who are presently entrenched in, and identified with, the Western culture. If we are to break loose into a new mode of consciousness, it seems more likely we will do so in Western terms within a Western tradition of the mystical (or occult) than through a study of a cultural heritage with which the body of Western men do not empathize.

Christ, Freud, Bacchus

Brown finds this new mode of consciousness which he calls "symbolic consciousness," in three Western traditions: "Christian, or psychoanalytical, or Dionysian."⁴⁷ He finds these three schools of thought to be as one in that they are found to be grounded upon the dialectical

⁴⁷ Idem, Love's Body, pp. 222-23.

imagination. Brown is a classical scholar and realizes the importance of Greek mythological thought to the present style of existence. Therefore, he understands that if Greek thought, which many believe is the initiator of much contemporary thinking, is not based on the dialectical imagination it would be difficult to convince an occidental that Western thought is so based. His searches reveal the Bacchic revelry, the joy of the body released in agonistic play. "Dionysus is the god." (As John Senior points out, the Greeks felt all men have Dionysus within themselves,⁴⁸ a fact of which a classical scholar, as Brown, would not be unaware.) Secondly, Brown's work shows he realizes he must convince Westerners that Christianity has a basis in "dialectical imagination" to make his thesis effable.

Brown's aim, as a critic put it, "is nothing less than the overthrow of the whole Hebrew-Greek (i.e., Christian) enterprise."⁴⁹ Indeed, he calls man to the erotic element in Christ's thought. Thus, Brown attempts to expose Christ's body of thought as expressing the need for a new mode of consciousness, a dialectical mode at that. The third "school" of dialectical imagination referred to by Brown is psychoanalysis--the teachings of

⁴⁸Senior, p. 18.

⁴⁹John Dixon, "Prolegomena to Christian Erotics," review of Love's Body by Norman O. Brown, Christian Scholar, L (Spring, 1967), 59.

Freud. But this Brown sees as standing in a unique relation to Western man in that, according to him, it

began as a further advance of civilized (scientific) objectivity; to expose the remnants of primitive participation, to eliminate them. . . . But the outcome of psychoanalysis is the discovery that magic and madness are everywhere. . . . There is a marriage (in heaven) between psychoanalysis and the mystical tradition.⁵⁰

Its purpose has become its method, and is Brown's method. That Freudian thought is as significant as Christianity or Athenian perspicuity is not at once obvious. Yet if we view Freud through Brown's eyes, we can see that Freudian thought is a direct outgrowth of the Protestant world, developed upon terms of Greek rationality. It is not so much that Freud has more followers than other psychologists, but that his thought is somehow to be seen as an evolutionary development and explication of the Western mind. And Brown sees it is linked with the mystical tradition. It is the approach Brown uses towards everything--but psychoanalysis is weighed from its lowest depth. Freud is found, by Brown, to base his thought upon the mystical "dialectical imagination" even though (and this may be significant) Freud himself often did not comprehend this.⁵¹ Psychoanalysis is the posture from which Brown exposes the mystical tradition of Western culture, which

⁵⁰Brown, Love's Body, pp. 254-55.

⁵¹Morgan, p. 104.

is Christian and Greek in essence. Yet, I feel the inevitable impact of Brown is that he does not pretend to desire to immediately amalgamate the East and West, but rather to lead the West to fuller expression of the true bases, which, if accomplished, will make a synthesis with Eastern thought imminent and effortless--since they are one in the body of love. Brown does call for a mode of consciousness which is beyond the battle of life against death. But he does so within the thrust and tradition of Western thought, although Zen and Tao have been considered and some of their terminology incorporated. Brown feels that it is not to another culture we must seek, but beyond all cultures where men are unified with the body of men. Brown feels his search is a criminal act, for, as he says, "It is criminal to violate the civilized taboos which have kept the seamy side concealed."⁵² The search for Christ's body, which is only recreated (resurrected) actively--not historically or by passive faith--is seen by Brown to be the uncovering of the dead elements of culture and the concomitant revival of the life instincts.⁵³ Importantly, Brown feels the erotic element of man is within all men,

⁵²Brown, Life, p. ix.

⁵³Richard Noland presents the thesis that Brown is mistaken in what he uncovers, but that what I have described is Brown's procedural method. Noland, "Apocalypse," American Scholar.

since it is instinctual, and as a consequence is the oneness of all men. Brown describes this unity of men as being the "body" of men--since it is what is most central and essential to the human situation. Since it is felt by Brown that this is an erotic, or lively, instinct expressed most succinctly in the most irrational, unreasonable, acts of men, and especially in the most unreasonable of all acts, the love act, he terms this essence of man "Love's Body." But it is significant here to comprehend this essence as something unstable, something which is constantly recurring and constantly new. The essence of man is found to be a completely playful body which is a body coming into complete oneness with the environment. Therefore Brown feels the essence of man is reached, is developed, so man becomes more and more involved and transacted with his environment. But this environment cannot be perceived as merely the physical habitat of the organism, but is all that impinges upon the development of love's body. In investigating what this could be, one is forced, Brown espouses, to discover that all possibilities of alternatives, and all events that have actualized these possibilities or could have done so or will do so, are properly discussed as the environment of love's body. (Brown therefore reaches the conclusion that the measure of man is in "billions of light years.") We are led by Brown to conceive of man's environment as what the Taoists call the

"Whole." Brown conceives of man as unifying the opposites-- as being the Unity of all Diversity in the Whole. It is seen that precisely in Christ's body man lives this unity with the whole. Man's essence is seen to be his oneness with everything, which is his immediate erotic polymorphous perversity. Brown understands Christ as a Christ of all mankind, and the true body as the constantly changing, playful, transaction of the organism and environment. As he says, "to become conscious of ourselves as body is to become conscious of mankind as one."⁵⁴ Apocalypse, in Brown, is the sudden recognition by a human that he is all-at-one with the universe and is therefore unique. This is a "mystical participation" in the universe and Brown feels that this is a fiery consummation of our bodies into Love's Body.

The Peaceful War

Brown finds the unification of man is a very Christian effort: "That they may be one--ut unum sint. This is Christ's last prayer before the crucifixion. . . ."⁵⁵ He finds the body of Christ is love's body, the unified body. It presently exists, Brown feels, but is covered up by the "ego illusion" in the Western culture. The problem Brown discovers is how to develop salvation,

⁵⁴Brown, Love's Body, p. 82.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 81.

how "to make in ourselves a new consciousness, an erotic sense of reality . . ."⁵⁶ And this "is to become conscious of symbolism. Symbolism is mind making connections (correspondences) rather than distinctions (separations)."⁵⁷ Brown finds that a war must be waged, yet it is a peaceful war. The war is "a mental fight, a struggle in and about men's minds."⁵⁸ The battle is "the erotic sense of reality" attempting to present itself in the life of man, and Brown feels it is won as men realize that all divisions, as he says, "are not based on the truth but on what the Buddhists call illusion, what Freud calls unconscious fantasies."⁵⁹ This occurs, Brown proposes, as we "reconnect consciousness with the unconscious, to make consciousness symbolical . . ."⁶⁰ This is found to be an endless process, and the war must be waged peacefully or the death instinct will win.⁶¹ Erotic battle is fought with instruments of the miraculous. It is in levity that Brown finds man in union with the erotic reality. Brown feels that presently Eros is in bondage. As he says, "We are in

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 258.

⁶¹Jules Henry describes a "death culture" and a "life culture" and warns that men must be aware of the potential of the "death culture" to dominate the world. Jules Henry, Culture Against Man (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1963), pp. 475-77.

bondage to authority outside ourselves"62 The battle fought is for freedom from authority. Brown says, "There is only one political problem in our world today: the unification of mankind."63 Brown feels that spontaneous action is the sign of Eros winning the "peaceful war." Freedom is license to Brown, and he understands we must be free. Brown feels that scholars come to an "erotic sense of reality" as they recognize the choice is "Either miracle or Scripture"64 and that intellectuals are presently in a "bondage to books" which "compels us not to see with our own eyes; compels us to see with the eyes of the dead, with dead eyes."65 Much of his writing is made to convince those who presently are in the fields of scholarship to become poets and escape what he calls "the age of reasoning from already received Scripture."66 As scholars, and teachers, avoid bondage to books and attempt to come to the spirit of their human divinity, Brown perceives that ". . . the authority of the past is swallowed up in new creation; the word is made flesh."67 Love's Body is gained by scholars, and teachers, as they come to experience

62 Brown, "Apocalypse," Harper's, p. 49.

63 Idem, Love's Body, p. 81.

64 Idem, "Apocalypse," Harper's, p. 49.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

experiencing, rather than to experience through the vicarious means of books and cultural traditions.

Brown proposes that Christianity is psychoanalysis when it is significant to the battle of Life against Death:

For two thousand years Christianity has kept alive the mystical hope of an ultimate victory of Life over Death, during a phase of history when Life was at war with Death and hope could only be mystical. . . . Certain it is that if Christianity wishes to help mankind toward that erasure of the traces of original sin which Baudelaire said was the true definition of progress, there are priceless insights in its tradition, insights which have to be transformed into a system of practical therapy, something like psychoanalysis, before they are useful or even meaningful.⁶⁸

Psychoanalysis becomes, in Brown's hands, the Christ-revealing process. Men's minds are made whole, the diseased ones are eased, as they become themselves Christ.⁶⁹ This process, though, comes through a mystical oneness with nature. This is a "Dionysian or body mysticism" and is felt to be the Western tradition.⁷⁰ Brown finds in the poet, in the novelist, and in the artist the ability to heal. He feels that "the times call for . . . the beginning of cooperation between the two (art and psychoanalysis) in the work of therapy and in the task of making the unconscious conscious."⁷¹ Furthermore, "Modern poetry, like

⁶⁸Brown, Life, p. 309.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 311.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 310.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 312. (Parenthetical phrase mine.)

psychoanalysis and Protestant theology, faces the problem of the resurrection of the body."⁷² Brown calls for what Whitehead calls the "Romantic Reaction." This could be seen as the attempt of the artist at therapy, to render whole what is rent asunder. Brown finds this poetry as subverting the "'reasonableness' of language."⁷³

Christ is found to be revealed to men only as they are consciously active in the peaceful war, which is waged against the use of words. Brown feels that men will never be free of the "bondage of authority outside" until they have died through recognition they are presently existing deadly. When man is conscious that he is dead he is immediately consumed by his own fire of the desire to live, according to the work of Brown. When man recognizes the excremental tendencies of his own existence, Brown feels he has found the light which will, through radiant energy, destroy the excrement. As he paraphrases, "Truth is error burned up; a light shining in darkness; darkness overcome. The everlasting bonfire. The truth and the life and the joy is in the overcoming."⁷⁴ Brown feels man will then be nothing, "Or no one; I'm a noun."⁷⁵ Yet out of this nothing Brown feels we have the true shape

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., p. 319.

⁷⁴Idem, Love's Body, p. 233. ⁷⁵Ibid., p. 262.

of a human being. "Creation is out of nothing: the unreal awakens us out of the sleep of reality."⁷⁶ Brown believes that as we die we become divine and that when we accept what he calls "Object-loss, world loss"⁷⁷ we realize that we have created the phenomenal world we perceive, and therefore recognize our own divinity. In other words, Brown believes that man will come to feel his own divinity as he destroys the world he perceives and recognizes that he is divine because it was he who perceived that world. At exactly that same moment man is lost in an "oceanic consciousness" for he exists as an ego no longer--that too was a creation of his.

Psychotherapy becomes the Christ revealing process. Brown states, "Psychotherapy is rebirth; and to be reborn, we have to pass through the grave."⁷⁸ But he has earlier reminded us that birth is violence, and it is a creative violence. Psychotherapy is also Dionysian. It is seen as the development of the body of mankind in the Spirit of the Erotic. It is felt to be the negation of the excremental body which we presently call our own, and the sudden, apocalyptic, miraculous recognition that we are everything.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 263.

Play is the Way

Play is a foolish enterprise. It is ludicrous that men (grown, mature, civilized men) should disregard all that they have grown to depend upon and jump around like a group of silly youngsters--having a transactional ecstasy with everything. It is foolish that men can learn from children. Brown feels that this is true, very true: "Truth comes empty-handed; in its poverty is its strength."⁷⁹ "Truth riding a donkey; as foolishness."⁸⁰

Brown feels that "The sublimation is at the same time a fall, into a lower order of creation."⁸¹ He furthermore feels that abstraction can be equated with sublimation. Children are said to act naturally because they are playful. They see the entire world as alive, as being of the same essence as men. Brown points out that this is also the case with schizophrenics and primitives. They are at one with the world and know that it is alive as they. Brown points out that "The final metamorphosis is the humanization of nature."⁸² This is an alchemical process; it is not accomplished by modern, rational science. The scientist can tell that a stone is not alive or that a tree is not something human. The scientist is more mature than to feel this. Yet Brown calls for man

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 237.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 238.

⁸¹Idem, "Daphne," p. 99.

⁸²Ibid., p. 103.

to be aware of the symbolic. Man must see a "penis in every convex object, a vagina in every concave one."⁸³ The world is alive and "symbolic consciousness" shows this. Yet this is silly. It is a playful world that Brown describes. The world constantly must be played with, says Brown, or it becomes dead. Brown feels that each man literally forms his own world, so that Brown can say "ontogeny recapitulates orogeny."⁸⁴ Furthermore, "The final metamorphosis is the humanization of nature . . ."⁸⁵ Since Brown feels "The spirit, the human essence, hides, buried in the natural object . . ."⁸⁶ the return to man's very human origin is in what he calls "The reconciliation of spirit and nature."⁸⁷ This is a symbolic process and is accomplished by man developing a symbolic consciousness that has awakened "the spirit from its sleep."⁸⁸ This occurs in a sudden, abrupt, apocalyptic matter. It is sheer madness, but is "supernatural" or divine.

We are enjoined to believe that we deny the government of the world, for we are to "see politics as

⁸³ Idem, Love's Body, p. 250.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 212.

⁸⁵ Idem, "Daphne," p. 103.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 100.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 106.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 101.

madness"⁸⁹ but a madness that is so bound to the reality-principle that it can never "liberate instead of repress."⁹⁰ The trip back down, through our cultural selves into our human essence is a mysterious trip and ends in mystery. It is always, according to Brown, "Poetry, the creative act, the act of life . . ."⁹¹ But this is an act of transformation, which is an art of pure sexuality. To Brown the beginning is a whore, a mysterious beginning, which is always a rebeginning--a revolution. But he says that "the revolution is a visionary break-through/or poetry/or madness."⁹² When we come to union, unification, Brown feels man has become Dionysian and has come through madness to solve the problem of madness. This is beyond the literal sense, for he feels we "begin by being conquered/cave-man conquered."⁹³ We must leave the political solution behind, which is to conquer and to become divided, more split, if we are to come to the Dionysian communion. This is, according to Brown, "a metapolitical solution to the problem of madness."⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Idem, "Politics," Caterpillar Anthology, p. 12.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Idem, "Daphne," p. 93.

⁹² Idem, "Politics," Caterpillar Anthology, p. 11.

⁹³ Idem, "Homage," Caterpillar, p. 93.

⁹⁴ Idem, "Politics," Caterpillar Anthology, p. 12.

Politics is to Brown, "a cycle of explosion and repression."⁹⁵ This is madness to become divine, or original, rather than madness to reinstitute the old forms of repression in new manners. The call to a "Higher Logos" of play which Brown makes is therefore less elusive. It is a "logos of union" which is founded through "intellect seeking union with energy."⁹⁶ It is grown men playing that Brown envisions; grown men who are using their imaginations. Play is seen as aggressive behavior precisely in its attempts to transfigure man as the divine creator. Imagination is more real to Brown than physical objects for it alone can lead us back to our origins--our essence. This is an eschatological philosophy only as it is etiologically--for man is seen as a recurrent phenomenon developed through a "permanent revolution" of constant creation which is a constant rebirth of the man. Brown feels that only in the abolition of literal unilinear time do we gain a communion with the "species essence" of which Brown comments Marx spoke. It is thus that imagination destroys. In unilinear time, conceptions and events are routines and have specific causes. Brown believes that the origin of civilization is therefore not lived out through each man and life becomes a sober process of flight and ennui from the terrors of death. Poetry is,

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 12.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 15.

instead, found to be "The rule of die-in-order-to-live . . ."⁹⁷ which is the very rule that destroys lineality. Poetic imagination is not to be routinized, for it is our grasp of our collective oneness with the universe.⁹⁸ Since Brown understands that the development of the formal law of contradiction, which is lineality, negates recurrence in mankind, he posits that the perception of the origin of civilization is thereby repressed in mankind. But he believes that in a "Higher Logos" we can escape from ennui and fear perpetuated by the fact we feel alienated from the world about us. Our formal logic is, Brown feels, specific to a particular mode of consciousness which is an historical contingency. Our civilization is seen as merely a representative product of this mode of consciousness and is therefore also a contingency. Humans are not felt to be contingencies, but are espied as significantly divine: "The spirit is human; the invisible reality is human."⁹⁹ Man discovers this divine spirit within himself and the world as he becomes conscious of his role in the mysterious process of the development of everything he perceives--"cultural" or "natural."

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 17.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 18.

⁹⁹Idem, "Daphne," p. 103.

The "Higher Logos" of which Brown speaks must be beyond contingencies, but always mysterious. It is the "mystical tradition" that is felt to have kept this Logos alive, and man is shown to be able to participate in this Higher Logos only as he becomes conscious of the veil the "formal law of contradiction" has spread over him. Here Brown speaks of the burning away of error, or the understanding of the unnecessary of the reality principle. The discovery, though, cannot be made through the rise of the particular mode of consciousness which has produced the particular culture to which a man is wedded and embedded. Rather, Brown shows, it is gained only as the imagination operates freely. This is found to be the real behavior of man, and to be the uniting factor between him and his Supreme Divinity which is the Creator of Civilization. If we take Brown seriously we see man is trapped by a reality-principle or culture which is of his own making. At the point of sheer divinity man is nothing in particular, yet is everything. (It cannot properly be expressed in words for it is what creates language.) Therefore, Brown posits that for man to gain unity with his divinity he must be able "to redeem words, out of the market place, out of the barking, into the silence; instead of commodities, symbols."¹⁰⁰ This is to Brown the search

¹⁰⁰ Idem, Love's Body, p. 258.

for truth: "The true meanings of words are bodily meanings, carnal knowledge; and the bodily meanings are the unspoken meanings. What is always speaking is the body."¹⁰¹ Thus Brown says, "To rise from history to mystery is to experience resurrection of the body here now, as an eternal reality; to experience the prouisa, the presence in the present, which is the spirit."¹⁰² (Dionysus and Christ reborn in the death of the world which has rent our bodies asunder. Dionysian Christianity is ours.) Brown feels that "To let the silence in is symbolism."¹⁰³ But is also perceived as a new mode of consciousness by Brown, "If consciousness is all words and no silence, the unconscious remains unconscious."¹⁰⁴ A bodily, playful consciousness is created as man goes down into the depths and discovers his union. The trip down is not easy, Brown attests,¹⁰⁵ and we will find this is always a question of a tempestuous furor of a religious conversion. It is, as he says, "Religion hid in War," but the war is the anachronistic reality-principle attempting to destroy, crucify, the mad god within us, warns Brown. Brown does not present a philosophy that is difficult for an educator to follow. He says, "It is a question of love . . ."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 265.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 214.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 190.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 258.

¹⁰⁵"Norman Brown's Body," Psychology Today, p. 45.

¹⁰⁶Brown, "Daphne," p. 103.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bleibtreau, John. The Parable of the Beast. New York: MacMillan Company, Collier Books, 1968.
- Brown, Norman O. "Apocalypse: The Place of Mystery in the Life of the Mind." Harper's Magazine, May, 1961.
- _____. "Daphne, or Metamorphosis." Myths, Dreams, and Religion. Edited by Joseph Campbell. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1970.
- _____. "From Politics to Metapolitics." A Caterpillar Anthology. Edited by Clayton Eshleman. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Anchor Books, 1971.
- _____. Hermes the Thief. New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1947.
- _____. "A Homage to Propertius." Caterpillar #13, IV (October, 1970), 92-102.
- _____. Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959.
- _____. Love's Body. New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1966.
- _____. "Psychoanalysis and the Classics." The Classic Journal, LII (March, 1957), 241-44.
- _____. "A Reply to Herbert Marcuse." Commentary, XLIII (March, 1967), 83-84.
- Brustein, Robert. Revolution as Theater. New York: Liveright Books, 1971.

- Cary, Joyce. The Horse's Mouth. New York: Harper and Row, Perennial Library, 1944.
- Dewey, John. Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education. New York: MacMillan Company, The Free Press, 1916.
- Dixon, John. "Prolegomena to a Christian Erotics." Review of Love's Body, by Norman O. Brown. Christian Scholar, L (Spring, 1967), 53-65.
- Dorian, Peter, ed. Choice. Vol. III. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, January, 1967.
- Dubos, Rene. "Man Overadapting." Psychology Today, IV (February, 1971), 50-53.
- Faulkner, William. The Unvanquished. New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1938.
- Friedenberg, Edgar Z. "Beyond the Reality Principle." Review of Love's Body, by Norman O. Brown. Book Week, III (July 10, 1966), 5.
- Grant, J. E. "Animadversions Upon Professor Brown's Apocalypse." The Noble Savage, V (1962), 12-18.
- Henry, Jules. Culture Against Man. New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1963.
- Huxley, Aldous. The Perennial Philosophy. New York: Harper and Row, Harper Colophon Books, 1944.
- Kropotkin, Petr. The Conquest of Bread. New York: Vanguard Press, 1926.
- McHarg, Ian. "Man and Environment." The Urban Condition: People and Policy in the Metropolis. Edited by Leonard J. Dahl. New York: Basic Books, 1963.
- McLuhan, Marshall. Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. 2d ed. New York: New American Library, Signet Books, 1964.
- Marcuse, Herbert. Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud. New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1955.

- Marcuse, Herbert. Five Lectures: Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Utopia. Translated by Jeremy J. Shapiro and Sherry M. Weber. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1970.
- _____. "Liberation from the Affluent Society." The Dialectics of Liberation. Edited by David Cooper. New York: MacMillan Company, Collier Books, 1968.
- _____. "Love Mystified: A Critique of Norman O. Brown." Review of Love's Body, by Norman O. Brown. Commentary, XLIII (February, 1967), 71-75.
- Mayer, Milton. On Liberty: Man v. the State. Center Occasional Papers. Santa Barbara, Calif.: The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, December, 1969.
- Meier, C. A. Ancient Incubation and Modern Psychotherapy. Translated by Monica Curtis. Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1967.
- Merton, Thomas. Zen and the Birds of Appetite. New York: New Directions, 1968.
- Mills, C. Wright. The Power Elite. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.
- Morgan, Thomas. "In His Little Known Book Life Against Death Norman O. Brown Pushes Beyond Freud to the Possibility of a Society Without Self-repression." Esquire, March, 1963.
- Morgenbesser, Sidney. "The Vision of Norman O. Brown." Review of Life Against Death, by Norman O. Brown. Harper's Magazine, November, 1966.
- Morris, Van Cleve. Existentialism in Education: What It Means. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.
- Nin, Anais. The Novel of the Future. New York: MacMillan Company, Collier Books, 1968.
- Noland, Richard. "Apocalypse of Norman O. Brown." American Scholar, XXXVIII (Winter, 1968), 59-68.
- _____. "Norman O. Brown and the Future of Man." Massachusetts Review, X (Summer, 1969), 537-54.

"Norman O. Brown's Body: A Conversation Between Brown and Warren G. Bennis." Psychology Today, IV (August, 1970), 43-47.

Ortega y Gasset, Jose. The Modern Theme. Translated by James Cleugh. New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1931.

Reps, Paul. "Cucumber." The World of Zen. Edited by Nancy Wilson Ross. New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1960.

Roszak, Theodore. The Making of a Counterculture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Anchor Books, 1969.

Senior, John. The Way Down and Out: The Occult in Symbolist Literature. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.

Watts, Alan. The Book on the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are. New York: MacMillan Company, Collier Books, 1966.

_____. Psychotherapy East and West. New York: Ballantine Books, 1961.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 03062 9083