

(E)facing the Face - The Body of the Text

The face is a living presence; it is expression...The face speaks...

Levinas

...For the individual needs to purify the face...

Rebbe Nachman

I seek Your Face...

Psalms 27:8

The body, heavily weighed by physiological needs, falls beneath the slow sway of temporal binds. The body grows and ages, and what was once new deteriorates and crumbles. Facing its effacement-the body- crushed beneath somatic fatigue, struggles to summon it's last vestige of strength.

The book, the thought expressed on the text runs the risk of being made an idol. With a precise beginning, a centered middle, and a totalizing end, the narrative reveals itself. In revelation, emptied of all hidden subtext, the text is con/textual/ized and thus open to misrepresentation. As a perfect whole, the work takes its place in history, banished to the dusty shelves of works finished.

The face, the openings of personalized being, resists the curve of time. The face (re)presents the "more" that evades the trapping of the totalized body. In the face we perceive, receive, something beyond the body. In its innocence the face points to depth, to subterranean streams of unspoken, undefined experience. While the body is subsumed by the orders of time and place, the face speaks of an absent presence, present in its absence. As Levinas taught, the face is the trace of the transcendent, the trace of the infinite.

The book, the body of work is the face. Surrounded by the pre/face and the post/face who seek to contextualize the text. The preface tells of the authorial intent, the concretized and static direction of the book. The post-face speaks of what was learnt, how the book was meant to be read. Within the boundaries of the intended meaning lives the body of work, the face of the text. Reading must remain open to the infinite interpretations. The face beckons, demands to be experienced, beyond the intent of the author.

There are seventy faces to the text...