

Adam Day

an excerpt from a poetry sequence entitled, *Midnight's Talking Lion and the Wedding Fire*.

Untitled claims underscore a small social microcosm
then widens the scope to include all of the neighborhood,
addressing “sickness” of American “social order” and its “total
implication” for the “total being” of the “total Negro.”
Argument about the personality and identity formation brown
of black American as such within segregated society,
an unconventional ethnography of everyday life inside “total
institutions,” closed worlds: prisons, army barracks, airports,
TSA processing, boarding schools, nursing homes,
monasteries: identity formation within a system of social
segregation. System binaristic, like social order of Jim Crow
anywhere, yet not organized by racial difference. Instead,
depends on “basic split between large
and managed group, conveniently called inmates, and small
supervisory staff.” Much like Ellison, the sociologist was

interested in how members of the subordinated population strive to define themselves, to attain an identity that rejects “the second-class status assigned them.”

Freedom danger; what you want from it? “-borhood is a ruin,” commissioned, but ultimately not published... Ordinary neighborhood racialized poverty alienation in the land of their birth.” And yet, alternative institution offers asylum.

A basement passage seems to lead to a blank wall; then at last one enters the brightly lighted auditorium” a bit disoriented “social workers as “white-jacketed psychiatrists carrying a flurry within “an atmosphere of shelter, however fleeting, a clean, bright space where “concerned faces” are met by “expert workers.”

One small, unfunded, and employing staff of 4,000 at its peak. Ellison emphasized link between mental health and lived environment. St. Elizabeth’s, by contrast, impersonal, bureaucratic, confinement, site where patients, or what Goffman calls “inmates,” were to endure a “daily round

of petty contingencies,” as well as traumatizing experiences such as electroshock therapy.

A group of connected modern childhood traumas, dreams, semi-psychotic. Threat of something is ever-immanent, “this the...bloodletting behind the day.” How the self seems to suggest separation, sense a vision may have significance only to oneself. Not portraying vulnerability, but is vulnerable, creating something akin to a perception of responsibility for, or a role in, the state.

How trauma, psychoanalysis and dreams offer threat to self's sovereignty, and paradoxically work to construct personal identity. Risk to self's sovereignty seems to acknowledge insufficiency of narrative to explain, as well as need to speak for about experiences and aspects of multiple selves, across time and mind, struggling to understand.

The invisible zone of reclusion is itself a secondary adjustment., imperfect but, illuminating – indirect challenge to social order allows individual to claim identity taking some measure of control over lived environment – which

“represent ways in which individual stands apart from role and self that were taken for granted for him by institution.”

Subjectivity "the other" author allows us into by using the second person. Jobs bleed into identity, vice versa. Life roles: son of aging parents, father, writer, attorney – genuine and enforced performativity, overlap of borders. Living in the show, but also life who do you have to be at a given moment among expansiveness and especially circumscription of role - front stage, back stage. How represented: sushi chef, Dr. karate master; terrorist, cab driver; athlete, dealer; CEO, soccer mom Fed up. Inhabiting a site where one can, literally, “stand apart”

from any socially prescribed role. Not only a “free-place,” a site of “relaxation and self[-] determination” that enables them to “be own” self, but also a “stash” or “personal storage space” that adds up to physical “extension of the self.”

Early in C.D. Wright's *The Big Box Store* Spring Midnight Fire poetry is: "speech by someone who is in trouble," on the whole Paris is by no means exclusively quite affluent — banlieues have incomes as America so if you have seen the living found in those counties you can imagine the future generations at escape." Further noted is data organized by neighborhood... Cites, like American analogue, augment detachment. People communicate across the crevasse addressing identity formation evolution.