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TITLE

**Ethics and Imaginings in the work of
Ian Hamilton Finlay**

by

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THE USE OF

Chapter (1) Poetics in the work of Ian H. Finlay.

Chapt (2) The necessity of imagination to a social code of ethics.

INTRODUCTION A.

Finlay's work does not present us with any particular structural theme within his work. As a result it is not going to be possible for me to discuss his work and be entirely true to it, since to mimic this collaging of elements would leave this thesis without a beginning, middle or end. In order to maintain any discussion of his work it is necessary to correlate the whole by relating one element to the other and all the elements to each. That is I have completely foreclosed the potential of his adopted format in order to identify the format itself as a style. However, I am not setting out to discuss this style in terms of any which may have preceded it, I am however setting to discuss it as a device.

I will discuss his style in terms of the thematic devices he uses in order to avoid any particular theme. That is, the theme of his work is to have no particular theme at all but instead to collage elements and use various metaphorical devices in order to interfere with the dynamic process of set structures of mortality which may be in society. It is necessary for me to import certain knowledge of the symbols and metaphors Finlay used and their relation to various assumed beliefs and suppositions within society in order to maintain such a discussion meaningfully. I will be discussing the inner workings of his work in chapter one. His method of relating one element to another in the overall structure and the existence of various substructures within this. In order to make this essay relevant to a wider realm I shall conclude this thesis by discussing the work, outside of its own terms in a discussion on political art and ecology. I do not pretend to be totally true to Finlay's work but rather I shall be working on the assumption that critique is a process extending from text rather than identifying any innate quality which permeates the entire text.

INTRODUCTION B.

Chapter 1

My view rests on the idea that because something new is always being added reason it is progressive. This correlates with Finlays use of poetics. As an artist he always has one foot outside of reality. Through his work he steps outside of all moral boundaries in order to permeate language on the level of imagination. The work is maintain a process rather than reaching any conclusion. It is by way of Finlays reliance on this area between the real and the imaginary that he destabilises what would otherwise be fixed ethics. Ideals of right and wrong present themselves as essential elements of the same dynamic system through his work. As a result heightening mans awareness of his own consciousness. This results in a dialectic process, which he leaves to the mechanisms responsible for the propagation of "truths", rather than 'questions' to resolve. This realm being the realm of politics.

"What is social about art is not its political stance but its important dynamic is opposition to society". (1)

In this chapter I will discuss the dynamics of Finlays poetics i.e. his use of form and aesthetic to evoke resonances which occur between art and culture, between the natural and the unnatural, between the real and the imaginary.

In chapter two I will discuss the relevance of this in relation to present cultural dilemma: that is postmodern aesthetic which divorces us from certain ethical possibilities by dening

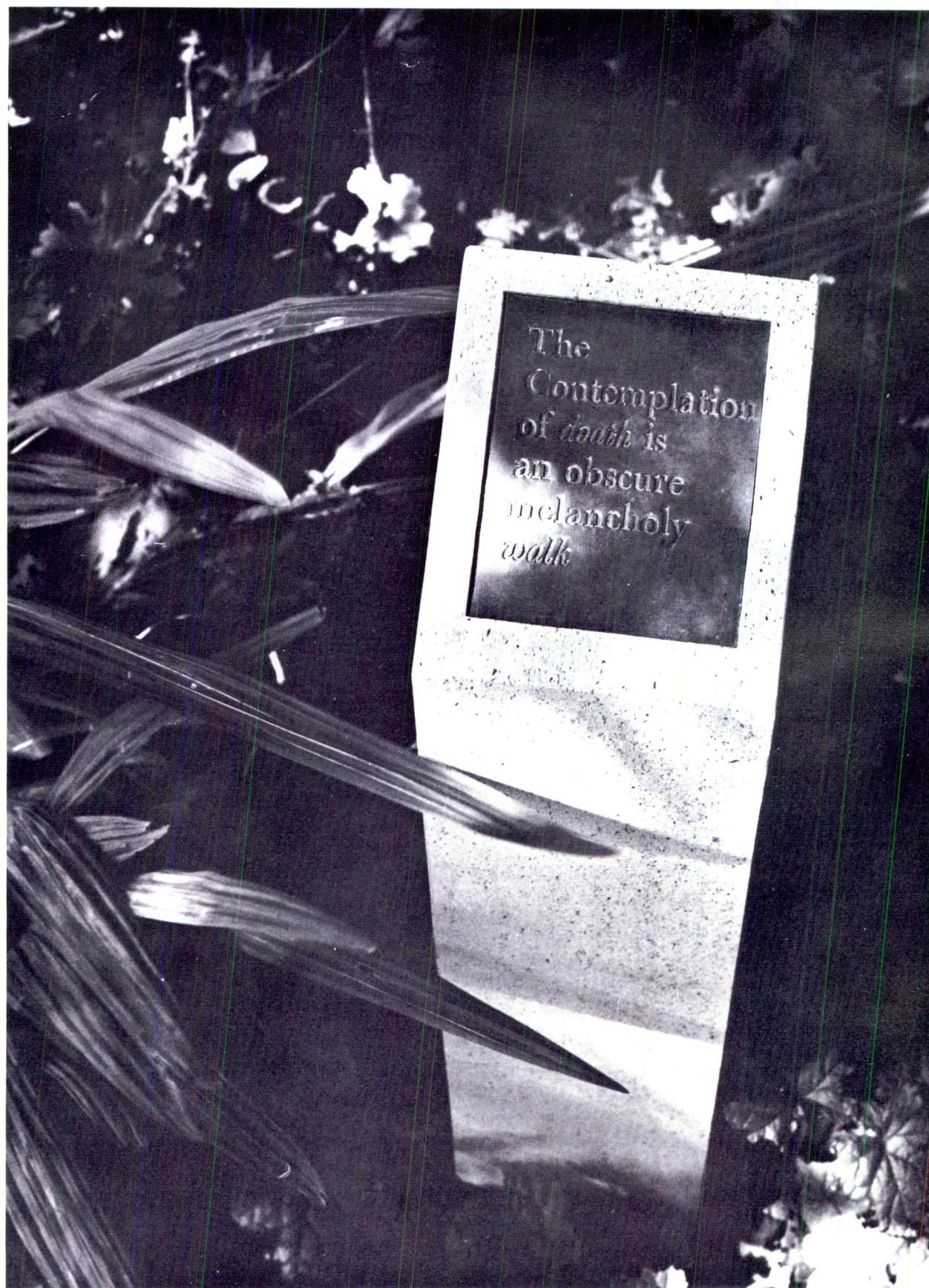
any freedom on the part of the individual to permeate the structure imposed by language.

Primary to discussion individual pieces of Finlay's work I would like first to discuss the garden as a metaphor in itself. Walter Benjamin described aura as

"the unique phenomenon of distance, however close it may be. It leaves behind it an atmosphere that is uncanny, and an impression of distance quite explicitly in excess of reality". (2)

The idea of aura is essential to the work of Finlay. By forcing us to reflect on a contained and ordered space we are simultaneously brought to a realisation of the untamed wilderness which surrounds it. It is the unlimited distances that lie beyond the walls of the garden which the contained garden itself evokes. It is as though one cannot conceive of the near without relating it to the distance on which a definition of the near relies. This kind of device presents itself in various forms in Finlay's work constantly reminding us that we create our own meaning by employing that which is real to us in order to conceive of the imaginary. By mimicking nature's ruthless order on a smaller scale we make our own laws and conceive of them as nature in itself. The garden is a cultural entity. The garden is in fact a containing space of man-made order made to mimic natural order while simultaneously paying homage to it. This device of nearness and distance is the manifestation of aura in Finlay's work. It is an example of nature made intelligible through a symbolic system which is the basis of all ideology.

The garden is as such a study of man's relationship to his circumstances of being and an



attempt to dominate these circumstances i.e. an attempt to empower himself by isolating a part of nature from the whole it comes to represent the whole i.e. to represent a universal whole which is only accessible to us through the imagination. Tamed nature as a result comes to represent the universal of nature which we can never experience since we only constitute a fraction. However it is a necessity for man to assume certain facts about his existence and the assumption of a universal and an infinite is a basic necessity to the formation of culture.

Culture as such is a feeble attempt on the part of man to give meaning to his being / existence. However being caught between his empirical existence and a haunting imagination, this reality is essentially undefinable. It is caught in a constant flux between mans being and his compulsion to define this being through conceptual relations. It is only in dreams and memory that one does not have to favour reality over that which is fictional or vice versa. Finlays garden is this kind of dream world where the imaginary and the real stand side by side with each inscribed on the other. By sacrificing the idea of a static truth - identity is seen as a relation rather than an absolute. As a result Finlays work is unnerving since it denies identify as an enclosed unit.

"The contemplation of death is an obscure melancholy walk". (3)

The walk Finlay refers to is a walk in memory. Employing one visual metaphor in order to elaborate and explain another seems an ambiguous tactic. At the same time to explain literally would negate the function which visual metaphors act out. To place words where they do not 'literally' fit avoids the foreclosure of the word within the syntax. It also avoids



It is the case with gardens as with societies: some things require to be fixed so that others may be *placed*. Ian Hamilton Finlay, *'Detached Sentences on Gardening'*.

A PLACEMENT

obeisance



Tree Column-Bases 'Lycurge' (Lycurgus) and 'Saint-Just', in the garden, Little Sparta. Photographs by Andrew Griffiths. The Wild Hawthorn Press.

a basic premise of all words. That is the grouping of dissimilar. Hence if one is to take words as literal which one must in order separate things and events from a particular time and place one must negate all variation. Words themselves demand imagination. Were we to believe words to be literal references we would believe that the word 'chair' referred to exactly the same object in every minute detail every time this word was used. Hence the very basis of language 'the word' relies on the function of imagination accepting the illogical as real. This is a necessary premise of language.

This enigma of Finlay's garden evokes a sense of a mythological world of unresolved questions. One is led to think of unknown forces perpetuating all the tensions between the cultivated and the wild which the garden itself evokes. Words hanging between the real and the imaginary. The enigma of a coherence that encapsulates so many diversities. There is a unsettling feeling in this contained world of unresolved questions.

"It is the case with gardens as with societies some things require to be fixed so that others may be placed". (4)

Finlay does not allow us any cultural innocence. His garden is punctuated constantly by a kind of Romantic irony. Seducing us into the moods and sentiments the garden evokes only to bring us back abruptly to an awareness of an author. As we read 'nature' or 'the natural' it is in fact our own sentiments which we use as translator. The mind and the outside world function as one. While Finlay's symbolism is poetic it is not bandle.

While quoting the symbolism of Nazi propogandas, Finlay changes the sense by placing it in a context which is open-ended. However the symbols themselves are utilised in the same context of Mythopoetics which is consistent in all his use of symbolism. Finlay presents symbols that wold otherwise be interpreted as literal in the form of allegories. While the symbols he uses have very direct links with our perceptions through the history of naziism and the french revolution it is not in this context that Finlay presents them. In fact his use of allegory is in direct opposition to modernist scientism and "reductionism". Rather than singling out the essential element through which to everything else can be reduced, his work becomes collage, symbols, creating metaphors, which could have no resolution in a literal way. Thereby restoring a past which does not single out the real from the fictional or the true and give preference to either. History is presented as a process involving both fact and fantasy. In memory the creative the imaginary and the distorted all stand side by side with the vestiges we hold in memory of real experience.

"The scathing truths of the imagination are displaced by the indiscriminate ferocity of fancy". (5)

Even so Finlays work is not always read as a mixture of truth an fiction. While the aesthetic qualities of Finlays work ensure that it is constantly metaphorical it is not always read as such. Any reference to Nazism in the public domain is almost automatically interpreted as a promotion of it. As a result there have been attempts to censor Finlays work from the public domain. One particular example of this was a project commissioned by the French government for the Bicentennial of the Revolution. He was accused of sympathising with Nazi politics by virtue of his inscription of the "SS" thunderflash on the piece and also



because his washing line at little Sparta had the "Siegfried Line" written on it. This reference to the Siegfried line creates the kind of ambiguity typical of Finlay since it is possible to interpret it as a reference to Wagner while it also refers to the wartime song.

Finlay draws a parallel here between folklore and ideology. Ideology being the result of the form and speech we impose on nature to mimic perfect order. Finlay constantly refers to the absolute ruthlessness which any system of order. Implies in order to maintain an imaginary microcosm of order, contained within a perimeter of a definite nationalism, there must also be a terror, a ruthlessness which destroys anything which comes into conflict with that order. As a result the imaginary the fanciful manifests a latent violence which can explode into revolution at any moment. Parallel to the ideas of the real and the imaginary realm which encompasses the ideal are violence and order which are not separate entities but essential parts of the same system. Violence and virtue are located in the realm of the imaginary. Imagination is essential to all the ethical dimensions which manifest themselves in any ideology.

Ideology is itself rooted in a concept of the universal and the infinite which we can only assume: This assumption being a product of imagination.

Any attempt to interrupt the dynamism which comes from that mixture of the real and the imaginary brings society to an unbreakable stale-mate. Without the imaginary, the poetics which enable use the conceive of the other and empathise there is no possibility for an ethical code based on a society that is an ethical code which functions for the good of a collective group.

Camouflage Sentences

To camouflage a tank is to add what Shenstone calls 'the amiable to the severe' – the beautiful to the sublime, flutes to drums.

Camoufleurs are Monday painters.

It is the bufineff of dazzle camouflage to caufe an s to appear an f, and an f an s.

Psychologists discover everything to be camouflage. It is then made clear how very little these experts know of tanks.

Realism is a style which purports to be, and is at first often taken to be, without camouflage.

Every style in art is a camouflage through which, by our own reconstruction, we think we see 'real' nature.

Nature loves to hide – said Heraclitus.

Classification of German Panzer Camouflage:

Primitive (1939) overall dark grey

Classical (1943) dark yellow, olive green, red-brown

(Cf. N. Poussin's *Funeral of Phocion*)

Plein Air (1944) 'the hedgerow campaign' – real foliage, grasses, etc., over a dark yellow ground.

The Presocratic philosophers regarded the apparent world as a camouflage; they differed as to whether the thing confused, was Fire (Heraclitus), or Water (Thales), or Air (Anaximenes), or The Boundless (Anaximander).

AFV crews who applied camouflage colours to their ~~vehicles~~, ~~staked~~ their lives on their art.

The origin then of many truths which become manifest in the real is in fact in a realm of imagination and what lies behind this we do not know. It is perhaps this which creates an eerie feeling in the dream world of 'little sparta'.

"The camouflage a tank is to add what Shenstone calls 'the amiable to the severe' - the beautiful to the sublime, flutes to drums'.

"AFV crews who applied camouflage colours to their vehicles, staked their lives on their art". (6)

There is a certain terror evoked in the realisation that the gap between a mere idea and the violence of war is so slight. Finlay refers in this to an idea which manifests itself immediately in an almost playful mimicry of nature. It is reminiscent of childhood games of hide and seek. Playing in the woods, pretending to be a tree. This parallel between what would be considered as imaginary games with the reality of battle camouflage is unnerving. It implies an unknown force which cannot be limited to any single imagination in terms of the individual. A kind of sublime imagination which has life of its own outside of any individual imagination.

Finlay's work brings us to a profound realisation of our relationship to systems of economy and power and the degree to which this moulds our perception of the world. The uncertainties which he raises lead us to ponder on life but do not set out any particular

stance that we should take up. They do not maintain any one point of view and constantly open up the real to the imaginary and vice versa. In "Osso" Finlay creates an analogy between the natural forms of marble and the system of power and economy which Naziism entails. The aesthetic of this piece is overwhelming. One is immediately led from these 'enormous' broken pieces of marble to think of an unyielding system of power with the propensity for immense destruction. While there is a sense of immense destruction in this piece the marble is itself immensely beautiful. The piece itself is enticing to the imagination which is itself unnerving. He completely denies any one master narrative in his work and consciously plays on the idea of contradictory ideologies existing within the same text.

So while Finlay is playful in his use of allegory it is in fact the propensity of the imagination to become a destructive force and become subsumed into the power of its imaginings as a power greater than itself i.e. a power inscribed into a whole society that is unnerving. Finlay points to memory as the territory both of culture and personal imaginings. These imaginings when inscribed into the real can become greater than the individual that bears them and ultimately subsume him. It is the relationship of the individual and his identity as a necessary flux between the realm of the poetic and the ethics and ideologies which stem from his capacity to imagine that is unnerving.

In Finlay's piece "Monument" he places three bronze watering cans on a plinth. The monument is a homage to Robespierre, Saint Just and Couthols. The watering cans as such take on a ritualistic element. They pay homage to the dead revolutionaries who died at the mercy of an ideology born of their own poetics. An ideology based on a poetic translation



BRING
BACK
THE
BIRCH

of the natural. The art objects in our present society do not maintain this poetic dimension.

Before objects are recognised as art before they become established as art they have a spiritual, ritualistic dimension that 'art' in our capitalistic culture cannot accommodate. Finlays garden encapsulates this magical element which we have lost in our society. In ancient tribal custom of prehistoric times was to carve drawings onto the inside of caves. These drawing were hidden from the outside world and were meant more for the spirits than for any mode of communicating with other men.

Finlays garden refers to the "unknown". A concept which we are enable to accept to a large extent in our post-modern society.

"Bring back the Birch". (7)

This pleas hang in mid-air. Who is he calling onto to restore back to us these products of nature. There are echoes of the mystical in this plea that cannot be avoided. When man attempts to communicate with the greater forces or powers which motivate nature we are immediately in the realm of magic. One is led to think of a bygone age of fortune tellers and the occult. Of a time where a there was access to a secret communications with the forces that motivate nature and possibly the same forces that motivate our imagination - "the powers of imagination!"

Referring back to Finlays piece "Osso" I would like to discuss it in terms of its connections with two other pieces. The other piece I have mentioned already is the "Monument" and the

third piece comes in the form of a room dominated by a long, low stone wall inscribed with the text "The sound of running water heard through the chinks in a stone dyke. revolution."

I am setting out again to define that connections which exist between the ethical and the imaginary. A symbolic order and ideology.

If one is to take as a start the objections raised in connection to Finlays use of the double lighting flash of the S.S. possible to say that the objection itself is not logical. It is not logical to see the depiction of this sign immediately in term of a promotion of the ideology it signifies. However it is probably the most instinctive and spontaneous reaction to its use. In its original time and space, in the original. events to which this sign referred it was not a literal sign but rather it pertained to a ritualistic homage to a greater power. It maintains an aura of a distant power. It did not refer to any particular thing in that society nor was it used as a sign to communicate but rather it was used to signify a cult. Nazism was an attempt of a whole group of people to dissolve themselves in a sublime power. Hence the use of the symbol is threatening because it stirs an instinct which recognises and pays homage to an unknown power. A power which is greater and beyond one or all of the peoples who attempt to dissolve themselves in it. The symbol refereed to an imaginary sublime. This is while each individual may have experienced a sense of power was a fragment of the entire power. The entire powercould not be absolutely known by any individual. That is to say that the sublime is an illusion evoked through the imagination and is essential to self as a social phenome.

In Finlays Monument the three watering cans maintain the same kind of mystical ritualistic

quality. In this piece Finlay makes a connection between an ideology born of the imagination of the three revolutionaries. It was in fact their own ideology which they themselves conceived of which ultimately destroyed them. Having given birth to the idea it took on a life and momentum of its own which ultimately dissolved them i.e. which became greater than the particular individual or group of individuals who conceived of it. The watering cans maintains an aspect of the ritual while also having a very literal meaning. Watering cans are used to give life to the earth by providing it with water. It was the same soil that gave birth to the ideology that inspired the french revolution that ultimately the revolutionaries were themselves dissolved in. Again Finlay creates an anxiety centered on the potential of the imagination to manifest itself in the real world and subsume the real which conceived of it.

The dyke piece again emphasises the idea of the imaginary becoming greater than that of the individual imagination which conceive of it. The imagination itself being as much as product of cultural conassiance as of personal caprice. The piece is itself a stone dyke with the inscription "the sound of running water heard through chinks in a stone dyke. Revolution!" (8) the words will inevitably erode given that they are carved into what is in effect a stone dyke. The implication that while ideas are not real they can have real consequence is one that creates huge anxieties. Ideals have a life of their own and manifest themselves independently of their source.

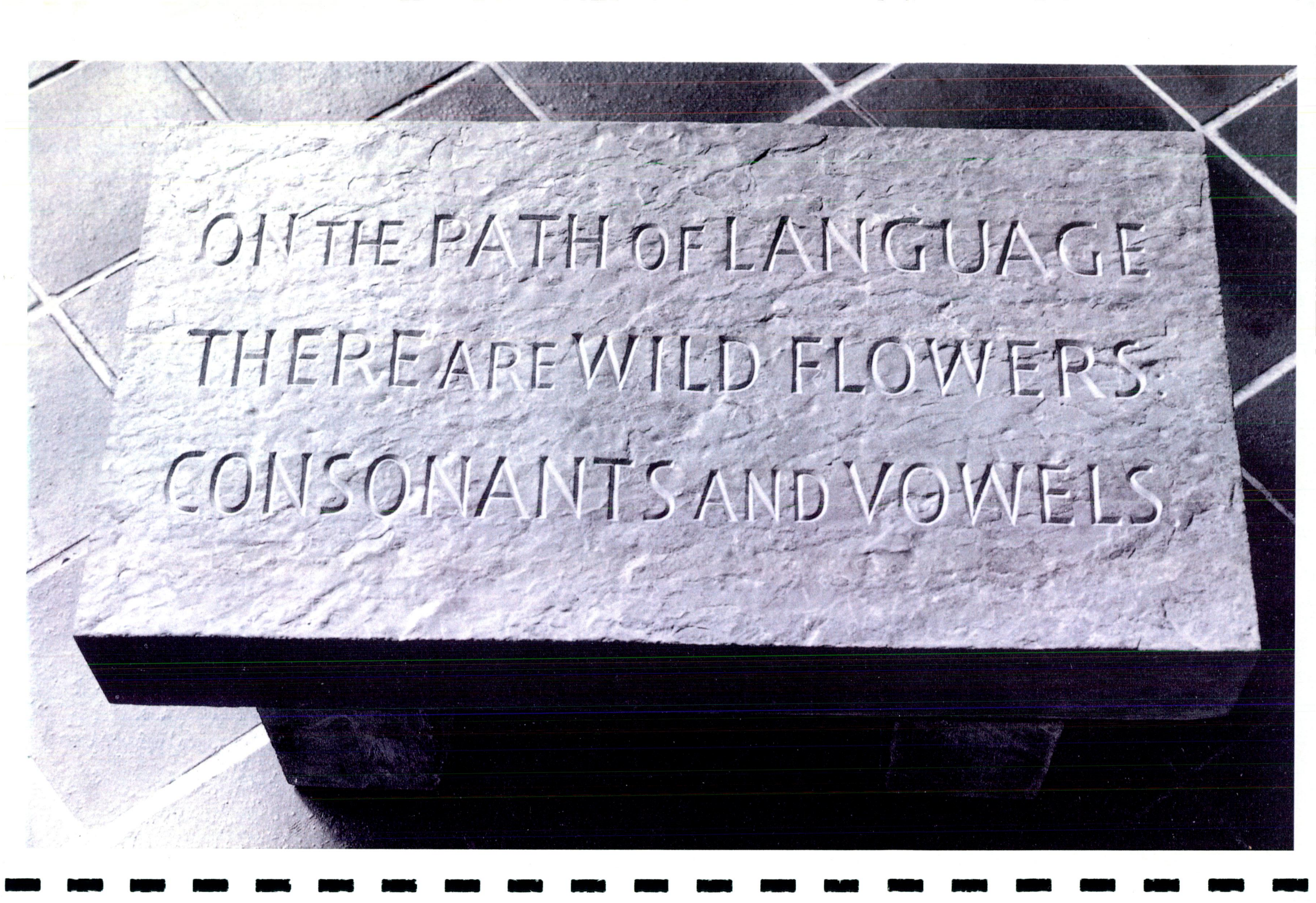
It is an idea which a Godless society cannot afford to face. Industrial Capitalism demands that the only sublime we recognise is that of technology on which this system relies. It is

through societies acceptance of this mindless sublime that the work ethic exists and we constantly pay homage to that greater all encompassing mindless power of the machine through our submission to this work ethic. In this ethos everything must be known. Technology, the machine must make everything known to us in order to provide us with a power a force in which everything is dissolved. No one experience can be left to be. The self must become the other of the mechanised system and the other the self. Everything must be dissolved into mindlessness.

Finlay is censored for reconstituting the unknown within our society. The self must know everything and everything must be made known to the self since there cannot afford to be an unknown. In order for man to continue to pay homage to the machine he must continue to see it as the greater force. Maintaining a bad faith a continual cynical belief in the ethos of nothingness which constantly reverberate from the machine itself.

In opposition to this Finlays art objects exist within a living breathing world and remain part of that world. Eroding with time evolving changing. Being and becoming offering an alternate to the ready made by restoring the object from isolation back to the realm of real time. The objects are transient in time they will change. They are not proposed as examples of culture pertaining to any particular societies rather than refer to the realm of real time where association is endless. And all artifacts belong to an entire dynamic structure of value.

Finlays use of mythopothics exist to caution us. The power that manifests itself as a result of imagination may also motivate imagination. The relationship we devise conceptually

A rectangular stone plaque with a rough, weathered texture is set into a floor made of large, light-colored square tiles. The plaque is inscribed with Latin text in a serif font. The text is arranged in three lines, with the first line being the longest and the third line being the shortest. The plaque is slightly raised from the floor, and its shadow is visible on the tiles to the right. The overall image has a slightly grainy, vintage quality.

ON THE PATH OF LANGUAGE
THERE ARE WILD FLOWERS.
CONSONANTS AND VOWELS.

so much information that it is impossible to engage with a natural order which so alienated from us.

Finlay constantly refers to this space which we cannot experience but are constantly aware of that is the space between being and becoming. His works are constantly unresolved in a sense. The works themselves are situated in the context of a dynamic processes. They are subject to shifts of light, shade, weather conditions and plant life. By placing them in this ever changing environment they have no fixed meaning. Their context which is primary to their meaning cannot be fixed. Since the two are dictated by the ever changing dynamics of nature. Hence the objects are not by definition absolute but rather constitute a relationship.

"On the path of language there are wild flowers consonants and vowels". (9)

Finlay refers to language in the same way he talks about the fixed and the placed within nature. Unlike a lot of postmodern art which refers to man mindlessness and denies any possibility of the individual. An example of this would be Blade Runner where the whole idea of identity is undermined. Again this is largely due to an acceptance within society of a mechanised sublime. The result being that we must accept the self as socially coded. It is the machine itself which implants false memory hence identity is dissolved into the machine. The idea of social coding, assumes that all these codes are static and waiting in an unidentified realm hence it denies language as a process. Language is seen as a 'prison house'. A static trap which the individual has no means of permeating or escaping.



In contrast finlay refers to language as dynamic. Hence the metaphor of 'wild flowers, constanants and vowels'. Wild flowers does not quite fit in this space as a result the meaning hangs between the finite and infinite of language and nature.

The use of metaphor avoids this contemplation of self and object, object and self. In contrast Finlays work is permeated throughout by associated meaning. Finlays use of metaphor in this case ensures that identity is defined in terms of the poetic and the real. Identity exists not as an absolute but as a relationship between the mind and the outside world.

"The words we have spoken will never be lost of earth". (10)

In metaphor words exist though the absence they invoke. Metaphor refers to the associative dimension of language. In metaphor the words which do not exist within the syntagmatic form of the sentence are those which give the metaphor meaning one must fill in the gaps by referring to the associative relations the word holds within the language - system in its entirety. Therein the metaphor refers to a dynamic living system which is outside of the syntax. Again this adds a spiritual, mystical dimension to Finlays work. The idea that that language has a life of its own refers to a universal realm of language in its entire structure. The individuals intervention in this entire system of "connections is made possible thorough the syntax. It is particularly relevant in this quote that Finlay should say "the words we have spoken" rather than "the words we have written" since it is the realm of the spoken word which is most accessible to individual intervention.

"In intonation, discourse enters into immediate contact with life. And it is in intonation first of all that the speaker enters into contact with his listener: intonation is eminently social."

Finlay writes his texts in the tradition method of poetry. That is to say his inscriptions are assertively ambiguous and elusive. They are designed as such to provoke the imagination of the reader. His poetry as such illuminates not his own intention but rather the process of reading itself and the associative dimension of language which poetry refers to. It is the gap between written and interpreter which is illuminated. The pieces never take a book form that is they are never foreclosed but rather are left floating mid-air without a cover. Through this method Finlay once again refers to the absent as being a constant ally of the present since the texts themselves are left open to the four winds of language and as such have innate connections and refer to all other existing texts.

As such, we are never provoked to understand the mind of Finlay himself but rather to understand the elements of his work as they relate within their own structure that is each element to the next and finally within the larger structure which is the entire structure of language. Thereby acknowledging the idea that "the mind I only able to understand the world only because the mind itself a part of this world". (11) It is important to emphasise that the idea of an entire structure of language cannot be experienced or proved and relies always on that language which is absent. Hence it is the realm of the imaginary.

The idea that words are events is essential to the process of working which Finlay adopts. Indeed his controversial dispute with the Scottish arts council illustrates this. In a dispute

which came about over Finlays refusal to pay rates on a building in little sparta. While the Scottish arts council claimed that the building was a dwelling and therefore could not be deemed a temple Finlay himself claimed otherwise and refused to pay the tax. Therein began a war between the "Little sparta" vigilantes and the council which resulted in the local council sherrif seizing several works of art the building. All this furore stemmed from a disagreement which was essentially a semantic one. That is from a disagreement as to the essential meaning of the word 'temple' the debate as such became a debate of the sacred and profane. It is very likely that the harshness of the councils action was not so much due to the issues involved but rather the very distabalizing effect of Finlays arguments on the essential tenets of any society. These tenets being what that society holds sacred and what it holds profane. And whether these qualities are produces of the real or the conceptual realm.

Therein language is political. Finlays use of it undermines much of the old thinking on subject and object. His metaphors which discover an area between the mind and the outside world. It is in this area-this space of doubt which nothing is absolutely definite, but everything is swimming, in a process of structuring which occupies both the mind and the outside world simultaneously-that Finlays work takes place. This coincides with the idea that the human conscious is never separate to the outside world and vice versa. Hence, one cannot consider one without considering the other.

This of course undermines any attempt to identify innate truths in either. The author as such becomes part of a realm which exists outside of any individual mind. He is as such at the mercy of language as it infolds from him. As such Finlays works are instantly recognisable



UMBRA SOLIS
The Shadow of the Sun
NON AERIS
and not of the Bronze

as objects and phrases which belong in the grater scheme of things and as such will continue to belong long after the individual this language passed through has deceased. In this sense Finlays pieces are hopeful. Unlike the denial of authorship practiced by the like of Jeff Koons or even June Levine. Finlay work does not situate the author as a mimicker in a system of dogmatic coding. His works situates man in a sublime which is unique in its every moment and where every tiny readjustment renew the consciousness which we assume. Man is aware of himself through the form and language he imposes on the world at any give moment. The individual at once defines the system which defines him.

Finlays work works on the same seductive level of the "face of the other" in advertising. However he constantly brings us back form our momentarily lapse of awareness by directing us to the devices which make this awaremess possible.

"The shadow of the sun and not of the bronze". (12)

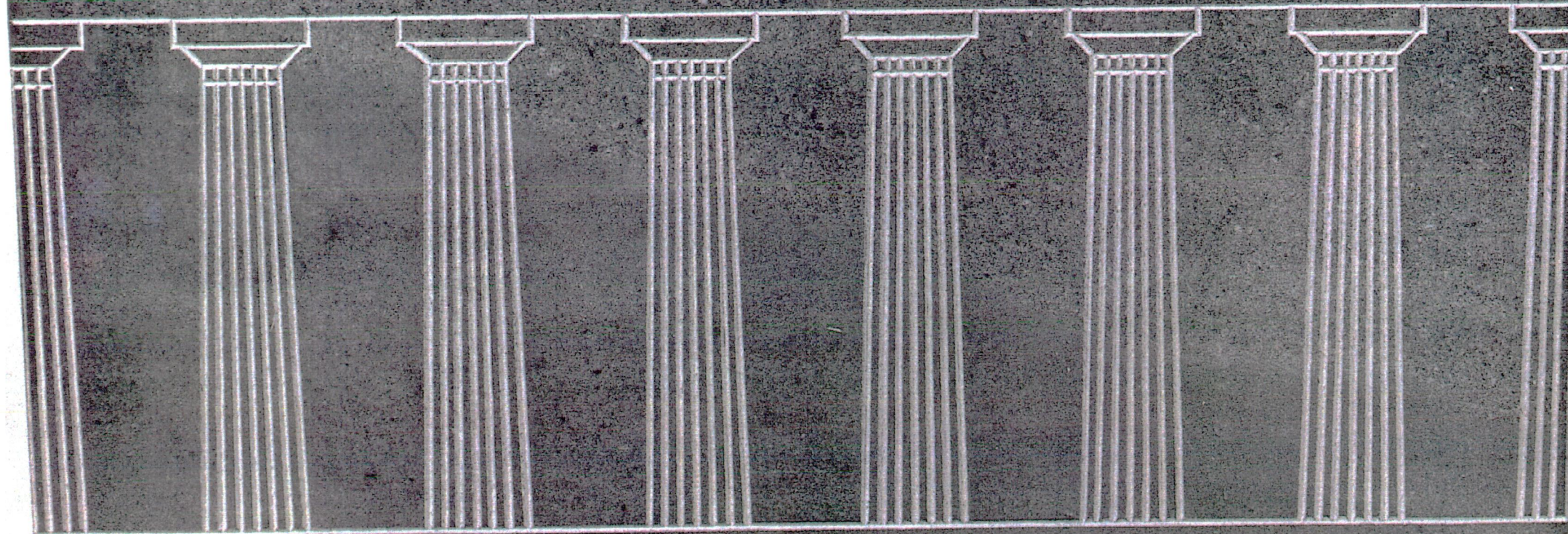
Here Finlay links the terms shadow and bronze in order to momentarily restore an absence. That being the recognition of the bronze, the shadow and the time. The interpretation of time is essentially poetic interpretation. That is it interprets the bronze and the shadow as connotations of an abstract idea which relies on the assumed postulate of a continuum of time as such the bronze, the shadow and the sun are lost to us in the recognition of the meaning they combine to denote. This continuum of time is not something we can know or prove through experience. It is through the sign which belongs neither to the bronze or the sun that we can devise a cultural interpretation which must first become blind to the natural that is unintelligible meaning of the materials in themselves. It is this abstract element

which is the basis of all language as such. Thereby connecting every element in the language to every other element. Therein lies the essence of any paradigmatic shift. By change in any system of abstract relations a basic change of the concepts that is of the poetics which make connections each element results in a completely new structure permeating the meaning of each element. It is impossible therein for any sign within a language to belong solely to an object each sign by virtue of its syntagmatic context reveals a new meaning each time it is used. The individual permeates language not through the word in isolation but through the world in its immediate context of the syntax.

Individuality therein is not innate rather it is a relation. It relies on difference and is as such a social phenome. The relationship therein between time as a conceptual value and individuality as a social phenomenon lies in the presumption of relative values through abstract concepts within all concepts. The individual is bound therefore by the values inherent in the social concept which bind one individual to another. Just as the present moment is bound to the values which connect the present moment to the future and past within the time concepts. Concepts incorporate their opposite their contrary.

Finlay refers constantly to this aspect of language which relies on the relationship of the signs which are present to the signs which are absent. The value of each sign is not anything to do with an object the sign itself refers to but rather the value is determined by the place the sign occupies within the overall structure of the language. Finlays work makes us aware of the abstract concepts which underly the relationship of one sign to another. Value is determined by nature make intelligible which is in fact culture.

EVENTS ARE A DISCOURSE



In this way happenings become events through their relationship with certain symbolic systems. Finlay's temple and the happenings which surrounded the debates concerning the nature of a temple is the most clear example of the relationship the value system of language being primary to the event. That is to say that experience and value systems are the one since differentiation is primary to both. Ideology is simply the passing of signs through one individual to the next. Happenings are events within a given symbolic order. Discourse is as such an event. Happenings have meaning when they are translated into language.

As such Finlay's art comments less on his own opinions or on nature. It functions in directing the reader of the text to examine his/her own opinions and possible prejudices. Finlay constantly directs us into realm of the absent. Hence making us aware of the symbolic values which inform our experience through differentiation. Differentiation relies on similarities. For example in order to have a writing style there must be many different similar styles which make the differentiability of particular elements which stand outside the similarities possible to identify.

CONCLUSION A

Having discussed these ideas i.e. Finlay mode of working of maintaining the poetic the imagination I would like to conclude this thesis in broadening and emphasising the priority I have given this mode of artistic practice.

In will do this by linking his practice to the crises of a capitalist industrial society i.e. the impossibility of proposing a praxis in this society and the necessity to return to the unknown.

In order to open up this possibility again and therein are-establish the possibility of an ordered society with ethics based of universal and immutable ideas - also I will emphasise that this necessity is more essential to society in the are-establishing of imagination as a necessity to an ethical dimension.

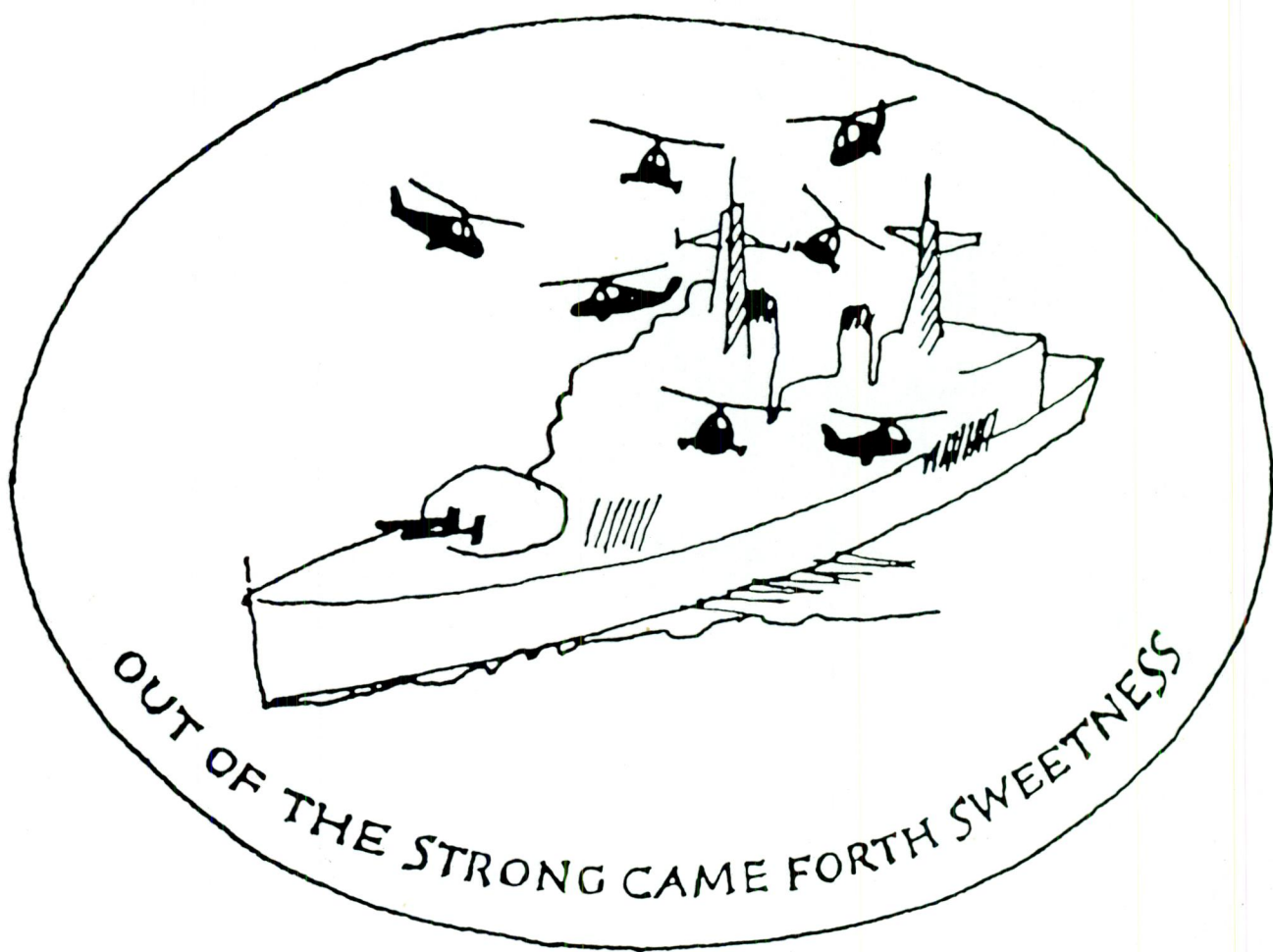
My essay will therefore conclude not by stated the crises of a society which ignores ecological issues but rather the crises of a society which denies the imagination and leaves the issue of ecology open to exploitation by a whole variety of different interests.

ECOLOGY AND ART

In the present ecological crises it is essential that art which deals with issues based on social perceptions of the natural is critical. This is to say it is essential that art maintains an ethical imagination which also incorporates the poetical potential of this imagination. Finlay succeeds in this by producing art which does not lay claim to the objects and words it appropriates in order to put them to his own ends in promoting any ethical stance which is particular to him as author. He presents his work without censoring it and leaves the language he adopts as an open door to all its possible connotations. There is no elite in Finlay's work we are invited to wonder freely from one value system to another.

By relating his work to a body of work which is specific to ecology it would seem that I am in a sense contradicting the emphasis of his work which avoids any master narrative. This ecological movement is in fact holding together vestiges of completely opposing value systems under the same terms depending on who and where it is being used.

This is not necessarily a bad thing. However this opinion would not tally with the political forefronters of the movement. It does however reflect an unresolved debate on these issues in artistic practice. This lack of resolution in art practice is necessary if art is to function not as propaganda for a particular ideology but as a means of raising consciousness through the propagation of dialectic tensions. It is only by maintaining this that we can heighten the awareness mankind holds of his own consciousness. The idea of a politics based on ecology comes alongside a new awareness of man's relationship with the natural. This is in the belief





that we only perceive through structures of language. These structures are discovered between our mind and the world outside. Hence the two form each other and are essential parts of the same system of human consciousness. Hence in order for man to escape the imminent mindlessness induced by technology and the machine he must recourse to a new sublime.

We no longer have recourse to the unknown is our postmodern experience. The unfathomable mysteries of God and nature are lost to us. In their place we have a sublime which relies on technologies and mass communications.

Thus the analogy Finlay makes in his emblem series between Heraditean cosmology and modern warfare. The analogy is the same in the second emblem which encorporates the HMS Lion of the largest British warships and the helicopters which swarm around the ship like bees. Again equating the mysteries of the natural with that which has replaced them, the mechanics of the modern warfare.

The equation of the ruthlessness of a natural system of perfect order and that of modern technological systems of power is an authentic one. It does however enforce the ridiculousness of paying homage to a sublime which is mechanic i.e. is itself an invention of man and is as such totally understandable to him. While it may inspire the same terror as a system of ruthlessness and order it does not inspire the same awe hence the relationship demenates man rather than uplifting him. It is impossible to achieve a sense of greater being by submitting to a man-made sublime which is mechanical i.e. is not beyond our

understanding. The awe of simply existing without asking the question how is in some way dissatisfying. It is a basic tenet of mankind's nature not only to question that we exist but also to question how we exist.

Without a God image and with the sublime of nature being lost in an age of virtual reality and mans conviction in his ability to be creator down to the very basis of human experience man is left with a sense of powerlessness in a religion of inhumanity and mindlessness which the technological sublime inspires.

With each generation comes a prediction of the day of judgement. In our generation it is an ecological day. In one way a move back to the sublime of nature would restore a basic catharsis within our culture. Having said that if nature is to be claimed high judge it is essential that we maintain an awareness of nature as being that area of uncertainty a dynamic relationship between the mind of man and the outside world. In order to avoid a dogma based on cultural concepts of the natural art practise must recognise the relationship between man and nature as one of becoming.

It is within this context that the aesthetic of the age of ecology must function. This inability to define the self as an absolute but rather as a relationship in flux extends to society and it is in this context of co-existence that art must function. To allow the polarities and binary oppositions which exists in the process of culture to become manifest in the aesthetic without censorship. It is here that we locate the necessity of myth. Myth stands outside experience and this is its essential function. Myth is a means of hinting truths to offer mere

glimpses at a realm of unlimited association. The poetics of art are essential to arts reaffirmation of imagination and its essential function in equating similars and dissimilars. It is from this process that value systems come about.

Where the aesthetic is censored in order to manipulate language to a particular ideological intent it is no longer the realm of art, but rather it is propaganda.

Such as aesthetic would be self reverential and have no play within the associative realm of language. Since arts essential functions is to question existing value systems. An art which set out only to reinforce a value system or ideology would as such act as advertising does to capitalism. I am assuming here a position which presumes the possibility of reading a text visual or linguistic in terms of its own existing elements and their relative values. That is I am opposing the idea of asserting true meaning in the text through identifying the authors intent or through a reading which would be anthropological or sociological. By allowing art to maintain a multitude of meanings and values in flux without foreclosing any of them the imagination is allowed to function uncensored.

Ecology is the great terror of our age. As such it is platform which could be used to the advantage of any particular ideology passing under the guise of ecology. This may sound like paranoia implicating one social class as being intent on deceiving and exploiting another.

However it is more a concern that the multiplicity of ideologies existing within our present society are not seen to be one master narrative within aesthetic practice. In order to have an ecological ethic in our society it must allow for the contradictions it will bring about in ideological terms. The flux of contradictory ideologies must become apparent in order for dialectic tensions to exist. This avoids the orthodoxy of a master narrative.

The imagination is the realm of identification with the other. Without this ability ethics can only exist as narrow minded puritanical dogma. The imagination frees us from the limits of self, allowing us to experience a variety of different perspectives. This is the basis of an ethic of free speech i.e a tolerance for all attitudes or at least for the expression of all attitudes. It is only outside of our own personal reality that we can envision a code of ethics which incorporates the other.

While the idea of the image has been undermined by the idea of signifiers relating to each other and therefore the represented having little relation to the representation it does not undermine the ethical dimensions of the image as it stands alone as a plea for justice. Hence to progress from it is necessary for us to progress in an system of ethics has its roots in the epistemological.

"In conclusion, we may postulate that three ethical functions of imagination - utopian testimonial and empathic - are ultimately linked to poetic activity of imagining otherwise. How could we commit ourselves to utopian possibilities of existence, recount the stories of past heroes and victims or respond, to the ethical call of fellow humans, without the

imaginative ability to listen to other voices from other times and places? And is it not this aesthetic acoustic which enables us to record a new voice for those others here and now."

FOOTNOTES

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3. IBID 2. pg 103.
4. IBID 2. pg 262.
5. Arts - Review London England v. 44 Mar. '92 pg 85.
6. IBID 2. pg 170.
7. IBID 2. pg 175.
8. IBID 2. pg 146.
9. IBID 2, pg 258.
10. IBID 2, pg 44
11. Structuralism John Sturrock pg Paladian Press.
12. IBID 2. pg 237.
13. Richard Kearney Poetics of Imagining from Husserl to Lyotard.
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