Sudao[1]: Repeating the Question in Chan Discourse

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The duality of unthought/thought (silence/language) has always pervaded metaphysical and onto-theological discourse. That this traditional duality is logocentric is assumed by Robert Magliola's differentialism, grounded to a degree in both the Derridean *différance* of signifier-signified and the negative dialectic of Nāgārjuna's tetralemma, particularly the fourth lemma ("neither x nor y") with its pure "negative reference." Differentialism plays off/between and indeed "reinscribes" the traditional unthought/thought or inexpressible/expression rift in Hindu-Buddhist thought, just as Derrida's deconstructive discourse, ever parasitical upon its host, *plays* off/between similar rifts in Platonic and Hegelian discourse.

Here I want to explore the connection of unthought/thought with another basic duality or pattern of betweenness in Chan Buddhism, that of question/answer. This immediately presents itself in the most naïve but also pragmatic reading of the *gong'ans* (J. *kōans*), those *wenda* (J. *mondō*) or question-answer texts (dialogues).[2] I am going to suggest a way of reading the *huatous* and *gong'ans*—our primary "case" will be *Wumenguan* Case 43— which sees the answer not as "disappearing into," presumably a more traditional view, but as "repeating" the question. Or: the question repeats itself, is (always) already a self-repetition. I then will come back to Magliola's differential treatment of the same *gong'ans* and *huatous* and try to show that his own (off-) Derridean readings in effect take the answer as a repetition of the question. My own reading here is grounded in a certain priority: I look first at the dynamic-dialectical (off-Hegelian but also off-Heideggerian) side of the paradoxes, where the experienced *temporality* of question-answer is paramount, and then move to that purely logical-dialectical side which Magliola (given his Nāgārjunan/Derridean proclivities) tends (or first appears) to foreground. The real issue is then perhaps the identity-and-difference of these two "modes."

Between the Word-Head

Xuyun said:

> Our sect advocates the Chan training. This training centers on "realization of mind (and) perception of self-nature," that is, an exhaustive investigation into one's fundamental face . . . There were many *gong'ans* (devised by the ancients but) later only *huatou*'s [word-heads] were taught such as: "Who is dragging this corpse here?" and "What was my fundamental face before I was born?" In the present day, the masters use the *huatou*: "Who is the repeater of Buddha's name?" . . . [T]he reply to "Who?" will invariably be the same: "It is Mind." Word arises from Mind and Mind is head of (i.e. ante-) Word. Thought arises from Mind and Mind is head of Thought . . . *Huatou* = . . . the mind before it is stirred by a thought. It is the mind in its undisturbed condition . . . [it] is the moment before a thought arises. As soon as a thought arises it becomes a *hua wei* (lit. word-tail). The moment before a thought arises is called "the un-born." That void which is neither disturbed nor dull, and neither still nor (onesided) is called "the unending."[3]

According to this meditative technique the student wants to "look into the mind" (the *huatou*, word-head or thought-head, pre-word, pre-thought) *just before* "it is stirred by a thought": "The *moment before* a thought arises is called 'the unborn' [my emphasis]. That void which is neither disturbed nor dull [blank, empty[4]], and neither still nor (onesided) [directional, in motion] is called 'the unending.'" We note first that the traditional (post-Nāgārjunan but pre-Magliolan) Chan view clearly foregrounds the "betweenness"-state of the *śūnyatā*-void (it is "neither x nor y"). Secondly, there is the temporal factor: we are dealing with an "imminent moment," the moment just before the word-head (pre-thought, pre-word/language) becomes the word-tail (thought, word/language, "expression"). But this betweenness of the imminent moment (or moment of imminent arrival at a thought) is of course closely tied to the betweenness-state of the "void" (or "devoid"): "neither disturbed nor quiet, neither still nor in motion" is a kind of physical description of the state-of-mind just at that (passing) *moment* of "arising thought."

But what would it mean for the student to meditate on a question of this sort? Perhaps the question is "held in suspension" at the moment before it emerges into thought as an "answer;" that is, the student wants to remain "in the question," the question is prolonged. We might say the question is "opened out"—even to the point that it swallows up not just its "answer" but (what may be the same thing) the questioner, who "falls into" it. "When a student looks into a *huatou* with the same steadiness with which a broken tile when thrown into a deep pond plunges straight down 10,000 *changs* to the bottom, if he fails to become awakened in seven days, anyone can chop off my head and take it away" (*CZT*, 24).[5] Here we might think of Heidegger: *Dasein* is the being that asks the *Seinsfrage*, question of being, thus opening himself into being and/or

opening (the) being in(to) himself. But for Heidegger the *Seinsfrage* is fundamentally temporal, is temporality itself.

The Chan "question" is also a process of holding-in-doubt, is itself a (continuous) "state of doubt" (doubtful or skeptical state of mind), suggesting again the prolongation just before the "arising thought," the indefinite delay of that thought/answer:

> When one looks into a *huatou*, the most important thing is to give rise to a doubt. Doubt is the crutch of *huatou*. . . . This doubt should not be coarse; the finer it is, the better. At all times and in all places, this doubt alone should be looked into unremittingly, like an ever-flowing stream, without giving rise to a second thought . . . one should take no notice of either stillness or disturbance. (*CZT*, 38)

Now let us consider one of the most basic word-heads: "What was (or is) my fundamental face (original nature) before I was born?" (The traditional answer is/was, of course, "Buddha's face," "Buddha-nature."[6]) Again, temporality: it seems the student may be trying to "think back" to his earlier, earliest, "original" face/nature, in which case it is an indefinite or infinite (infinitely delayed) task, since he could never get to that point/origin/answer. (Here we think of answer as "origin of the question.") One way to look at a continuously prolonged question is as an indefinitely repeated question, formulated not as a repetition of discrete question-sentences ("What was my original face?" "What was my original face?") as in "chanting Buddha's name"—which we assume would establish it as a word-tail, a thought, one which would indeed "disturb the void of the mind"—but simply as a (pre-thought, threshold-of-thought) "continuously prolonged question." This again is thought (or mind) before it is "formulated" in words/language, so the easiest way to see it is perhaps precisely as that "state of doubt" mentioned above. But the point is again: here we would be (in a moment) *between* a continuous state of doubt/holding in suspension—which might be seen as a pre-conceptual (pre-discrete) repetition—and a conceptual state of (discrete) repetition.

While a more traditional (and/or more Heideggerian) interpretation of the continuously-prolonged (pre-thought) question—of that state of doubt, questioning state of mind—as "opening out" so that the questioner (his self, being) "falls into it" might account for the pressure of this moment-of-betweenness (e.g., as a kind of Heideggerian *angst* grounded in being/nothing interplay), we need to see that the moment of betweenness is itself a form of mutual reflection—pre-thought reflects thought, thought reflects pre-thought—and thus of repetition. While the image of the falling stone does suggest that the *huatou* meditator falls downward toward the "unthought," perhaps to be swallowed up by it, an "answer" is in some sense always (already) expected, that is, an answer other than that of the question-abyss which itself becomes the (its own) answer. A conceptualized or "voiced" answer is also expected/demanded, even if we remain suspended as long as possible just at the threshold

of that voiced answer. But this expected answer, rather than (like the question-abyss) swallowing/answering itself, that is, rather than merging with or becoming the (its own) question, can only "repeat" the question.

We do also get the between-state marked out in terms of (logocentric, phonocentric) audible/inaudible sound (inner/outer, divine/human or human/divine "voice") imagery, which is perhaps one way in which the description or conception of it gets away from temporality (and thus closer to Plato and Husserl if not Derrida[7]). For this praxis of "looking into the *huatou*" is indeed also a kind of inward seeing-hearing:

> . . . you should unremittingly and one-pointedly turn the light inwards on "that which is not born and does not die" . . . you should . . . turn inwards your (faculty of) hearing to hear the self-nature. "To turn inwards" is "to turn back." . . . When "hearing" and "looking" are no longer in pursuit of sound and appearance, they become fundamentally pure and enlightening and do not differ from each other . . . . If there is singleness of thought abiding in that "which is not born and does not die," without pursuing sound and form, this is "going against the stream;" this is called "looking into the *huatou*" or "turning inwards the hearing to hear the self-nature." (*CZT*, 41)

But here again we are at a point/moment "between two voices"—between the "original (unthought) voice" (voice of original or Buddha-nature) and the "voice" of the thought just about to be expressed in language. One of the best-known Zen *kōans*, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" indeed plays with(in) the betweenness of unsound/sound or unthought/thought (though not explicitly between original voice/"present" voice) in a more self-reflexive way. Yet one is struck here by "'To turn inwards' is 'to turn back'." Does it imply "back in time," the temporal reversal already suggested by the quest for "original face (voice)"? Do then all *huatous* have, does even "Who is dragging this corpse here?" ("Who are you? Who is the mind/original self inside your body?") have this dynamic? Of course it does, if we think of it as a question about "original nature." But do all *huatous* have this reverse-time dynamic because they are asking about absolute "origins" or because in all of them the prolonged question (state of doubt) is itself a structure-of-repetition which has the sense of "going back" (in time) merely in the sense of "repeating it again" (going "back" to it again and again)? "Turning inwards is turning back": prolonged questioning is repeating, suspended doubt is repetition.

My case is of course made too easy by the *huatou* which Lu K'uan Yu tells us is most commonly used "in the present day": "Who is the repeater of Buddha's name?" The answer is "my (non-)self." Lu explains that while this word-head can apply also to those Buddhist schools/chants in which Buddha's name was repeated out loud,[8] it especially applies to the silent meditative praxis of Chan. Then we have a variation on the above problem. Is the meditator silently repeating (discrete, voiced) "Buddha-names" (implying that he is already into the zone of thought, word-tails), or silently repeating pre-

conceptualized (voiceless) Buddha-names (what would this mean?), or (as we assume) at the moment between these two "states"? While Lu suggests the meaning of the word-head ("Who is repeating?") is really (again) "Who are you? What is your original mind/nature?" its actual terms give us something arguably more complex and self-referential: the "who?" in question (self as itself a "question") is the "who" that is already questioning/pre-thinking/*repeating* (the question/pre-thought). This is again a clue that questioning itself can be seen as a form of (self-) repeating, with the accent on the (self-reflexivity of the) "self." It could suggest a form of self-inscription within a pervasive text/textuality.[9]

Here is Lu's comment:

> …when one is asked, "Who is repeating Buddha's name?" everybody knows that he himself repeats it, but is it repeated by the mouth or by the mind? If the mouth repeats it, why does not it do so when one sleeps? If the mind repeats it, what does the mind look like? As mind is intangible, one is not clear about it. Consequently some slight feeling of doubt arises about "who." (*CZT*, 38)

Predictably (logocentrically) the "inner voice" of the mind is given priority over the "outer voice" of the mouth: the former repeats (the name) even in (dreamless) sleep, the latter only while we are awake.[10] The "deep sleep" image reinforces the notion of the pre-thought (pre-word) as dwelling in the deep mind/unconscious: yet even here we get the repetition. Also, the repetition-potential of outer voice/thought/language gets qualified here. Yet this whole "narrative" of mouth/mind is set within the context of "doubting," used as an example of the doubting-procedure: when asked, "Who is repeating the name?" we will question/doubt that it is x, then question/doubt that it is y, where the latter doubting (that "mind" is repeating it) leads to a more "positive conclusion" (*CZT*, 38), so that in a sense the repetition-potential of the mouth/outer voice, in being "doubted," is simultaneously (intra-textually) being reaffirmed.

"Goat Horns" and "Original Face"

Though *kōans* or *gong'ans* ("public cases," the *an* is also "problem," "*event*") may be based on the *huatou* form of simple ("What?" "Who?" "Why?") question, in them the master can ask the student to solve a dilemma or paradox stated formally as such: "What is X and not-X?" We get the formal dilemma in *Wumenguan* Case 43:

> Shoushan holds up his bamboo stick, and says: "You monks: If you call this a bamboo stick, there's an impingement [*chu*, a 'coming into-onto,' as a goat's horns can]. But if you don't call this a bamboo stick, there's a parting [*bei*, a 'turning one's back']. Tell me, all of you, what do you call it?"[11]

"Not calling X an X" is clearly problematic (a "wrong answer") if it means that we "call X a Y," but what if it means "not calling it anything," remaining

silent? Is silence also a "wrong answer" or merely a "turning one's back" or "refusal (to speak)"? "Calling X an X" seems (at least on the face of things) to have a univocal sense, and it is less obviously wrong or problematical: the most obvious problem here would be that then we have only the "name" (a "stick") and not the "actual thing." But again I want to first emphasize the temporality of the scene here: the monks are under the pressure of time, they must quickly answer with either an "affirmation" or "denial"—where denial can have at least the two senses mentioned. Or perhaps they have another option, one that only the most enlightened would hit upon. If, with a *huatou* like "What was your original face?" we want to "look at the question," hold it in mind just at the moment of pre-thought/thought betweenness, perhaps a similar strategy exists here: a student might hold the dilemma or doubt itself in his mind—"Is this X or not-X?"—just at the "imminent moment," remain suspended just on the "verge" of answering. But this "non-answer" is effectively a (silent/spoken) prolongation, thus (as suggested above) repetition, of the question: it is the *dao*-"way" of a *dao*-"answer" as imminent suspension.

Wumen's comment here is "Not get it with words, not get it without words, *sudao* (quickly reply)!" Or: "Without words, without silence,[12] answer now!" This does strongly suggest that we take the "Don't call it an X" as a silent "response," but either way we "can't get it" ("get the answer"), whether with a voiced assertion ("It is an X") or a silent non-assertion. (On the doubt-model of the *huatou* the latter would be the "denial" of a "not-thinking this is an X," the pure negative reference of the Nāgārjunan fourth lemma perhaps, which we would still need to distinguish from the "not-thinking it is anything"; this last comes closer to a complete "not-thinking" or total "silence.") The paradox of this dynamic (temporal) dialectic then becomes: "You must answer now, but you can't get the (right) answer either with words or without words." We are thrown back into a temporal-logical pattern in which the question (statement of the either-or dilemma) is effectively repeated. To "get" the answer (in other words to "get" the question) I would have to "answer now" by hanging in the moment between question (pre-thought, state of doubt of the dilemma itself) and (voiced) reply, where either (any) reply ("It is/is not X") would be "wrong." But this imminent or "arising" ("Answer fast"!) in-between state can be read as a "between of the between" since effectively we are between the imminent unvoiced/voiced state of the *huatou*'s "prolonged doubt"—which corresponds to the ambiguous (pre-thought/thought, unvoiced/voiced) option of "not-calling X an X" or "not-getting it without words"—and the voiced/thoughtful/logocentric answer, "X is X," "not-getting it with words." Of course, then there "is no answer"—but that is precisely what the "question" was telling us in the first place. The answer could only be a repetition or "reformulation" of the question, of the temporal-dialectical *demand* (to be answered) of the dilemma; that is, it could only be a repetition (yielding a still more "imminent," more narrowly "in-between" state) of the question-answer (temporal-logical) betweenness.

Magliola's reading, which takes this *gong'an* mainly as a logical-dialectical (synchronic) "thought-exercise," gains momentum by interpreting the two Chinese terms. Magliola distinguishes his off-centric or differential reading from the logocentric Chan reading. In the logocentric reading, *chu* and *bei* mean simply (univocally) "assert" and "deny," and the dilemma is essentially that of medieval nominalism-realism:

> If one becomes too attached to the name, the word-sign "bamboo stick," one "falls for" the correspondence theory, and slights the real bamboo stick, which is, after all, other than its name. . . if one refuses the ability of the name, the word-sign "bamboo stick," to correspond to its referent, one cannot seize the real bamboo stick at all. ("Differentialism," 90)

Now Magliola's differential reading, which needs to bifurcate one of these two terms (*chu* and *bei*) so that we can get an X/Y versus a Y, that is, get an "and/or which is between the and/or of X and Y," relies on a highly suggestive and playful reading of the character *chu*. Its primary sense is "impinging on" (like a goat's horns) in the sense of "becoming attached to" or "involved with": thus "to assert," where the name has impinged upon its referent. But its secondary sense, Magliola claims, is to "impinge" in the sense of "bang into," "give offense to," thus correlating it with the meaning of its supposed "opposite" *bei* which clearly means "turn one's back on," "give offense to." "Perhaps it is with this recurrence in mind that Inoue recognizes *chu* and *bei* can have the 'same' meaning" ("Differentialism," 90).[13] We thus have a pattern of *chu*-entanglement/offense versus *pei*-offense, a further (more literal) refinement of *chu*-affirm/deny versus *bei*-deny, and—picking up Blyth's comment on another Chan *gong'an* that "You must do one thing, and at the same time do-it-and-not-do-it"—Magliola correlates the *chu*-entanglement with "not doing one thing" and the *chu*- and *bei*-offense with "doing one thing." "In short, the meaning of *bei*, which 'does one thing,' is reinscribed in *chu*, but in a veiled way, so that *chu* both 'does one thing and doesn't do it.'" That is, the logocentric meaning/discourse is reinscribed within the differential (and for Derrida "parasitic") meaning-discourse:

> If we . . . elevate the above to a sort of paradigm, it can become an analogy for the workings of the Buddhist "two truths" (*saṃsāra/nirvāṇa*). Buddhist bliss becomes the "free slide" to and fro, and performed at will, between "doing it/not doing it" [because there is a subversion of coherent meaning(s), this is differential] and "doing it" [because there is a retention of coherent meaning(s), this is logocentric]. In short, Buddhist bliss is the free slide between the differential mode and the logocentric mode. And each mode, while bearing its own integrity, is "shot through" with the "sameness" of the other mode, the "sameness" of reinscription . . . . ("Differentialism," 91)

Magliola further describes this reinscription, in the context of the logic of paradox, as a strategy of "taking the paradox literally." Thus while for

logocentric thought either "X = 'all and only Y' and 'all and only not-Y'"—which is "a logical impossibility, so that the two logically preempt each other, and the mind is exploded into non-reason"—or "X is 'part Y' and 'part not-Y" (a "synthetic or mediating approach"):

> Differentialism, when tracking the logic of paradox, finds itself led to neither of the two customary solutions, but to reinscription . . . . Derrida is well-known for his assaults on traditional paradox, and on mediation in general. He regards them as mere "dialectical" variants of what has already been deconstructed . . . . Blyth . . . represents for us that movement in Ch'an which stresses literality—the logical literalness which refuses mediation. "The most important thing" about paradox, he reminds us, "is that it should not be explained away." Otherwise, he says, the sage is a "mere punster" and his *mondo* [*wenda*, question-answer] just "pseudo-Zen riddles." But how does reinscription work in terms of paradox?…[W]e are granting…that somehow *Wumen*'s paradox is "delivering" the solution. . . We are taking the Buddhist "at his word" . . . What remains is to take the paradox literally, i.e., at its word as expressed in rational terms. If "X is Y and not-Y" . . . then Y and not-Y are the "same." . . . Thus the recourse of off/reason, the hard dreadfulness of reinscription. The differentialist solution to *Wumen*'s paradox is "'with words' and 'with words,'" or, reversing direction, "'without words' and 'without words.'" This is a special kind of redundancy whereby the first term hides itself in the second term and usurps it. [Thus] the differentialist solution to *Wumen*'s paradox is "'with words,' and (veiled) 'with words,'" or . . . "'without words' and (veiled) 'without words.'" A Buddhist "sameness which is not identity." ("Differentialism" 92-93)

Now one might wonder here why, since "Y" and "not-Y" are (literally) "the same," we wouldn't also have the option of saying (in addition to "Y and Y" and "not-Y and not-Y"), "Y and not-Y," "with words and without words." In this case we would be reading the "Y and not-Y" literally, non-paradoxically, not-thinking (it as a paradox)—the praxis of not-thinking, which is what we are after. Although (Magliola's point) it is in not-thinking-it as a paradox that we think it as "Y and Y," "not-Y and not-Y," why not also "literally"(non-paradoxically) not-think it as "Y and not-Y"? Might this not also be a form of reinscription?

In any case the term "reinscription" suggests—and this view is reinforced by the fact that "with this recurrence in mind . . . Inoue recognizes *chu* [assert or assert/deny] and *bei* [deny] can have the 'same' meaning"—that we are now fully "caught" within a logical recursiveness which entails/is entailed by an intra-textual (intra-language) recursiveness, an on-going repetition which offers no possibility of "escape" from language/thought/logos, caught within the field of "free play," "free circulation of signifiers" in which, perhaps, any combination might come around. Derrida sees the "essential structure" of language/meaning as being one of iterability and citationality (within the pervasive language-machine),[14] a view which bears a certain relationship to the early Wittgenstein's notion of logical tautology ("Y is Y") as the redundancy of "pure logical form." Do we then read Magliola's "With words and (veiled) with

words," where the "without words" has been usurped/appropriated/reinscribed as "with words," as merely this potential for any (randomly-chosen) signifier—though perhaps *a fortiori* one which signifies the "logical form" of the whole machine—to substitute for another? After all, they are all mere iterations or citations, "quoted usages" within the larger text, the larger "style" which, like the "veiled woman" of Nietzsche's *operation feminine*, as described in Derrida's *Eperons*, finally "puts all the truth in quotation marks."

Magliola holds of course that a full escape from thought/language becomes logocentric (the non-rational absolute being just as "essentialized" as the rational one), yet he wants the "Way of the Between," wants to "frequent the 'unheard-of thought' and also, 'with one and the same stroke,' allow the reinstatement of the logocentric too . . . ," since "for Nagarjuna the 'beyond knowing' allows for logocentric, i.e., language-bound knowing (in a way which frees him from Derrida's quandary concerning entrapment in language)." But how, again, does this apparently pervasive intra-textual model of "reinscription" allow us to get to or on this "Way of the Between," how does it give us a glimpse of the "unheard-of thought"? We assume the "silence" Magliola is after here lies precisely in the "betweenness"—that it is the silence/unthought between the (logo-phonocentric) "sound" of assertion and of non-assertion. But as long as we remain within the synchronic, logical-dialectical-linguistic model suggested above, it seems the silence of betweenness only comes in patterns of *repetition* within the larger system—becoming thus an off-silence and perhaps what Magliola would indeed want.

But let us return to the basic question-and-answer structure of our *gong'an*. The sage asks you to answer him by asserting/denying, using words/not using them: the "silence" of your answer (and/or of your understanding/enlightenment) can only be in some sense a repetition of (the silent or off-silent, unthought or off-thought kernel of) the question. This is already clear in Magliola's dialectical working out of the "solution": if the sage asks, "How can you (not-) think 'Y and not-Y'?" you must "answer" by (not-) thinking "Y and Y" or "not-Y and not-Y" (repetition with variation of the question) or (possibly also) by (not-) thinking "Y and not-Y" ("full repetition"). We get a variation on this, which points us toward a more empirical-temporal reading of the same *gong'an*, if we take the "silence of the between" here, and/or of the intra-textual (narrative, dialogic, question-answer) repetition, as lying in the very asymmetry of the Way of the Between itself (and/or of the *gong'an* itself, the "text") as an "off-track." In *Life-Worlds* Magliola speaks of the "law of aberrant reinscription" in Derrida's later texts, where "dissemination" becomes:

> the dissipating of decidability (the *dis-* here = in several directions), so that—like the case of a teletype machine out of whack—the aberrancy introduced within the limits of the machine brings about a random but inevitable return of several possibles, and these possibles are asymmetric to each other.[15]

Magliola's "unthought"—or rather interface of thought/unthought, or of (un)thought and thought/unthought—then could be seen to lie within the asymmetric nexus of (un)decidability, where any of several (logical) possibles may "return." This is in fact the whole strategy of "off-tracking" traces/*prajñapti* within the larger "body of textuality" that we get in Magliola's most recent book—taking textual "cuts" (*tranches*, as in "cutting" a deck of cards, the Mallarmean-Derridean dice-throw of *Dissemination*), looking for "unexpected" or "asymmetrical" linguistic-semantic connections and overlaps which seem "pre-determined" (within the organic language-body, language-machine) yet "contingent" and so reveal the "continuity of rifts." But here I want to come back to my problem of Chan "question(ing)." To think (of) the unthought-unthinkable, inexpressible or "silent" side of the logos/off-logos difference here as lying in the open-ended nexus of pure contingencies, pure possibilities might just be to think (of) it as the radically open-ended and contingent nexus of the "question" itself—the question which could have any number of answers "returning" to it, and/or could be unanswerable. But the question/answer (unthought/thought) duality remains indeterminate: the asymmetric self-returning possibilities, those signifiers/citations within the self-repeating language-machine in one model, might be seen as possibilities of the (still unthought) question itself, and/or as its (thought/unthought, silent/voiced) answers.

But then Magliola's view of reinscription, as I have tried to suggest by slightly "expanding" it here, while it may seem logical-synchronic, has been all along assuming, perhaps even grounding itself in the temporal-dynamic side of the dialectic. Thus we have the repetition-and-reversal pattern of "manifestation and return"—contingent meaning-possibilities spun-out and (always already, though perhaps asymmetrically) returned/returning. Similarly, the problem of an unstable-dynamic "origin" lies (unspoken but assumed) at the heart of the Magliolan off-Derridean reading of the quintessential *huatou*: "What is/was your original face?"

> "Before your parents gave birth to you, what was your prior face?" introduces a hierarchy, a signified (factor) and signifier (mirroring activity). The question it poses necessarily drives the disciple back away from the signifier (his present human "face") to the signified alone, the "prior face" or Buddha-nature. As such, the question forces the dyad of Buddha-nature and particularized human face to rupture. In our terms, the "word" is the signifier and the "ante-word" the signified, and the intent of the *huatou* technique . . . is to shear off the word, and to raise the question—with Chan's "*great doubt*"—of "who?" Eventually this "free signified" should dissolve too, crumbling during meditation before the . . . off/rational . . . which reaches up and deconstructs it. The result is supposed to be *śūnyatā*, "devoidness" . . . [16]

This may be a variation on our "classical" *huatou* model in which one strives for a point between the logocentric unthought ("original face" as

transcendental signified) and the voiced word/thought ("my face"). Here again we are suspended in a between-state: (logocentric-voiced) word is "sheered off" and we are reaching (our earlier reading foregrounds the temporal-dynamic sense) toward the pure (logocentric-unvoiced) signified, which "should dissolve too, crumbling…before the off/rational which . . . deconstructs it." That is (we assume) this "free signified" (unthinkable original face) dissolves within the signifier-signified rupture, *aporia*, unbridgeable difference of devoidness. But the question or thought-problem of (thinking) one's "original self-identity" has again already "posited" this same (or a similar) difference: the gap where we end up is the gap of the "question" which has been, in a sense, repeated. Or recirculated: any question or notion of "origin" is for Nietzsche/Derrida/ Magliola (always already) a "copy," "rehearsal," "transcendental signifier." The "original face" must have been "already recirculated" as copy/rehearsal/signifier. Thus if the question posed by the *huatou*—the question of "who?"— "necessarily drives the disciple back . . . to the signified [transcendent origin] alone" then the question was by definition unanswerable, that is, "answerable" only by a breaking-down (of it) into (*śūnyatā*/devoidness as) the ongoing "return" of (asymmetric, contingent, off-silent) answer-possibilities.

And as we have seen, the problem of origin as repetition is explicitly stated as *huatou* "question" in the case of "Who is repeating Buddha's name?" If we reach toward the "mind" (transcendental signified) as "original repeater" and away from the speaking/repeating "mouth" (signifier)[17]—here the mouth-signifier (Saussure's "sound-image") becomes curiously self-reflexive, making it perhaps harder to ever "escape" from the gravitational field of its "echo chamber" and move toward the "already" self-reflexive, autonomous, *causa sui* signified—we remain "lost" (or perhaps for Magliola "found") within an indefinitely recursive (self-reflexive) pattern of "answer as repetition of the question." Indeed we might say that not only the (self-) "repeater" but also the whole dialectical pragmatics of question-answer is here placed within some sort of encompassing, indefinitely recursive, self-repeating "text."

"Open Mouth See Guts"

In the *Biyan lu* Case 3 we have a slightly unusual reversal of the typical *gong'an*'s question-answer dynamics (or "directionality"). Here the master answers an "ordinary question" (put by a student) with a paradoxical answer:

> Grand Master Ma was unwell. The temple superintendent asked him, "Teacher, how has your venerable health been in recent days?" The Great Master said, "Sun Face Buddha, Moon Face Buddha." ("FDD," 13)

What first strikes one here is that the paradox is given as answer to a question so open-ended as to be meaningless. "How are you?" is a question of ("mindless") ordinary conversation, a merely ritualized, formulaic question: this is clear when we contrast it (as polite "student's question") to the

"philosophical" student's question ("What is Buddha?") or the *huatou*, or *kōan*, or paradox-questions posed by Chan masters.[18] The "openness" of this question, which could have any number of answers, contrasts with the openness of *huatou* questions like "What is your original face?" ("What is your Sun-Face-Buddha?") For in a quite different way "How are you?" is meaningless in its very openness (all-inclusiveness, as in "X = Y") and thus is answered/echoed by a paradox that transcends sense. The answer then could again be read as a certain form of repetition of the question, with variation. But in the "form" of the *kōan*, we also see a role-reversal: we might have expected the student to inquire about one of his "homework" *kōan*-paradoxes, "What is Sun-Face-Buddha/Moon-Face-Buddha?" and the master to answer with the absurdly incongruous, "How are you?" This context also makes clearer, now that we are forced to take it seriously, the radical open-endedness, thus meaninglessness, of such an "ordinary conversation" question and so of ordinary conversation. Thus this "expected" sequence is an inversion of the actual sequence here. They are both variations on "answering nonsense with nonsense," arguably what takes place in—is the "form" of—all *gong'an*'s.

In Chan tradition this "Sun Face Buddha" suggests eternity and "Moon Face Buddha" transience, fleeting time. Thus in reply to "How are you?" the master may be saying "I am alive/dead (alive and already dead)." The commentary goes: "Sun Face Buddha, Moon Face Buddha. When he opens his mouth you see (his) guts (*kaikou jiandan*[19]). Like two facing mirrors: inbetween there's no reflection." Magliola ("FDD," 13) comments on this "open mouth see guts": ". . . if the two Buddhas are one and the same (though not, of course, the logocentric 'self-same'), indeed you can see the viscera when the mouth opens—there's nothing inbetween! (Notice how this Buddhist text is 'somatic,' 'inscribed as human body'[20] . . .)." That is, if X is Y (mouth/mind is body or mouth is mind/body, the space between them collapses or disappears) I don't care, there is no "I," "I" am non-attached to all dualities such as sun and moon, mouth (active speech, life, perhaps being-awake as we saw in the *huatou* of the mouth/mind) and guts (transience, death, decay).

Both terms then could be *aporias*: *dan*-guts/gall could suggest both (logo-or off-centric) body and (logocentric) inner nature,[21] while *kou*-mouth could be both a merely physical (logo- or off-centric) "outer voice" like the one that talks/repeats Buddha's name only while we are awake (unlike the mind), and a (logocentric) "inner voice" (Derrida's Platonic sun-logos). Here we come back to the unthought/thought or silence/language betweenness, already suggested by the equivocal or *aporia* term "mouth" ("voice"). It is the same sort of betweenness we saw in our brief analysis of *huatou*'s: the moment just before pre-thought/pre-voice passes into thought/voice. "Open the mouth" could thus mean "open the mouth to speak" and/or "open/fall into the abysmal question," it catches both senses simultaneously in the "moment of opening." But then is the question we fall or open into to be the "guts"—-"open mouth see guts"—as inner/deep body and/or as deep mind/nature ("moon" as unconscious)? We open

the mouth—paradoxically (simultaneously) speaking and silencing the mouth—and fall into the silence of the deep mind/body? Or perhaps the fall/opening also goes the other way, from guts to mouth, into the opened question of the open mouth? Perhaps the fall from speech to silence is simultaneously one from silence to speech?

The last part of *Wumen*'s comment reads: "Like two facing mirrors: in-between there's no reflection." Magliola focuses on this line:

> A reflection is a signifier, just as mirrors are the receptive apparatus (and, in Buddhist allegorical terms, the mirrors are the "pure consciousness" which normally registers, without "attachment," all signifiers passing across it). The Commentary is making the point, however, that here there is no signifier at all . . . a signifier would be occlusive, not revelatory. . . In Derrida, absence-of-signifier would mean the "remainder" of the "pure signified" . . . —a "more" sur/passing even the sumptuous "free-play" of a Roland Barthes. ("FDD," 13-14)

Chan's "absence-of-signifier"—between two mirrors where "inbetween" there can be "no reflection" (no signifying of factors/signifieds)—becomes then Derrida's "opaque signifier": here "a signifier would be occlusive, not revelatory," it would (in the old Chan metaphor) simply "cloud the mirror" (cover it with dust). Thus (paradoxically) we seem to come closest to "having" a (transcendental) signified in this (pure) condition of the absence of any signifier/signifying (*signifiant*), a between-state of two purely-reflecting surfaces which are then reflecting . . . what? One another's pure "power of reflection" (of "signifying")? I should think that if there are no "occluding signifiers" here (signifiers which would have needed something to signify, something other than their own blank "source" in the mirror-surface), then the pure (blank) signified with which we are "left" could not escape the dynamic-differential fate of being an indefinite/infinite self-reflection and recursiveness—the on-going (postmodernist *mise-en-abime*, hall-of-mirrors) mirroring of mirrors (within mirrors). If this signified (sun = moon, mouth = guts, life = death) was the question-as-origin, it now gets repeated indefinitely (and "within itself," the problematics of an ever-narrowing betweenness both spatial and temporal) as its own "answer."

Thus we come back to our "question-answer" reading of the two mirrors in terms of a mutual "falling" or "opening-into" which reveals finally only the blankness of the question. It's a self-reversing movement, the "falls" (mouth to guts/guts to mouth) echo/repeat one another, the "question" (endlessly) repeats itself. It becomes the "non-sense" of its own betweenness. But if these two mirrors are "the same" they are still (as "signifiers") also "different"—sun and moon, mouth, and guts. Each is itself an *aporia*-term, a betweenness. There is also a certain asymmetry in their relationship: each can encompass the other, depending on how we "read" it. Sun/mouth can encompass moon/guts as the "open space" of logos-speech, in the heart or depths of which we find silence;

moon/guts can encompass sun/mouth as the unlimited *khora* or body of "writing" of which "speech" is but one manifestation. Which come(s) of course to the same thing: the two sides of the sign, of language. This can also be seen as the *order* of sun-logos-male and the *chaos* of moon-body-female, where again either might be seen as encompassing the other.[22] But is there to be a mutual (non-) reflection between two "mirrors" when one encompasses the other, or is it precisely the image of the *mise-en-abime*, "abyss" of a hall of mirrors? Two "under-determined" mirrors, two "overdetermined" mirrors, one under- and one over-determined?[23] In any case they would "cancel each other out."

The Question of the Question

In *Derrida on the Mend* Magliola cites Streng, who distinguishes Nāgārjuna's "dialectical" from "correspondence" and "intuitive" truth-structures in Indian thought.[24] But beyond this picture of the Nāgārjunan tetralemma as a negative dialectic which, rather than "expressing an absolute by not-expressing it" (apophatic theology), simply (or not so simply) "denies the illusion that it exists,"[25] beyond the conception of a non-empty ("devoid") *śūnyatā*, of *nirvāṇa* as *saṃsāra* which points toward Magliola's differentialism as an off/rationality in which rationality is "reinscribed," most striking here is Streng's/Magliola's characterization of Nāgārjuna's "dialectic" itself. While it is not reified, "is never an independent force or first cause, but is operative only in relation to phenomenal or ideal entities [both of which it deconstructs]," this dialectic is nonetheless "the spiritual *answer* to the problem of grasping after self-existent entities. It is the means of quelling the pain found in existential 'becoming' which results from longing after an eternal undisturbed entity" (*DOM*, 93-94, my emphasis).

That is, when we see Nāgārjuna's tetralemma as a schema of (non-) assertion which reveals or points toward (*prajñapti* as "conductal clue") the devoidness of *śūnyatā*, the trace of thought/unthought or logos/off-logos difference, we are also seeing it as a praxis, a "way" (*dao*) of discourse/ understanding**/existence.** If we "off-track" within this dialectical truth-structure then the dialectic is also itself a dynamic "off-track(ing)"—the "Middle Way" is an "Off-Way."[26] We have to keep in mind this dynamism of the whole dialectic, the directionality of the trace and dynamic force of the "one stroke" of dialectical betweenness—

> Nāgārjuna's Middle Path, the Way of the Between, tracks the Derridean trace, and goes "beyond Derrida" in that it frequents the "unheard-of thought," and also, "with one and the same stroke," allows the reinstatement of the logocentric too … (*DOM*, 87)[27]

—if differential Buddhism will be able after all to solve/dissolve the problem, open or close the *aporia* (*wumen*, "gateless gate") of post-structuralism, "go beyond Derrida" in this way (though here we are by no means being sent back to

the Hegelian solution).[28] Magliola ties this sense/force of the Nāgārjunan dialectic as dynamic "Way" (process of change, of "transmutation") directly to the problematics of thought (language)/unthought (inexpressible) by quoting Sprung:

> It follows that the middle way is not a means to some final truth; it is not a path leading to knowledge. Whatever it is, it is the end of theory, and of [logocentric] knowing. It is the practice of wisdom, not a means to it. Is he [Nāgārjuna] telling us that the end of philosophical thought is not the answer to a question with which it began nor even the end of a quest, but the transmutation of "thought" into what is more than thought: into a "way"? Does the middle way not supervene at precisely the point where thought is driven beyond itself, having failed to achieve its aim—that of making sense out of all matters brought before it? Is the end of philosophy to discover that philosophical questions all along, were not in the service of philosophical answers? (*DOM*, 94)

Strung seems to suggest that when thought is changed into a "way" then the issue is no longer one of "answering the question" with which one "started." This raises the (no doubt unanswerable) question: does this sort of Nāgārjunan (and Chan) praxis then leave us "within" the question, within our questioning? Does the "way" supervene at the point where thought is driven beyond itself (into a way), having failed to "answer its question(s)," precisely because this way is the "way of the question"? Again we come back to the *aporia* of silence/language or unthought/thought. But if "answering" (as a positing or positive "determination") is logocentric whether occurring within thought/ language or within an absolute state of silence/non-thought, we are left wondering about the more ambiguous (logo- or off-centric) status of (thought or unthought) "questioning"— of the Way of/as questioning. I am suggesting here that the way of questioning takes us "beyond thought" because it is what comes just before thought, that it is fundamentally neither thought nor unthought but pre-thought, always (already) emerging in the imminent zone or moment between silence and saying.

Loy feels that Derrida cannot go so far as Nāgārjuna in the direction of an "absolute silence" or "cessation of language":

> [For Nāgārjuna] the serenity (or "beatitude": *śiva*) we seek is the coming-to-rest of all ways of taking things, the repose of named things (*sarvopalam-bhopaśamaprapancopaśamah*). His commentator Candrakīrti (seventh century A.D.) glosses the verse as follows: "The very coming to rest, the non-functioning, of perceptions as signs of all named things, is itself *nirvāṇa*... When verbal assertions cease, named things are in repose; and the ceasing to function of discursive thought is ultimate serenity." Contrast this to Derrida's problematization of the difference between signifier and signified . . . For Derrida, what is problematic is the relationship between name and concept; so it is not surprising that he concludes with an endless recirculation of concepts.

But notice what is signifier and what is signified, for Candrakīrti: The nonfunctioning of perceptions as signs for named things is *nirvāṇa*. . . The important thing in Buddhism is that the coming-to-rest of our using names to take perceptions as self-existing objects actually deconstructs the "objective" everyday world.[29]

For Loy then Derrida remains trapped within language (as Magliola has also suggested) because while he questions or even "breaks down" all signifier-signified connections he limits (the possible domain of) his "assertions" to this zone of linguistic signs, so that he "concludes with an endless recirculation of concepts" (one might have said "signifiers" here); Buddhism wants us to "stop speaking" in a more radically empirical sense (tied directly to perception/understanding of objects in the world) and thus, in a more fundamental and final way, to "become silent." Coward, on the other hand, speaks of a school (Bhartṛhari's) of Hindu thought in which we do remain within language, within that "pregnant silence" which lies ready to explode/disseminate into speech/meaning at the very heart of language:

The Absolute word-consciousness has within itself a trace, an impulse, toward differentiation into thought and spoken speech . . . there is a pent up pregnancy within *Śabdabrahman* that predisposes the silence of *paśyantī* to burst forth in thought and speech. The ultimate silence, after all negation and purification has occurred, remains within the unity of language. And that unity contains within itself the seeds of difference which create the possibility for the multiplicity of language to burst forth.[30]

And—here Coward takes us back to pre-"*Dénégations*" writings like "Violence and Difference" (on Levinas) and "Edmond Jabés and the Question of the Book"—this seems to be quite close to a certain theme in Derrida:

Silence is seen [also] by Derrida to be dynamic in nature. Rather than being the cessation of language, as suggested by Sankara and Mādhyamika, Derrida's silence is the origin, the source of all speaking, and yet a source that locates itself in the quiet between the letters of his writing. Language, both ours and God's, originates not in God's speaking but in God's keeping still—it "starts with the stifling of his voice and the dissimulation of his face. This difference, this negativity in God is our freedom, the transcendence and the verb which can relocate the purity of their negative origin only in the possibility of the Question."[31]

Here of course we shift the terms of our discussion somewhat by bringing into play (the possibility or "question" of) a Judaeo-Christian, monotheistic discourse; but then no doubt we are already entering into "cross-cultural" terrain when we do (off-) Derridean readings of Hindu-Buddhist texts.[32] And arguably the same sort of "silence" is at stake—that is, the same human longing to dwell in a silence at the heart of language and existence, a silence which paradoxically

itself longs to burst (as with the force of an exploding question) into sound and sense.

Notes

1. "Quickly say (answer)!" The comment on Shou-shan's question, "What do you call it?" in *Wumenguan* Case 43 is: "Not with words, not without words, quickly say!" (See the later discussion.) "*Dao*," speaking or going "through," can of course mean "way" as well as "say," as in the first line of the *Daodejing*—"*Daokedao, feichangdao*"—often translated something like "The way that can be spoken of is not the constant Way." Needam claims in *Science and Civilization in China* (*History of Scientific Thought* II [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1954], 228) that the character for *dao* has a "head on the right and foot on the left" in its oracle bone form, suggesting a simultaneously contemplative/pragmatic way.

2. And here it may seem we are dealing with a quite non-Platonic form of dialogue.

3. Lu K'uan Yu, *Chan and Zen Teaching: First Series* (London: Century, 1960), 22-23, 37. Hereafter *CZT*.

4. Magliola quotes Streng: "Nagarjuna 'is not saying that the true eternal state of reality is a blank; the calmness of nirvana does not refer to an ontological stratum beneath or behind the flux of experienced existence.'" *Derrida on the Mend* (Indiana: Perdue University Press, 1984), 94. Hereafter *DOM*. See note 23 on "dark" versus "blank noise" (Serres, chaos theory).

5. These are the words of "Ancestor Kao Feng." A "*chang*" is "a measure of ten Chinese feet" (Lu's note). But wouldn't the true seeker of the "original face" have wanted his *own* head to be cut off?

6. Magliola (see later discussion) reads this "original face" in terms of the signifier (my own face)/signified (Buddha's face) split.

7. For Plato the divine/inner voice is of course the truer *logos*; against this "logocentric" voice Derrida sets the deferral or difference of "writing" based on the pure repetitions of "external memory" (*hypomnesis*). (See "Plato's Pharmacy" in *Dissemination*.)

8. Or in "language/thought"—paradoxically, since this way seems more robotic and thus "mindless"—perhaps it is Mindless because performed "in thought."

9. See the later discussion.

10. The Mind is "always speaking" (Buddha's name), even when we sleep—it is perhaps a kind of "constant *Dao*" where we take *Dao* as "speaking." The mouth/outer voice, though, only speaks while we are awake. This gives us an interesting variation on Descartes' final certainty (after much hesitation) that he is "not now dreaming." Descartes assumes that if he had merely dreamed the assertion "*Cogito ergo sum*" it wouldn't have been a "real thought," a "clear and distinct idea," thus wouldn't have "counted." The *huatou*, interestingly enough, virtually reverses the priority, since here the fact that the "voice" continues even in sleep is what validates it. (A key issue for Freud, and by extension Lacan—and Descartes?—is dream-sleep versus dreamless sleep; here the *huatou* presumably gives priority to the latter.)

11. Robert Magliola, "Differentialism in Chinese *Ch'an* and French Deconstruction: Some Test-Cases from the *Wu-Men-Kuan*," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 17 (1990): 87-97, 89. Hereafter "Differentialism." *Chu* has the *chueh*-animal horn radical on the left, but the lower part of the right-hand component is a graph often used for invertebrates. Thus its "positive" meaning as "come into/onto" or "attach" is really a physical

"touching"—in one combination it means the "sense of touch" and, in another, an insect's antenna(e). It clearly also has (as Magliola says) the "negative" meanings of "ram," "offend." *Pei*, which has "north" over "moon," though "moon" here may mean "meat"—see the later discussion of *tan*-**"guts"—means** "back (side)," "reverse (side)," "behind," "turn one's back on" but also (sometimes) "to remember," "learn by rote." The senses of "reversal" and "rote memory"—Derrida's *hypomnesis*, contrasted with the Platonic doctrine of *anamnesis* or "living memory" in "Plato's Pharmacy"—are suggestive in light of the later discussion.

12. Magliola's suggestion. "Differentialism," 91.

13. "See Blyth, 281": Magliola's note. That they have the same and also opposite meanings is of course the key point. Both characters can clearly mean "offend" or "repel," thus "reverse"— are they the same because they reverse each other as in two facing mirrors (see the discussion of "Open Mouth See Guts")?—while the *chu* also (in its positive sense) means "touch." (See note 11.) But if the name actually "touches" its referent/signified/object might it not merge/disappear into it? Then we *would* after all have just the signified (word/signifier having disappeared)— apparently the contrary of *pei*-"refusing to assert" but also (more clearly than if we only have the "name" or "signifier" as in the interpretation Magliola suggests here) the "same" as it?

14. At least since "Signature Event Context" (1971); English translation, *Margins of Philosophy* (1982), trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982): 307-330.

15. Robert Magliola, *On Deconstructing Life-Worlds: Buddhism, Christianity, Culture* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 159-160. Hereafter *DLW*.

16. Robert Magliola, "French Deconstruction with a (Buddhist) Difference: More Cases from the Gateless Gate and Blue Cliff Record," *Studies in Language and Literature of National Taiwan University* 3 (1988): 1-25, 10. Hereafter "FDD."

17. That mouth which "cannot speak/repeat while we are sleeping," as the mind can.

18. Though in fact we might say a novice's question of the form "What is Buddha?"—which could be met by the master's blow or, as here, his paradox—is just as formalistic or formulaic as "How are you?"

19. Here the character for open mouth (*kuo*) reflects/echoes the sun, while guts (*dan*) has the moon (meaning also "meat") as its radical on the left—and something very like that bold, offensive "goat-horn" on top of its right-hand component. This *dan* ("guts") in its first meaning is "gall;" then "courage;" "internal parts, e.g. of a vessel;" "tube of a tire, etc." "Gall" as in "gall bladder" and "liver bile (fluid)," thus a certain kind of "inner nature" (as in "courage," "guts"). Could *dan* then (also) have meant "inner nature" or "inner voice" in this sense, as contrasted with the "outer voice" of the open mouth? *Dan*'s possible sense as "inner tube" could lead to various more-or-less "convoluted" readings on the theme of (inwardly-coiled) repetition and recursiveness.

20. See discussion of *dan*-"guts"—especially as "inner tube"—in previous note.

21. Note 19 again: "guts" as "intestines" and/or as "courage," "inner spirit."

22. We may assume that Kristeva's semiotic *khora* encompasses, as a kind of infinite space or womb, as chaos or even nonsense, the "rational limit" of (male) symbolic-representational language, just as Derrida's body of writing as recursive possibilities of *citation* (more clearly figured as "mother's womb" by Kristeva, Cixous, and Irigary) encompasses logocentric speech, and just as the Nāgārjunan/Magliolan *śūnyatā* as devoid/difference (and *chaos*?) "encompasses." The problem then becomes the "symmetry" of a two-way ("equal") reflection of/as "betweenness" versus the "asymmetry" of a devoid/difference that encompasses. Hesiod's *Theogony*, the writing/written body of Nietzsche, Derrida and French feminism and Serres' "background noise" (see following note) suggest that "chaos" (whose Indo-European root *gheu* means "yawn," "gape" and "gums") encompasses "order."

23. I suspect there may be (as yet unexplored) connections between the Nāgārjunan/ Derridean/Magliolan dialectic—*śūnyatā* as the devoid(ing), off/rational, voice/unvoiced difference—and Serres' interpretation of chaos theory in physics in terms of "dark noise" (babble, nonsense, **indetermination** of primordial disorder) which first self-orders into (meaningful) "sound" (tuned in out of static on the radio) and then, as the hyper-logical order of logical tautology, becomes the overdetermined redundancy of "blank noise" and "decays" back into "dark noise." (See e.g., *Genesis*, trans. G. James and J. Neilson [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995].)

24. While in the correspondence structure "language and reality, here the 'ultimate reality,' can match . . . and the 'logic of mutual exclusion' holds," in the intuitive structure the "'whole point of inner control is to realize one Reality pervading each particular manifestation of the Reality' . . . and the 'logic of convergence' holds." But the "'dialectical structure' . . . escapes the principle of identity and does not impute identity of any kind to *śūnyatā*" (*DOM* 93).

25. Thus simply "not-expressing" it, or "not-expressing by not-expressing" it. The latter formula suggests the imploding series of metalanguages which are Magliola's Nāgārjunan *prajñapti*.

26. Nāgārjuna himself calls of course his Way the "Middle Way" (hence *Mādhyamika*).

27. Magliola continues here: ". . . for Nāgārjuna the 'beyond knowing' allows for logocentric, i.e., language-bound knowing (in a way which frees him from Derrida's quandary concerning entrapment in language); and still Nagarjuna's 'beyond knowing' is not itself logocentric" (*DOM*, 88-89).

28. Well, arguably it remains an open question—opened in "another" way by the synchronic move beyond Hegel of French (post)structuralism.

29. Harold Coward and Toby Foshay, *Derrida and Negative Theology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 249-250.

30. Coward and Foshay, *Derrida and Negative Theology*, 211.

31. Coward and Foshay, *Derrida and Negative Theology*, 221. Coward is quoting Derrida in "Edmond Jabes," *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 67.

32. Cross-cultural "comparison" is of course the central thrust of Magliola's whole project.