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**The Glass Machinery in
Christopher Dewdney's *Predators of the Adoration***

Catherine Cook-Sourice

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

English

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
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ABSTRACT

The Glass Machinery in Christopher Dewdney's *Predators of the Adoration*

Catherine Cook-Sourice

Within the context of Christopher Dewdney's sociopoetic critique of Western culture, this study examines the recurrent trope of the "glass machinery" in Dewdney's highly symbolic 1983 collection of poetry, prose, and visual art, *Predators of the Adoration: Selected Poems 1972-82*. Employing a strategy of repetition, association, and layering, Dewdney explores the workings of "the glass machinery," a complex, all-encompassing, metaphorical symbolic system that imitatively represents the very perceptual paradigm that Dewdney "indignantly" critiques and "shatters." Though a significant trope throughout his work, the glass machinery recurs most comprehensively in *Predators*; thus, this study, while focussed on *Predators*, also frequently refers to Dewdney's other "incestuous" books, which illumine and explain one another. Three equally intriguing and interconnected tropes reveal the glass machinery's nature, workings, and purpose, which renders them essential to any discussion of the glass machinery: the Christ archetype, the concretion, and Remote Control. This study thus contains three chapters: one on the glass machinery, one on the Christ archetype, and one on both the concretion and Remote Control. Given the complexity of Dewdney's work and the shortage of secondary sources, I provide, as a basis for further work, a general overview of each trope within the context of the glass machinery, as well as within the context of

Dewdney's critique of what he considers to be the dominant "perceptual paradigm" in Western culture.

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Since Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and William Blake's work figure prominently in my thinking about Dewdney's work, I would like to thank Dr. Louis Poteet for his course on the Gothic novel and Dr. Robert Philmus for his course on William Blake. As well, I thank my two thesis readers, Dr. Laura Groening and Dr. Robert Sorfleet, for their feedback, which will be particularly useful in my future work on Dewdney; in this context, I would also like to thank the Chair of my thesis defence, Dr. Andre Furlani, for being a wonderful defence host. To Susan Brown, I extend a profound thank you for all her long-distance help during the past three years, which facilitated my completion of this project in North Bay, Ontario.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Alter Sublime</i>	<i>AS</i>
Cohen's <i>Beautiful Losers</i>	<i>BL</i>
Selwyn Dewdney's <i>Christopher Breton</i>	<i>CB</i>
<i>Demon Pond</i>	<i>DP</i>
<i>Fovea Centralis</i>	<i>FC</i>
<i>Predators of the Adoration</i>	<i>PA</i>
<i>The Immaculate Perception</i>	<i>IP</i>
Dante's <i>Inferno</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>Last Flesh</i>	<i>LF</i>
Blake's <i>The Marriage of Heaven and Hell</i>	<i>MHH</i>
Burroughs' <i>Naked Lunch</i>	<i>NL</i>
<i>The Radiant Inventory</i>	<i>RI</i>
<i>Recent Artifacts from the Institute of Applied Fiction</i>	<i>RA</i>
Olderr's <i>Reverse Symbolism Dictionary</i>	<i>RSD</i>
<i>The Secular Grail: Paradigms of Perception</i>	<i>PA</i>
Joyce's <i>Ulysses</i>	<i>U</i>
Selwyn Dewdney's <i>Wind Without Rain</i>	<i>WWR</i>

*O Times remote!
When Love & Joy were adoration,
And none impure were deem'd...*

William Blake
The Book of Los

Introduction

To discover the truth in anything that is alien, first dispense with the indispensable in your own vision.

Leonard Cohen
Beautiful Losers

Raised in London, Ontario, 47-year-old Christopher Dewdney, who has been a Toronto resident for the past twenty years, is a man of many talents: poet, visual artist, editor, media and culture commentator, Academic Advisor at Calumet College, Fellow at the McLuhan Institute of Technology, and professor of creative writing at York University.¹ He is also a visionary of the rare likes of Dante and William Blake,² and in this capacity he figures himself in *Radiant Inventory*'s "Knowledge" as a "healer" in an almost shamanistic sense:

I am a self healer.
I heal selves.
I show them
where I live.
The whistling silence
at the front
of the jet. (84)

During the past twenty-seven years, Dewdney has published fifteen³ works: *Golders Green* (1971), *A Palaeozoic Geology of London, Ontario* (1973), *Fovea Centralis* (1975), *Spring Trances in the Control Emerald Night* (1978), *Alter Sublime* (1980), *The Cenozoic Asylum* (1983), *Predators of the Adoration* (1983), *The Immaculate Perception* (1986), *Permugenesis* (1987), *Radiant Inventory* (1988), *Recent Artifacts from the Institute of Applied Fiction*⁴ (1990), *Concordat Proviso: A Recombinant Text* (1991), *The Secular Grail: Paradigms of Perception* (1993), *Demon Pond* (1994), and *Last Flesh: Life in the*

Transhuman Era (1998). All are works of poetry except for *The Immaculate Perception*, *The Secular Grail*, and *Last Flesh*, which are classified as non-fiction.

Despite Dewdney's already significant body of work, the literary praise and controversy generated by it, and three nominations for the Governor General's Award for Poetry,⁵ very little scholarly work has yet been published. To date, the Dewdney scholar will find about only twelve journal articles on his work,⁶ most of which were written during the seventies and eighties.⁷ The interpretive thrust of this thesis therefore rests on a close and critical reading of primary over secondary sources. Ultimately, the lack of critical attention paid to Dewdney's work seems due to the radically complex, obscure, scientific, and post-Modern aspects of his early work, perhaps unprecedented in Canadian literature and rarely paralleled in world literature. In fact, Brian Fawcett, who deems Dewdney "our first world-class poet,"⁸ claims that "[t]here is no poet in the world who even faintly resembles Dewdney" and "no poet in Canada...who possesses [his] intellectual torque and originality of language" (Rev. of *IP*, 20). Generally described by critics as "alien," "difficult," and "baffling," which perhaps partially explains "[t]he whistling silence at the front of the jet," the early work on which this study focusses does indeed present the reader with such interpretive difficulties that Robert Lecker begins his 1985 essay with "[w]e can experience...Dewdney's poetry, but is it possible to *understand* it?" (136)

Unfavourable critics suggest that Dewdney's early work cannot be understood. William Gairdner claims that the poetry in *A Palaeozoic Geology* is "too intellectual," the prose "too suspect," and the book merely "another of those nicely printed books meant to impress us....but [with] very little [that] is moving" (102). Robert Billings considers Dewdney

“a victim of [post-modernism]” (113) and *Alter Sublime* a failure “simply because of what it is” (112): full of “vague philosophical/non-sensical pronouncements” (112) and obscurity. In “Dewdney’s Science,” Keith Garebian⁹ contrasts Dewdney’s *Predators of the Adoration* with work by other scientifically minded poets, ultimately suggesting that Dewdney’s poetry is too “scientifically biased” (32) to communicate anything intelligible, and that the scientific diction, unaided by other recognizable language, “obfuscates the issue[s]” (32). Garebian concludes that in *Predators* “there is little that is common” (33), “no over-arching curve from science to morality to religion” (33), and no “fundamentally ethical bias” (33) or “spiritual purpose” (33), all of which he deems necessary.

Acknowledging but looking beyond the interpretive difficulties of Dewdney’s early work, as do Blakean and Joycean critics, favourable Dewdney critics believe that something can indeed be understood in his early work, and that there is much to admire and enjoy. W.J. Keith, for example, concludes that “[w]hen I understand him, the intimations of profundity and grand connections are awesome” (205). Douglas Barbour states that “much of the writing makes large, even occasionally exasperating, demands of the reader, yet the rewards are great” (755). In *The Family Romance*, Eli Mandel, who explains Dewdney’s place as Canada’s “most radical experimentalis[t]” post-Modern writer (83), deems him “the most advanced thinker, if not writer, in the country” (177). In contrast, David McFadden considers Dewdney’s “reputation for difficulty...simply unfounded” (82) and his early work “easier to grasp” than Blake’s work (82). Moreover, McFadden considers Dewdney a “fun” and “humorous” poet whose work is “a pleasure to read with or without understanding” (82); “[i]n fact it might be better if you don’t understand” (82), he adds, citing Robert Fones’ belief

that “you can return to it again and again and walk away with something new each time” (83). For his part, Stan Dragland in *Predators*’ afterword praises Dewdney’s “wildly original writing” (206), “exciting complexity” (191), and “grand design of great wit and obliquity” (206). As John Thurston notes, many of those endorsing Dewdney and his work (Mandel, McFadden, Dragland, Fawcett, Michael Ondaatje, and Steve McCaffery,) are themselves poets; thus, he believes, “[i]t behooves those interested in contemporary Canadian poetry to attend to any writer who has made such an impression on his fellow poets” (188).

In discussing Dewdney’s early work, I focus on four recurrent tropes as they appear in *Predators of the Adoration*, a collection of highly symbolic and metaphoric work produced between 1972 and 1982. A complex whole, *Predators* is comprised of five major sections that correspond with five of Dewdney’s earliest works: *A Palaeozoic Geology*, *Spring Trances*, *Fovea Centralis*, *Cenozoic Asylum*, and *Alter Sublime*. As Dewdney specifies in “A Note on the Text,” “[t]he sequence of poems in the original volumes is illuminating,” but the selected “material in...[*Predators*] has been ordered along slightly different lines of coherence” with some revisions (PA 207). Thus, *Predators* possesses its own life, logic, and order, and is herein viewed as a distinct and unique work containing the essence of Dewdney’s early work. It is also viewed as reflective of Dewdney’s entire canon, for like a moth hovering round a street lamp, Dewdney never strays from the thematic concerns first posited in the early work; they are his “mathematical constant[s fixed] from forest to forest” (PA 23), or from poem to poem and book to book.¹⁰ As well, then, *Predators*’ “Palaeozoic Geology” section can be said to contain the “blueprint” for all Dewdney’s subsequent work, as Dewdney himself suggests in *The Immaculate Perception*’s “Writing”:

Once begun, the natural trajectory of a written train of thought elaborates an implicit order. The first sentence carries with it the blueprint for the whole subsequent work, much as an embryo contains the code for the adult organism. (73)

Despite my focus on *Predators*, Dewdney's other works often enter this discussion, for his "incestuous" (Heinimann 53) books illumine one another. While comparing Dewdney's work to the concretion, which grows by accretion, Dragland explains that Dewdney "offer[s] a field of images which gathers, from line to line, poem to poem, book to book to make a total serial 'poem with no hard corners'" (193), and that the poetry "expands in the mind of the reader as [he] folds in more and more related matter" (194). Alistair Highet notes that "[t]he 'Spring Trances' sequence is...expansive, with each segment both a repetition and an embellishment" (12). In turn, Robert Lecker speaks of Dewdney's "layer[ing of] words, language, [and] experience" (139). Indeed, Dewdney expands his central thematic concerns by repeating images, words, and lines and continually associating them with others in a myriad of layered contexts so that gradually his work explains itself to the curious, patient reader. Dewdney and most critics agree, moreover, that his post-*Predators* work grows increasingly accessible.

Stylistically, *Predators* ranges from the conventional to the uniquely unconventional and radically post-Modern. Each major section combines two or more of the following: lyric verse, prose poetry, log entries (aptly described by Paul Dutton as "prose fragments with poetic correlates" [29]), prose reportage, parenthecized fragments, and prose manual fragments. *Predators* also includes a preface, an epigraphic poem, a "Bibliography of Creatures," a glossary, a table of "Local Place Names," and a table of "Geological Periods."

Interspersed throughout the collection, as well, are sixteen illustrations with forms as varied as those of the text: a map, diagrams, drawings, collages, and photographic montages. An integral part of the whole, the black-and-white illustrations mirror Dewdney's words on the white page while visually highlighting key thematic concerns, which renders them as crucial to a discussion of his work as is his text. In fact, as Dewdney explains to David Heinemann,

a poem can occur in different forms. It can be a three-dimensional object, or perhaps a collage. Many of the collages in *Predators of the Adoration* are poems that could not be expressed in any other way except by a visual illustration, and the method of assembly was the same as the poems. They would simply come together from a vaster body of material. (53)

Serving as my introductory context, and interpretive beginning and end, is "The Immense Odds Against a Fossil's Occurrence" (Fig. 1), *Predators'* final two-page illustration that unites its central images and themes while visually representing the entire collection, as the large round piece of fossil-filled limestone in the background suggests. "[I]f history is a book then limestone must be the pages of that book and fossils the writing on those pages" (74), writes Dewdney in *The Immaculate Perception*. If, metaphorically, such is the case, then *Predators* can be seen as Dewdney's book of history, its pages as limestone layers, his poems and illustrations as fossils, and "The Immense Odds" as the fossil that symbolizes *Predators* and the essence of what Dewdney attempts to communicate. And Dewdney does attempt to communicate something, for in a 1985 interview he informs Peter O'Brien that he is "very concerned with meaning, with actually saying something on the primary, apprehended level of the text" (105).

In "The Immense Odds," Dewdney unites the four central images on which this discussion focusses: the glass machinery, Christ, the concretion, and Remote Control. On

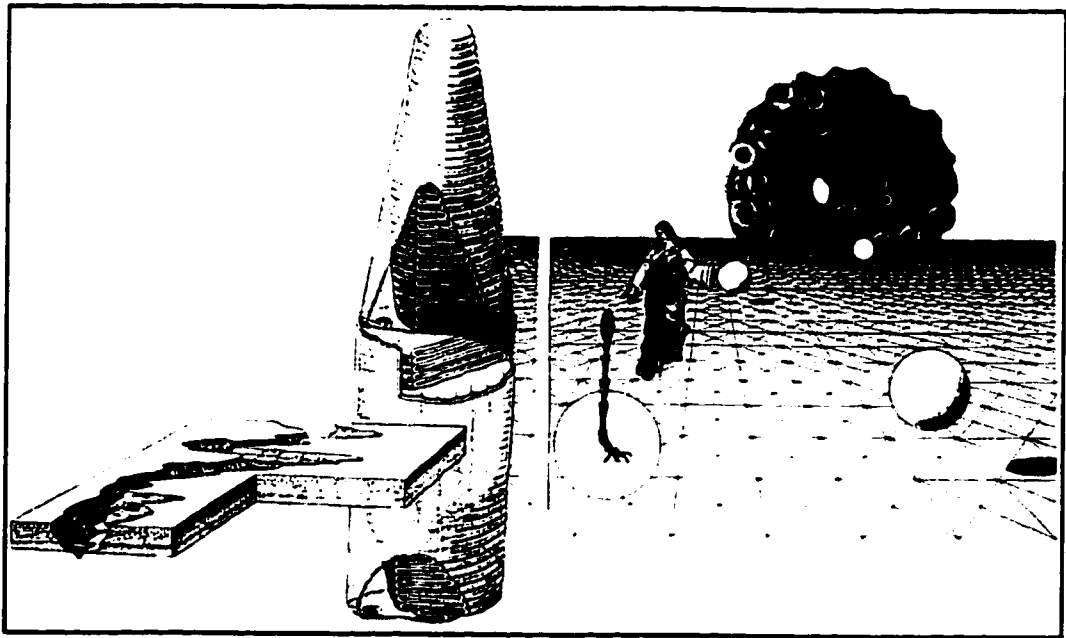


Figure 1 Dewdney's "The Immense Odds Against a Fossil's Occurrence"

the left page is a glass machine, for its coiled inner workings can be seen through the transparent outer wall. On the right page are four spheres that are concretions,¹¹ which in *Predators* are "remote control mechanisms" (PA 108); that is, they enable one thing to control another *from a distance*. The drawing's central and only human image is the Christ figure. Aligned with a concretion to his right, the Christ figure, as if giving a command, extends his right hand toward a horsetail¹² fern rooted in another spherical concretion; the distance between the Christ figure and horsetail is suggestive of Remote Control. Quite likely, the command being given is the command to "[e]xtend your hand / and repeat after me / 'one look indivisible'" (PA 32): a command that everyone adopt the same God and monotheistic, Christian perspective so that, as Christopher Frye writes in *The Lady's Not for Burning*, there be "[n]o / two ways of life. One God, one point of view. / A general acquiescence to the mean" (71). Implicit in that command is the repetitive, insistent command

of “Song of Remote Control”: “Give yourselves up to Remote Control. / We will take care of everything” (*PA* 113) for “you.” In uniting the glass machinery, Christ image, concretion, and Remote Control, which recur throughout Dewdney’s work but most comprehensively in *Predators*, “The Immense Odds” asserts a close connection between all four images while indicating the thematic centrality of the Christ figure and his command.

Although Chapter 1 examines the glass machinery, Chapter 2 the Christ archetype, and Chapter 3 the concretion and Remote Control, the ultimate concern of this thesis is Dewdney’s glass machinery in light of his critique of Christianized Western perception, and the type of consciousness, culture, existence, and individuals defined by it. While the Christ figure and his command ultimately account for Dewdney’s desire to “shatter” the glass machinery, the concretion reveals “the workings of [its] unseen machinations” (*PA* 138), and Remote Control reveals its purpose: mass “subliminal manipulation” (*PA* 110) and “absolute control” (*PA* 110). Warranting far more discussion than is herein possible, each of these intriguing images is itself a complex symbol and metaphor; therefore, as a basis for further study, I provide an overview of each image within a specific interpretive context to illustrate some of the “grand connections” between these images, and the “exciting complexity” of Dewdney’s work. I also hope to show that Dewdney is indeed, as Highet writes, “a far more traditional poet thematically than some of his...contemporaries” (3), and that his work is, at the very least, as approachable and worthy of critical attention and study as is that of Blake or Joyce. Finally, it seems to me that everything in Dewdney’s work can be interpreted in either a negative or positive context, that there are “always the two directions” (*PA* 109). My analysis focusses on the negative direction and context.

Within Dewdney's critique, I believe, the glass machinery represents the dominant paradigm that has shaped and become what can loosely be referred to as "Western perception": the cultural glass of the mind through which socialized individuals perceive themselves, others, and their world, and which defines consciousness, identity, and social reality. Ultimately, however, Dewdney appears to view the glass machinery as an outmoded, life-denying medieval perceptual paradigm still dominated by the Christ ideal, and still shaping and dominating late-twentieth-century individuals from within, and from 1500 years away. In "Opium," which alludes to Marx's view of religion as "the opium of the people,"¹³ Dewdney further suggests that Western perception is a complex symbolic system from whose deadening influence *no one* entering Western culture escapes, not even the poet himself: "This particular landscape implicates you. / (In a vision of symbolism that symbolizes / even the symbolists!)" (PA 80). In the same poem he writes that "[t]his means crystal to you" (PA 80), glass crystal. Much later in "Brain Pan," a glass floor "heaves under the vision of our arbitrators" (PA 162-3); thus Dewdney reveals that the all-encompassing symbolic system of the glass machinery is also the vision of "our" (PA 163) self-serving, utilitarian-minded arbitrators who "merely measure out our portions / of pain & gladness, as one would / loose sand through the fingers..." (PA 163). Indeed, the glass machinery represents, perceptually, an ideology¹⁴ rooted in Christian morality and consequences (*i.e.*, the reward of heaven or punishment of hell) that enables the arbitrators of this world to attain and maintain absolute power and control by transforming individuals into passive-minded, unquestioning, fearful, servile children who gladly depend on those in control and who, as a result, never think, grow, or love.

In terms of Dewdney's religious critique of Western perception, nowhere is his contempt for monotheism, medieval Christianity, and Christian *ideology* more undeniably expressed and clearly explained than in *The Secular Grail*. In his "Statement of First Principles," he writes that

Deistic explanations are a reduction of the singular amazingness of our world. They diminish it by trivializing it, confusing it with mythology. Notions of an afterlife demean the sanctity and profundity of existence. Historically, belief in immortality has justified the slaughter of millions of human beings. Genocide incubates in the heart of monotheism. (SG 189)

In "Monotheism as Ant Trap," he likens Christian ideology to a viral infection and insect poison, and describes Christianity as a mutating, fear-based "opportunistic conceptual system":

CHRISTIAN IDEOLOGY was the primary infection of the Roman Empire. As the Empire lay rotting its body was looted by successive waves of vandals who unwittingly carried the infection of Christianity back to their homelands in much the same manner that ants carry particles of Ant Trap into their nests. The virus proliferated like wildfire throughout northern Europe and within centuries mutated into several new forms.

Post-Hellenized Europe was ripe for the infection of Christianity, and existential fear became the main mode of transmission... (22)

In "Radiant Inventories: A Natural History of the *Natural Histories*," Christian Bok, thus far the only critic to address the religious issues in Dewdney's work, writes that, from Dewdney's perspective, "what has been traditionally considered profane is in fact more sacred than what has been traditionally considered sacred" (21). In an interview with Brian Fawcett in *Line*, also cited by Bok, Dewdney explains his religious point of view in relation to *The Immaculate Perception*:

IP is an indignant book where I'm confronting people who up until now have not been able to accept the miraculous in their lives, and who've had spiritual

or philosophical/political crutches which defer miracle for them, or which become vehicles for simulating miracles that in themselves paradoxically renounce miracle by representing it....a religious system which has the notion of a supreme being is a renouncement of the human miracle. Any kind of system which defers miracle in that sense, any belief system which centres on the immaterial soul... - all become insults to humanity. (72)

In other words, “[d]eistic explanations” (SG 189) and a belief in an afterlife reduce “the singular amazingness of our world” (SG 189) by rationalizing and defining the unknowable while renouncing, as Bok writes, “the vitalistic miracle experienced during [this] life...for the sake of the one absent...mortalistic miracle supposedly experienced after death” (21). According to Bok, Dewdney thus “sets out to invert the traditional process of spiritual redemption” (21).

Though more obliquely so, the same indignant response to the Christian religious perspective expressed in later works exists in *Predators*. In “The Immense Odds,” for example, two disturbingly unusual details (Fig. 2) suggest that the Christ figure represents, at least on one level, Christianity as the fear-based “opportunistic conceptual system” (22) described in *The Secular Grail*. In place of the expected human foot at the bottom of Christ’s robe, Dewdney has drawn a foot closely resembling that of an insect likely related to his poem “I Am the Lord and These Are My Flies”¹⁵ (PA 76-7), which alludes to Beelzebub, the “Phoenician Lord of the Flies,” “the power and agent of putrefaction and destruction,” and the Hebrew “God of the Dunghill” (Cooper 104). To the mid-right of the robe, Dewdney has drawn what appears to be a bat’s face; the robe’s darkness from the rib cage down further suggests that a black bat is, in fact, wrapped around the Christ figure. Thus, Dewdney links his Christ figure to the lust, deceit, and death generally associated with insects and to the

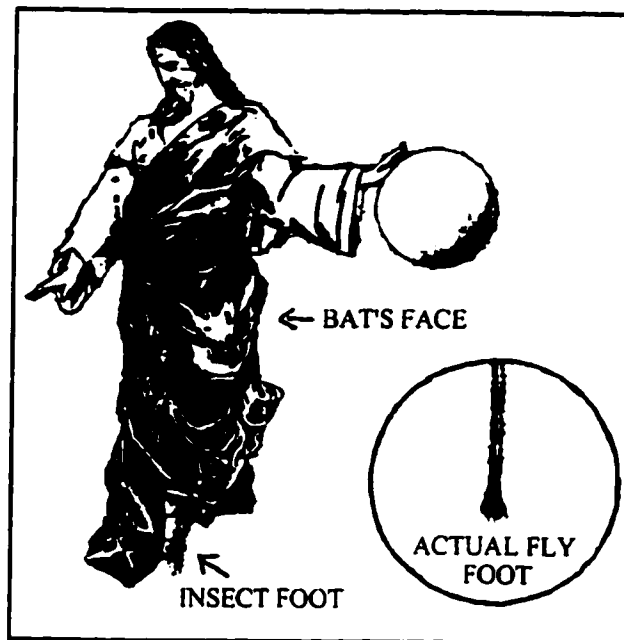


Figure 2: Dewdney's Christ Figure in "The Immense Odds"

vampirism and idolatry (*RSD* 75) generally associated with bats. He also suggests that, from his perspective, medieval Christianity is both parasitic and predatory. Perhaps, however, it is Dewdney's father, Selwyn Dewdney,¹⁶ who best describes the relevance of Dewdney's Christ figure when, in his own novel, *Wind Without Rain*, he reveals the relevance of his character J.C. Bilbeau, who is symbolic of "practical" (*i.e.*, utilitarian-minded), "progressive" arbitrators who kill religion by "identify[ing it] with success and progress" (150):

J.C. is a kind of symbol of all that I hate about...people....all...the little people who can't think for themselves, can't see for themselves, go groping around for a J.C. to lead them, a J.C. to worship, a J.C. who twiddles them around on his little finger until he is ready to use them. (271)

As previously noted, I view the Christianized glass machinery as *medieval*, like the "stained glass windows" (*PA* 44, 63) alluded to in *Predators* that flourished under the Church's patronage during the Middle Ages. In "October," Dewdney writes that "[t]he battle

is / with ramifications rather than roots. / With leaves rather than rock” (*PA* 116). Indeed, his battle is with *neither* Christ, the “spiritual Rock” (1 Cor. 10:4), *nor* with early Christianity of the Palaeo-Christian era¹⁷ (*i.e.*, Peter and the rock of the Church [Matt. 16:18]). Rather, Dewdney’s battle is with human beings, symbolized throughout *Predators* by leaves, self-deceiving “leaves [that] lie” (115), and their *perception* of Christ and God; in fact, Dewdney’s position seems not unlike that of Blake who begins “The Everlasting Gospel” with “The vision of Christ that thou dost see / Is my Vision’s Greatest Enemy”: a “vision of Christ,” not Christ. As *Predators*’ many medieval allusions suggest, Dewdney’s battle is also with the medieval idealized version of the crucified Christ and the “several forms” assumed by the “opportunistic conceptual system” of Christianity from the medieval age to the contemporary media age or, as Dewdney perhaps suggests, the “media/evil” age (*PA*, 70, my slash). Even the glass machine depicted in “The Immense Odds” subtly alludes to the medieval period, for it possesses only two openings, an entrance at the bottom and an exit in the middle, *i.e.*, the Middle Ages. More concrete, however, is the allusion in *Predators*’ second poem to “the late 4th century” (21), which identifies the Christian perspective to which Dewdney objects while dating the genesis of both Western perception and the Western individual as they exist today.¹⁸ Since “the late 4th century” is key to my discussion in this thesis, I now, in the way of a brief digression, provide a summary of its relevance to Dewdney’s critique of Western perception.

By 395, Christianity had more or less triumphed over the pagan Greco-Roman world view, having become the official faith of the Roman Empire (Matthews 178). By then, as well, its “main mode of transmission” - “existential fear,” the fear of “an omniscient, vengeful

god” (*SG* 23), and the fear of eternal damnation - was “entrenched in a written corpus” (*IP* 112), as Dewdney in *The Immaculate Perception* claims must be the case in order for a religion to survive; in 367 the twenty-seven books that form the New Testament (Weaver 32) were decided upon, and between 382-400 Jerome produced the first Latin translation of the Bible,¹⁹ perhaps “the wretched repose of our elders in latin” (*PA* 95) to which Dewdney refers. With the fall and sack of Rome, as suggested in “Monotheism as Ant Trap,” Christianity spread throughout Europe during the Middle Ages (500-1500), and then, through colonialization, around the world during the Modern Age (1500-present). The “late 4th century” thus marks the beginning of the universalization of Christianity, and the point at which the “opportunistic” Christian conceptual system starts to become the Western way of seeing; the Christian, the normative Western type; and Christ’s ideal image, the universal, exemplary Western ideal.

To the late fourth century also belong the three most renowned Church Fathers - Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine - whose “writings laid the foundation of medieval Christian doctrine and philosophy” (Matthews 165) and determined the new direction that Western civilization was to take. Of the three, Augustine (354-430), who became bishop of Hippo in 390, was by far the most influential. In fact, Paul Johnson in *A History of Christianity* deems him the man who “[n]ext to Paul...did more to shape Christianity than any other human being” (112). Indeed, as Johnson explains, the late fourth century marks the beginning of “a different mental universe” (122), a shift from “the humanistic optimism of the classical world” (122) to “the despondent passivity of the Middle Ages” (122). It is Augustine who “bridges

the gap” (122), claims Johnson, for his mentality “was to become the dominant outlook of Christianity, and so to encompass all of European society for many centuries” (122).

Augustine’s mentality, however, was highly pessimistic. A Manichee until his thirties, he converted to Christianity in 386 (Hornstein 45). In *Eros Denied*, Wayland Young defines Manicheanism as “complex, despairing and world-hating” (168), and the mentality that Augustine brought²⁰ to Christianity as a “Manichean, dualist, anti-life, anti-fucking cast of mind” (168): precisely the type of religious “divided mind” (*PA* 81) and negative attitude towards life and sex objected to in *Predators*.²¹ Thus, when Augustine’s mentality triumphed in the late fourth century, so too did his Manichean mentality,²² identified by Young as the very source of the fear of sex and love in the Western world. Dewdney simply identifies it as “the late 4th century.”

Augustine’s attitude towards the human being and condition was equally pessimistic, but not shared by all late-fourth-century Christian thinkers. As Johnson explains, Pelagius, for example, “portrayed the Christian as a grown-up man, a son no longer leaning on the Father” (121) whereas Augustine, whose view unfortunately triumphed,

saw the human race as helpless children. He constantly used the image of the suckling baby. Humanity was utterly dependent on God. The race was prostrate, and there was no possibility that it might raise itself by its own merits. That was the sin of pride - Satan’s sin. Mankind’s posture must be that of total humility. Its only hope lay in God’s grace. (121)

As Dewdney states in “This Command,” “[i]n the diversity of creation we had played favourites” (*PA* 177). Despite “the immense odds” and infinite number of other possibilities, “we” chose only Christ’s vision, and then chose only Augustine’s tragically hopeless view of the human being and condition, a view that became *the* medieval view.²³ Thus writes

Dewdney in “Brain Pan” while likely also referring to Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*, “[t]ragedy has burned me / clear” (PA 161): clear as glass and “transparent with age” (PA 140), the age of this 1500-year-old perceptual paradigm.

During the Middle Ages, the thousand-year period during which Christianity and the “Augustinian system” (Johnson 334) reigned, the medieval perspective evolved, as did an idealization of monasticism (Weaver 62-6) that can be traced to a biblical emphasis on leading a godlike, perfect life. For example, in the New Testament, which abounds with passages denigrating the flesh, Jesus commands that his followers imitate him, as well as God’s perfection: “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34), and “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt 5:48). From Dewdney’s perspective, “we” apparently try, for “[w]e portray ourselves perfectly, a single divine skill” (PA 67).

The medieval perspective that had developed by the end of the Middle Ages could not be more completely, or depressingly, expressed than it is in Thomas A Kempis’ *The Imitation of Christ*,²⁴ a spiritual guide written by a fifteenth-century monk for fellow ascetics. Nonetheless, the book has profoundly influenced the Christianized world for the past five hundred years, “guid[ing] and inspir[ing] men and women of every age and nation” (Sherley-Price 11). Indeed, Kempis’ perspective is precisely the type of medieval religious perspective that filtered down to the masses, becoming, from Dewdney’s perspective, the “collective (piss-off) voice” (PA 99) of popular wisdom, or “Hipgnosis” (PA 164), that continues to influence individuals travelling the paradigmatically Western “autobahn to paradise” (PA 81).

According to Kempis, “[h]e is truly wise who counts all earthly things as dung, in order that he may win Christ” (32) and heaven. To attain that goal, one must follow “the perfect way of the Saints” (38) by imitating “Jesus Crucified” (65), “forsak[ing oneself] and all else,” “completely deny[ing] oneself,” and “retaining no trace of self-love” (84). On the “royal road of the Holy Cross” (86), “you must live a dying life” (88); “seek [no] other model than Jesus” (64); “fear the anger of Almighty God” (96); “despise [your]self for Jesus’ sake” (75); “cast away all...self-esteem” (103); “[c]onsider yourself unworthy of God’s comfort, but...deserving of much suffering” (54); “learn not to trust in [your]self” (42); “hate [your life] in this world” (46); become “perfectly dead to [your]self” (33); be “free from passions and lusts” (38); avoid “curiosity and conceit” (96); be “wholly stripped of self-will” (143); gladly “be the servant of others for the love of Jesus Christ” (34); and “show yourself so submissive and so humble that all men may trample over you and tread on you like the mud of the streets” (110-1). With all due respect,²⁵ Kempis’ spiritual approach and perspective seem truly useful to only its intended audience: Christian ascetics. Moreover, the masochistic slave mentality that he advocates, if applied on the mass level that Dewdney suggests it has been,²⁶ clearly benefits, above all, “our arbitrators” and culturally economic “elite” (PA 49).

According to Johnson, Augustine, “the dark genius of imperial Christianity” (112) who became its persecution theorist (116), was the first to accept and justify the Church’s use of state-imposed torture and death (116-20) in order to secure conversion and “total religious conformity” (116). During the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church used Augustine’s arguments (Johnson 116) to defend its institution of the Inquisition “for the eradication and punishment of heresy” (McBrien 668). As Dewdney says, “the original purpose was

hopelessly lost in the nature of that purpose" (PA 92). With force and fear, then, the Church attained absolute power and mass "mind control" during the Middle Ages while reducing the many possible ways of seeing to "one look indivisible" (PA 32): to one politically correct Augustinian way of seeing and "one pure and simple religion" (PA 78) that functions, from Dewdney's perspective, "in the negative of creation" (PA 63).

As the evolutionary theme in "Immense Odds" suggests, Dewdney does not see contemporary Western perception and existence as having evolved beyond the basic medieval Christian way of seeing and being. The drawing depicts only three evolutionary stages. While the L-shaped piece of the earth's crust to the extreme left represents the first stage, the earth's evolution and the progression of natural history, the glass machinery represents the second stage, the evolution of human perception and consciousness: the glass of the mind. The Christ figure giving his command no doubt represents the final stage: the evolution of the medieval Western sphere of consciousness and gridded plane of existence produced by the Christianized medieval glass machinery. All individuals entering Western culture have no choice but to enter this glass machinery and exit onto the "Power Grid" (PA 78); there they receive the Christ figure's command and are transformed into obedient servile children, much to the satisfaction of "our arbitrators" and elite. The final evolutionary stage further represents, I believe, a deviation of human nature in the West from nature itself. Indeed, Dewdney in *Predators*' "'I Am the Lord and These Are My Flies'" suggests that he is "photographing your obsession and its natural generation / from a disjointed season" (PA 77): the imitative Western obsession with Christ's perfection generated "in the late 4th century" that was refined, along with the Dantean vision of hell, during the Middle Ages. Since, from

Dewdney's perspective, Western culture remains rooted like the horsetail fern in the medieval perceptual paradigm, he views individuals today as still trapped, like the "[p]ale grey moths" in *Predators'* epigraph, in the limestone layers of Western history. Thus, medieval "limestone caverns religious [continue to] hold captive the slow organic branchings of the glass machinery" (PA 57), which are "us," and to "throttle the soul" (PA 76).

As a result, Dewdney completely rejects every aspect of the dualist, life-negating, Manicheanized Christian glass machinery that he views as the dominant perceptual paradigm at play within modern Western culture. While refuting Christianized Cartesian dualism, he instead affirms multiplicity, indivisibility, and interconnectedness.²⁷ In the *Secular Grail's* foreword, he says that its "unstated premise," which is the premise of all his work, "is that the mind and body are one and that the heart and mind are also one"; in his "Statement of First Principles," he says that "[t]he mind and brain are one" and "[t]here is no immaterial soul distinct from the body. If you destroy part of the brain you also destroy part of what is called the soul" (SG 189). As for the mistrust of curiosity and fear of sexuality rooted in the myth of the Fall, Dewdney asserts in *The Secular Grail's* foreword that "curiosity is innate to the human spirit...and that science is the impartial engine of curiosity"; to repress curiosity is to repress the spirit, hence Dewdney's unbounded use of science. Moreover, repressed curiosity invariably leads to ignorance when, from Dewdney's perspective, "the fall from awareness is the fall itself" (PA 60), the only fall. Sexually, he believes that "[n]ot to love the self...erotically is a failure of perception and logic" (SG 48), hence the love poems in *Predators*. As in *The Secular Grail's* "Cocaine and the Shadow," which parallels *Predators'* "Opium,"²⁸ he also suggests that Augustinianized Christianity, like cocaine, creates a

“mindless, libidinous monster” (SG 87), and what Blake refers to in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* as the “pale religious lechery call[ed]...virginity that wishes but acts not” (160). Whereas Augustine writes that “[m]ankind’s....only hope lay in God’s grace,” Dewdney writes in “Statement of First Principles” that “[a]we, wonder and religious grace are innate to the human psyche” (SG 189). As regards “the finality of this vision” (PA 163), either heaven or hell, Dewdney says that “[d]eep down in every one of us is the frightening knowledge that the soul does not survive death” (SG 189). In *Predators*, he insists that “Satan was a fake” (43) and that “[t]he whole concept [of “hell”] was a part of its workings” (43), those of the glass machinery, for “[p]rimary reactions [such as fear] were the first step in inevitable design” (43): “accidents became deliberate” (PA 39). Referred to in *The Secular Grail* as “Atomic Jehovah” (23), the Western “God” is, according to Dewdney, but a concept, “[o]ne of the most ancient concepts of Judaeo-Christian civilizations” (SG 23). I hasten to add that, as Dragland notes, Dewdney seems to “intuit” the existence of a “secular deity” (PA 194); however, as a self-defined “agnostic” (SG Foreword), he accepts his inability to know anything about such a deity, perhaps the unknowable “mystery at the heart of existence” (SG Foreword).

From Dewdney’s perspective, it seems, the entire medieval Christian vision has been but “a rumour written in smoke” (PA 134), as well as “blown glass & cruelty turning on some spit” (PA 134) for 1500 years. Thus, he writes in “Palace of Fear,” “I like the simple religious sound / of glass shattering under water” (PA 86) or, more precisely, in the mind, for in his work water symbolizes the unconscious (SG 80). In *Predators*, Dewdney, the visionary and self-proclaimed “self healer,” urges Westerners to awake from this “[d]ivine anaesthesia” (PA

150) and to shatter the glass machinery on an individual basis. Once freed from this outmoded, paradigmatic, life-negating perceptual prison, such individuals will begin to truly experience the things of the world, “fully inhabit[ing them]selves” (SG 46), fully “inhabit[ing] the present moment” (SG 65), and fully experiencing a sense of the miraculous in this life rather than continue, as Leonard Cohen writes in *Beautiful Losers*, to “refus[e] to cooperate with the miracle” (77).

Individuals cannot shatter the glass machinery, however, without replacing it, for as Dewdney writes, “[t]here can be no highlights if there is no point of view. No...rainbows” (PA 141) symbolic of hope. Thus, shattering the glass machinery simply means “altering the mental image” (IP 183) - one’s proto-medieval self-image and mental attitude towards life - which is the note on which *Predators* ends. It also means attaining a balanced perspective, seeing through new *unstained* glass, and, not “progressing,” but returning to a previous, perhaps even pre-pagan way of seeing so that, as McFadden explains, “[t]he programming, the conditioning of the last three millenia²⁹ would vanish like a dream and we would come into constant possession of all the beauties of the religious, the poetic, life” (79), returning to “a way of being that preceded ordinary self-consciousness” (79).

In *The Secular Grail*’s “In Defence of Narcissism,” Dewdney defines that new, but also very ancient, way of seeing and being in the world as existential narcissism, which he deems “the only tenable existential position” (48). “To be narcissistic,” he says, “is to celebrate our miraculous condition, the terrible beauty of our incarnation,” “to love the self spiritually and erotically,” and to “celebrat[e] existence and all its contents” “in the Dionysian fullness of the moment” (48). More importantly, “[n]arcissism is...the ultimate vehicle to a

supreme, cosmic unification³⁰ with the universe as a whole” (SG 48). In *Predators of the Adoration*, Dewdney attempts to show his readers the way to existential narcissism and cosmic unification, writing that “[t]here is a path for you here if you see it” (PA 57), a path and model other than those of Christ. In examining the glass machinery and its shattering, this thesis examines Dewdney’s proposed path and his reasons for taking it. It is a path clearly explained in *The Secular Grail*, but obscurely and metaphorically modelled by the poet in *Predators of the Adoration*.

**Glass, the Glass Machinery, and Dewdney's
Politic of Perception**

And we who look on, who merely regret, have never loved nor thought nor moved.

Christopher Dewdney
"Hollow Wind, Empty Stars"
Demon Pond

Dewdney's metaphorical medium is his message. Preceded only by the silvered glass of "[m]irrors" (20) in "Transubstantiation," the first allusion to "glass" occurs in "Power Glen II" as "a glass on a table" (25). A wide variety of glass imagery then appears and reappears throughout *Predators*: a "glass sphere" (25), "stained glass windows" (44), "etched crystal" (57), a "single crystal of genetic light" (61), "smoked glass" (65), "[s]inking glass tunnels" (115), "blown glass" (134), "deep glassy eyes" (162), and a "broken glass floor" (162). As Dewdney adds more and more glass imagery, the original image gradually develops into the glass machinery: an associational and metaphorical symbolic system as increasingly complex, ever-expanding, and all-encompassing as the Manicheanized Christian Western perceptual paradigm under Dewdney's scrutiny. Far more than just one of many recurrent tropes, the glass machinery triumphs in *Predators* over all other images, becoming its unifying leitmotif and controlling image, as well as the over-arching, multifaceted metaphor uniting all others. Contradicting Garebian's belief, it also provides the "over-arching curve from science to religion to morality" (33).

In other words, the glass machinery triumphs in *Predators* just as medieval Christianity triumphed in the West to become the vision uniting "all the peoples of the tunnel"

“[i]n a single track mind, burning / with its head-lamp buried in your eyes, / [and] in your thighs” (*PA* 163). Indeed, while glass as a metaphor for human perception appears to represent the glass of any individual’s mind, the glass machinery, on the other hand, appears to represent collective Western perception: one perceptual paradigm that over time develops into a complex symbolic conceptual system that eventually triumphs over all other ways of seeing, thus becoming the normative and formative vision assimilated by all members of a culture. Clearly distinguishing between perception and consciousness, Dewdney specifies in *Predators* that “perception...defines...a sphere...of consciousness” (97),³¹ and in *The Immaculate Perception* that “[c]onsciousness is...identity” (25). Of course, different perceptual paradigms would define different spheres of consciousness and identities, some more desirable than others and certainly, from Dewdney’s perspective, more desirable than the one dominating the West for the past 1500 years.

In *Predators*, Dewdney’s glass machinery unites not only glass, mirror, and crystal imagery, but also ice imagery. In the “Alter Sublime” section, he speaks of “a substance which, for simplicity’s sake, [he]...call[s] Ice” (154), and associates with imitateness, falling, and the Fall:

This substance, clear and brittle in its natural state [as is glass], can be molded into any form. Also, when dropped, it will emit the sound of whichever object it is molded into a likeness of....if it is shaped like a bird it will not sing, but it will emit a soft swish-thud if dropped upon the floor. (*PA* 154)

In *The Immaculate Perception*’s “Insect Mimicry as a Thin Point,” Dewdney speaks of “a slow invisible mirror,” as well as of “racial terror” and “ancestral fear” (37). In *Predators*, it is as if the mirror in “Transubstantiation” becomes glass, unseen³² and

“transparent with age” (140), and then crystal, which homonymously plays on “Christian,” “Christology,” and “Christ” while implicating the transmissive radio crystal that recurs throughout *Predators* in close connection to Remote Control. The “glass apparatus” (IP 39), however, eventually becomes a life-denying, soul-throttling (PA 76) ice-making machine: “We didn’t expect Icelandic but closed our hands on each blossom before it opened. The pain was excruciating...” (PA 45). Invariably, Dewdney’s glass and ice imagery recalls Dante’s frozen glassy hell, described in Joyce’s *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*³³ as “the spiritual-heroic refrigerating apparatus, invented and patented in all countries by Dante Alighieri” (252). In Dante’s *Inferno*, the lowest sphere of hell, Cocytus, has “a lake of ice...more like a sheet of glass” (XXXII 23-4). Likely related to the glacial solar wind³⁴ blowing throughout *Predators*, Lucifer flaps batlike wings that “kee[p] three winds continuously in motion / to lock Cocytus eternally in ice” (XXXIV 48-52). Sinners are either “stuck in ice” (XXXII 34-5) up to their chins or “fixed under ice...like straws worked into glass” (XXXIV 10-2). According to Dante, “the tears first wept” by those above ice “knotted in a cluster / and like a visor made for them in crystal, / filled all the hollow part around their eyes” (XXXIII 97-9), forming a “hard veil cover[ing their] eyes” (XXXIII 112); also described as a “cluster of glass tears” (XXXIII 127-8), that hard veil is comparable to the “thin leers of / glass” (PA 39) that Dewdney wants “peeled” (PA 168) from unseeing eyes. In *Predators* Dewdney certainly seems to be suggesting that, although “[w]e didn’t expect” the medieval Christian glass to fear-freeze³⁵ and blind us, it has and continues to do so. Thus, Dewdney informs readers in *Predators*’ “The Dialectic Criminal” that finally “I *had* to change my tune”³⁶ (168) and “g[o]

like a bat out of hell” (169) because it was “time to break the ice. And break the ice I did” (169).

In fact, it is important to note that Dewdney is operating within an existing glass tradition, which in the Christianized West can be said to begin in the New Testament.³⁷ While Paul likens our ability to know only “in part” to seeing “through a glass, darkly” (1 Cor. 13:12),³⁸ glass and crystal are associated in the Book of Revelation with the partition between heaven and hell. God’s throne is surrounded by “a sea of glass like unto crystal” (4:6), “a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten victory over the beast...stand on the sea of glass” (15:2-3) above the sinners below “cast into the lake of fire” (20:15). Thus, while a glass sea separates the righteous from the evil, God’s floor is actually the sinners’ roof, a roof that, from Dewdney’s perspective, “keep[s] the stars out” (*PA* 173). In Revelation, glass and crystal are further associated with New Jerusalem, God’s jewelled city at the end of time: “Having the glory of God...her light was like unto a stone most precious...clear as a crystal” (21:11), and “the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass” (21:21). St. John’s apocalyptic vision of the Christian afterlife culminates in Dante’s thirteenth-century *Divine Comedy*, which has since inspired many writers. It has particularly inspired anti-Christian writers of the Modern period who believe that if “[t]his world is a small-scale Hell” (Johnson 121), as Augustine claimed, it is only because we choose, as Blake says, to “buil[d] a Hell in Heaven’s despite”³⁹: to create a hell on earth, inventing a glass through which we see so darkly that it becomes difficult to see at all.

Dewdney is not alone in his poetic critique of Western culture; writers such as Nietzsche, Joyce, Cohen, and Burroughs also seek to “shatter the glass” in their own ways.

While a madman in Nietzsche's vehemently anti-Christian *The Gay Science* shouts that "God is dead" (182) and smashes a lantern (183), Joyce's *Ulysses* climaxes when Stephen Daedalus angrily smashes a brothel chandelier and thus causes his Catholic mother's ghost, a symbol of the Christian morality and fear of hell that have tormented him (683), to vanish forever. In *Beautiful Losers*, wherein Cohen speaks of Dante (25) and "glass partitions" (36), the sexually liberated Edith's drawer contains "smashed glass" (136), and a "Danish Vibrator" (226) "launche[s] itself through [a] glass" (227) window; thus, carnal pleasure shatters the old perspective and breaks into the streets and world below (228). In *Naked Lunch*, a work also against "dead level conscious sex" (128), Burroughs writes of "glass brick walls" (30), "a great magnifying glass set in [a] roof" (90), and "a scream of longing that shatters the glass wall" (89-90). These writers occasionally enter my discussion, for they belong to a tradition to which Dewdney, from his late-twentieth-century "vantage over this prow" (*PA* 35), both alludes and adds. The tradition, however, ends not with Dewdney. For example, the Dewdney-inspired critic and poet Christian Bok,⁴⁰ in his first book of poetry, *Crystallography: Book I of Information Theory*, exhaustively explores crystal, writing in "Glass" that "[g]lass resonates / until shattered / by precise song" (n.p.): indeed, song as precise as Dewdney's song about "the precise miracle of life" (*RI* 11).

In *The Immaculate Perception*'s "Metaphor Templates," Dewdney writes that "the original metaphor is but a minor component" (74) of the larger complex symbolic system that evolves. Given "the complexity of [his] vision" (*PA* 178) of "symbolism that symbolizes even the symbolists" (*PA* 80), I begin with *Predators*' original glass metaphor, which appears in "Power Glen II" as "a glass left on a table [that] would, over a thousand years, create a large

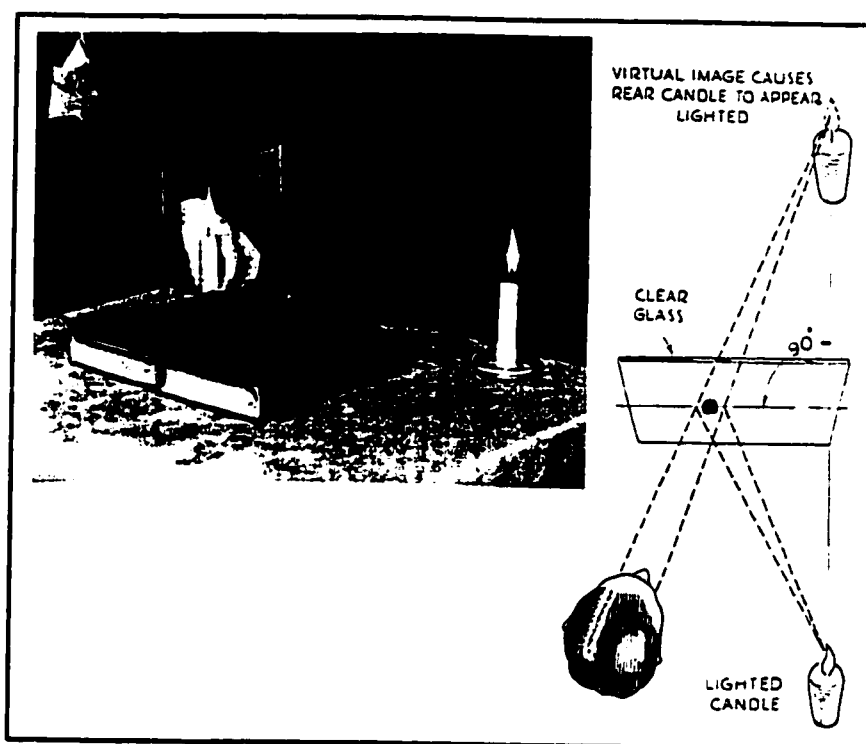


Figure 3 Dewdney's *Alter Sublime* Illustration of the Virtual Image. The black dot indicates the location of the virtual image.

glass sphere" (25). In all likelihood, Dewdney is alluding to the pane of glass on a table depicted in his earlier *Alter Sublime* illustration (Fig. 3), which he omits from *Predators*. While visually representing the glass alluded to in "Power Glen II," the *Alter Sublime* illustration, also discussed by Allan Hepburn in his essay on perception and consciousness in Dewdney's early work,⁴¹ reveals the relevance of glass to the glass machinery as Western perception and a "cognitive prosthesis" (IP 76).

In the *Alter Sublime* illustration, comprised of a photograph and diagram, two books on a table support a small pane of clear glass placed, as Dewdney specifies, at a 90° angle between two apparently lit candles. The illustration, however, explains the workings of the "virtual image," defined in *Predators'* glossary as "[t]he perceived location of an object as seen in a mirror or reflection (relative to the observer)" (188). As Dewdney indicates, the

candle in front of the glass is lit whereas the rear candle is in fact unlit; thus, the diagram shows how the perceived virtual image - in this case a flame - is actually located in the glass and thus *is* glass. Moreover, it shows how “[t]he virtual image is subject dependent” (*PA* 141) and relative, more specifically, to the position of the observer looking through the glass from an unspecified angle. Anyone looking through the glass from the same position, or perspective, as the observer would, despite reality, swear on a court bible - “in a court,” insists Dewdney, “where the evidence / neither confirms nor denies” (*PA* 75) - that the unlit candle is lit and that the virtual flame is real, as would those viewing Dewdney’s photograph taken from the same unspecified angle. Thus he says in *Predators*’ “Radio Symmetry” that “‘Seeing as is’ they believing say. / It’s on the record” (*PA* 157), “the record invisibly playing / above each of our heads” (*PA* 124) and likely playing the theme “Song of Remote Control” that urges listeners to “Give [them]selves up to Remote Control” (*PA* 113). The record is also likely the printed record,⁴² symbolized by the two books, that “validates...reality” (*IP* 75).

“Seeing as,”⁴³ however, means failing to see an object as it truly is, imposing on the object something not proper to it. Thus, Dewdney begins “Radio Symmetry” with “[a]t everything we see / occipital⁴⁴ a reconstruction retinal” (*PA* 157): when viewing the world, we “see as,” unrealistically reconstructing reality according to the principles of the glass machinery of Western perception. Whereas glass is used in optics to make visual prosthetics⁴⁵ that improve vision, enabling us to see more clearly (with glasses), to see the otherwise unseeable (with a magnifying glass or microscope), and to see from a distance (with binoculars or a telescope), the only function of glass in the *Alter Sublime* illustration is to distort reality, which is also Dewdney’s remote control agent’s function: to replace other

people's "solid reality" with "fantasies and lies" (*PA* 109). Unaware of the "distortionist" property of glass, the observer in Dewdney's diagram will not only believe illusions to be real and lies to be true, but will also likely believe ideological illusions and lies meticulously constructed (*PA* 109) by remote control agents, would-be arbitrators, and "distortionist movement[s]" (*PA* 90) who, seeking power and control, "provide incorrect information" (*PA* 90). Such an observer will even believe lies about him- or herself. In fact, Dewdney writes in the original *Alter Sublime* that "'I' is an illusion" (76). Like "Ice," then, "I" can be molded into any form and identity, which can be either life-denying or life-embracing. Which it will be depends on the individual's perceptual paradigm, on the nature of the glass metaphorically imbedded behind the eyes at a 90° angle, and thus in the mind.

Symbolically, the *Alter Sublime* illustration is not without Christian parallels.⁴⁶ While the table symbolizes an altar (*RSD* 4), itself a symbol of the Judaeo-Christian God's presence (*RSD* 62), the lit candle symbolizes faith (Gibson 40) and Christ as "the light of the world" (*RSD* 86). In terms of Christian "[p]rint [that] validates...reality" (*IP* 75), the two books supporting the glass pane can be seen as the Old and New Testaments (or perhaps as the two most influential Christian books in the West, the Bible and *The Imitation of Christ*) and all other literature supporting the Augustinianized Christian perspective and glass. The observer can be seen as the Western "I" who, seeing "faithfully" (*PA* 41) through that glass, imposes Christ's image upon him- or herself, who thus sees his or her original self as something that it is not, and who then, like Ice, assumes Christ's idealized form, flowing into it like water or heated glass.⁴⁷ As the unlit candle suggests, however, such an "I" is self-deluded⁴⁸: there is no halo above such an individual's head,⁴⁹ just a record playing Remote Control's song over

and over. Given Dewdney's concern with sexuality, it is worth noting that, in the case of the five wise and five foolish virgins, lit candles symbolize wise virgins (Christ can be seen as such) whereas unlit candles symbolize foolish virgins (*RSD* 172), as would observers who see themselves as lit candles that shine, or that ought to shine, only Christ's divine light. Since the candle also traditionally symbolizes the life of the individual (*RSD* 92), Dewdney's illusorily lit candle further suggests that individuals who see through medieval Western glass, imposing Christ's image as well as virtual sin and guilt upon themselves, are dead to life.

Clearly, the glass through which the Western perceptual paradigm operates poses, from Dewdney's perspective, the problem explained by Hepburn: "The glass...through which we glimpse the world permits cognizance, but that glass also divides us from the objects of our scrutiny, and carefully curbs understanding" (38). And it always will, for human beings inevitably view the world through some kind of conceptual system, which the glass machinery represents; if one is shattered, another takes its places, as Hepburn further notes when discussing an "Alter Sublime" image: "'The image falls crashing to his feet / again and again' [*PA* 149], but another eventually replaces it" (44). Thus, even more problematic than the glass, it seems, are the glass' 90° angle and the unspecified angle from which the observer looks through the glass. Indeed, as Dewdney writes in "Fovea Centralis II," "[t]here is / something to the angle of the sun" (*PA* 32), and the *Alter Sublime* illustration actually suggests that if the observer were to simply change position and look through the glass from any other angle, the unlit candle would not appear lit: reality would not be distorted.

Thematically, the 90° angle, a right angle, recurs in *Predators*. In "The Immense Odds," the L-shaped piece of the earth's crust is cut on a 90° angle, and the Christ figure is

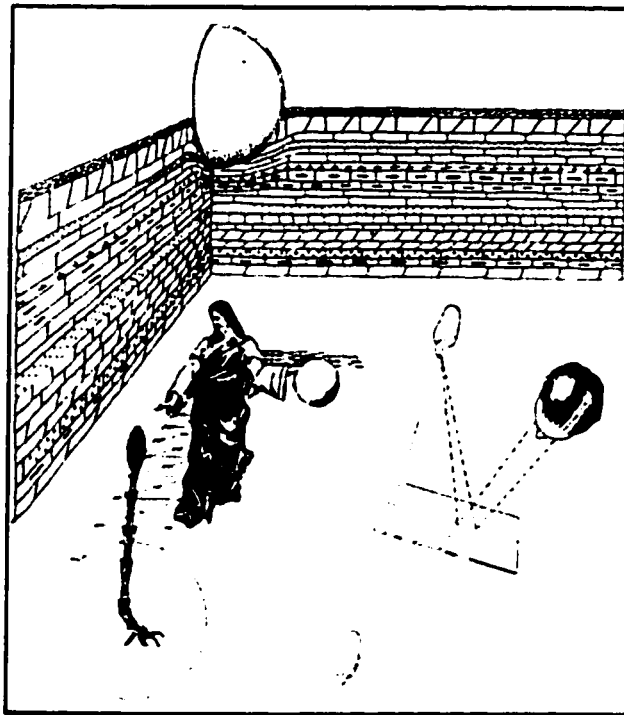


Figure 4 Comparison of Dewdney's Illustrations

aligned with the concretion and horsetail at the same angle; similarly, in the *Alter Sublime* drawing, the lit candle is aligned with the unlit candle and observer at a 90° angle (see Fig. 4 for a visual comparison). Thus, the Christ figure's position parallels that of the lit candle, just as it parallels that of the concretion in "Concretion Imbedded in Limestone" (Fig. 5), an earlier *Predators'* illustration that introduces "Power Glen II," a poem which also mentions "right angles" (26). Like a cornerstone, which is symbolic of Christ, the concretion is imbedded where two walls, at "right angles" to each other, meet. If limestone represents the pages of history (*IP* 74), and if the limestone walls represent the various eras of Western cultural history from its earliest beginnings to the present, then the concretion imbedded vertically in the middle of the two walls, and visually associated with Dewdney's Christ figure, is likely located in the 1000-year period of the Middle Ages; if such is the case, the

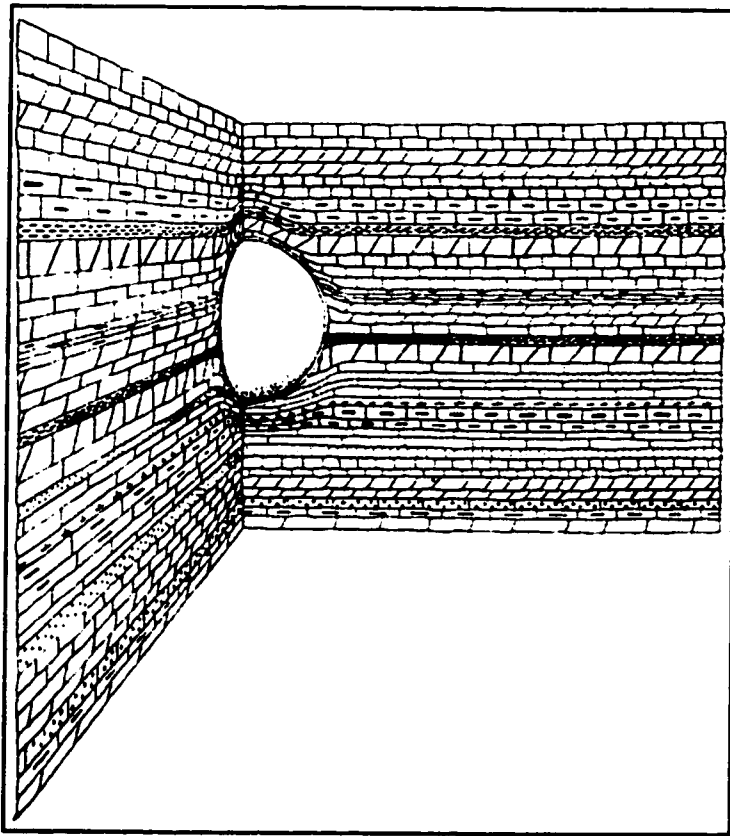


Figure 5 Dewdney's "Concretion Imbedded in Limestone"

"thousand years" during which the glass is left on the table in "Power Glen II" refers to the Middle Ages during which the Western "angle" on life formed (or ceased formation), becoming lodged in collective Western consciousness and in individual minds at the distortive 90° angle. Ultimately, that angle is "the angle of prehistoric imbalance" (*PA* 35) mentioned in "A Phonology of the Coves." Dewdney likely concurs with Blake who writes in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that "[t]he man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind" (156); in this context, "alter sublime" likely refers to the sublime altering of the standard Western opinion on life. On another level, however, the tables in "Power Glen II" and the *Alter Sublime* illustration probably also represent a

“memory table” (PA 10, 25), which Dewdney likens to a “water table” (PA 10), and the contents of Western culture’s collective memory. Left on the memory table’s surface for a thousand years, Augustine’s late-fourth-century point of view expands over the centuries into “a large glass sphere” (PA 25): an all-encompassing, unified way of seeing dominated by a fixation with moral perfection that is linked to the afterlife, and later referred to as the glass machinery, “a wheel unseen” (PA 124). As Dewdney suggests in “Opium,” that unified vision “made sense any way you looked at it” (PA 82), which “[i]s how we knew it was dangerous” (PA 82). He also writes in “Opium” that “[t]he lake grew calm” (82), like Blake’s “standing water,” likely the water that fills our “water-brains” (PA 140).

Dewdney’s first allusion to the glass machinery occurs in *Predators*’ “Spring Trances” section:

This is of two worlds - the one diurnal men know and that other world where lunar mottled eels stir like dreams in shallow forest water. Allowing both these mechanisms to continue operating, we slowly remove and replace theiyr⁵⁰ parts with corresponding and interlocking nothings. The glass machinery is equally filled with allusion to our aestive carnality, an infinite part of the pattern which regenerates itself with its own repetitive logic. (56)

The glass machinery, then, is a continually repeated “pattern” that, as Dewdney specifies, “we” perpetuate and “[a]llow...to continue operating” according to a few basic principles. The first involves Manichean dualism (which can also be referred to in its mutated form as “Cartesianism” and “binary thought”): a complex whole is reduced and divided into two mutually exclusive, completely disconnected parts, as the “remov[al] and replace[ment of] theiyr parts with corresponding and interlocking *nothings*” suggests. One known part, or world, is associated with day and “good,” all that is culturally acceptable; the unknown

“other” is unexperienced and associated with night and “evil,” all that is culturally rejected. Indeed, the glass machinery is ultimately a moral machine. Inherent in its morality and dualism is the idealization of “x” over its denigrated opposite “y” in a continual “imbalancing act”: “good” over “evil,” the ideal over the real, the spiritual over the carnal, the past and future over the present, the afterlife over life, the mind over the body and heart, culture over nature, the collective over the individual... As Dewdney says in *Recent Artifacts*’ “Idea,” “[t]his is the ideal world for the idea,” which “is *the* word for the ideal” (n.p.). Ultimately, then, the glass machinery denies those looking through it the possibility of balance, and succeeds because of moral social pressure. As Dewdney explains in *The Immaculate Perception*, “variance, when perceived, is viewed as monstrous,” and “to be safe is to be identified with the ideal type” (107); the ideal type in the West, as is discussed in the next chapter, is the Christ type. In “Radio Symmetry,” Dewdney nonetheless informs his readers that “[y]ou [do] have the right to solicit a stabilizer” (PA 157) and find balance. While “filled with allusion to” “[e]very nuance & cartesian plotted in radar-tunnels” (PA 56), those belonging to “the peoples of the tunnel” (PA 163), both the glass machinery and *Predators* are “equally filled with allusion to our aestive [dormant⁵¹] carnality” (62): to our “sleeping minds” (PA 26) and bodies, for “[t]he body is also a mind” (PA 156).

As depicted in “The Immense Odds,” the glass machine resembles a refining machine, and is undoubtedly related to the refining process⁵² described in *The Secular Grail*’s “The Immaculate Perception.” First, it should be noted that the “immaculate perception”⁵³ alludes to the medieval⁵⁴ doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which essentially refers to conception “without sin” (McBrien 655). In “The Immaculate Perception,” Dewdney defines

refining as “the fine-tuning of purity towards an ideal isolation tantamount to icon or symbol” (53), such as the Christ figure in “The Immense Odds.” He explains that “as a natural result of our sorting impulse” (53), the immaculate perception “differentiate[s] an item from its background” (53) as, for example, Christ from the rest of humanity. Thus, “previously mixed elements” (53) are divided and separated so that one item is isolated and privileged, which conforms to the glass machinery’s principles; “[i]solation reinforces the identity of the item and establishes its status as...an ideal form” (53). Dewdney adds that “[g]rouping raises the charge of serial identity” (53); that is, a group demands that its members conform to the ideal form. In the case of Western culture, this can be seen, quite simply, as the cultural “enforcement” (53) of the imitation of Christ. Dewdney further notes that, while “our sorting impulse” has led to important discoveries, “[i]t has also got us into trouble” (53): “Refined foods such as sugar have imbalanced our nutrition” and “refined chemicals have poisoned us” (SG 53). The theme of poison links the earlier “Monotheism as Ant Trap” to “The Immaculate Perception,” and ultimately suggests that medieval Christianity is among the harmful refineries that have imbalanced and poisoned human beings. In its negative context, then, Dewdney’s “immaculate perception” likely refers to a Christian way of seeing, or trying to see, “without sin” that developed during the Middle Ages, and that seeks to refine fallen, corrupt human beings towards a purity and perfection “tantamount to” that of the Christ icon.

Though comparable to a visual prosthesis, then, the glass machinery in *Predators* symbolizes a “cognitive prosthesis” (IP 76) that forces individuals looking through it from the distortive Western angle to see themselves, others, and their world “as” the medieval perceptual paradigm and complex symbolic system dictates. The social and moral

implications for the individual become apparent when a few perception-centred poems from the “Palaeozoic Geology” section are examined. Thematically focussed on perception, movement, and repetition, “Gas Port II” is a poem about those who perpetuate the glass machinery, as gas fuels a car:

A dream topography
or such intimate theatre
as we conceive
delineate no vision,
have rather, motion,
involute.

Involuntary motion
of hands, ears and denies
the movement of them.
Theiyr movement.

These apparitions caste
no light of theiyr own
theiyr eyes haunted, foxglove
in a mute, disjunct religion of sub
stance.
By this we are obvious,
unseen,
and slipping into itself.
As one devours the other.
Tautology. (PA 30)

In the first stanza, Dewdney suggests that the human drama and Western dream as “we” envision them are indicative of a lack of vision. Unable either to see or understand, the visionless merely possess a “motion / involute,” complex and inwardly circulating. While circular motion suggests repetition, “[t]autology” refers to the repetition of an idea, such as the repetition of the Christ idea, which is the ideal. This tautology is the Sisyphean “methodical dance” referred to in the next poem, “At Mask Value,” wherein the poet complains that it is “[a]s if they handed me / some red muscle / and said / ‘do this, the same’”

(PA 33). In "Power Glen I," he suggests that "we" too dance this Sisyphean dance, for "[w]e / go through the motions" (PA 22); thus, the "[i]nvoluntary motion / of hands" and the "ears" that (h)ear the same old "MUSIC" (PA 45) belong to us, and it is our repetitive, reflexive motion that "denies [our] movement" and personal growth. Rather than fulfill ourselves in this life, we "devour" and disappear into the glass machinery that devours us so that, in an ideological you-are-what-you-eat way, we become glass, "obvious" and "unseen," and spectral "apparitions"⁵⁵ repetitively manifesting the same old idea, ideology, and behavioural pattern. In becoming glass, we perpetuate the glass machinery.

Thus, writes Dewdney, "[t]hese apparitions caste / no light of theiyr own / [for] theiyr eyes [are] haunted" (PA 30) by a Christian self-image ascribed to them by a "religion of sub / stance" disconnected from reality, as "disjunct" suggests. Like the insect eye in "Glass," their eyes are no doubt also haunted by the image of Dante's icy hell and "warning frightful" (PA 157): "There is cold hexagonal fire / in the insect's eye" (PA 27). These eyes, seeing through the glass machinery from the distortive angle, render individuals too afraid to live and love, which isolates them from others, and keep them quietly unrebelling in servile obedience, as the spelling of "caste" suggests, to the higher-ups (be they human, divine, or abstract), thus perpetuating what Dewdney regards as a "sub / stance" towards life. Hence, such individuals are "foxglove," a drooping tubular plant with white or purple flowers, and another of *Predators'* many hollow, tubular images symbolizing the empty inner state produced by the Western way of seeing. While foxglove originally meant "little folk" (Gibson 124) - perhaps the masses living according to the "[c]omprehensile"⁵⁶ folk edition" (PA 34) of medieval Augustinian theology or Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* - the foxglove within

Christian symbolism represents a “desire for forgiveness” (Gibson 124) and, invariably, a belief in sin, traditionally symbolized by the fly and vampire (*RSD* 146), and in one’s own sinfulness.

If eyes were suns, the haunted eyes in “Gas Port I,” “[t]he *same* deep glassy eyes that / [the poet’s]...vision keeps referring to” (*PA* 162), could never light the self’s way, for “glassy eyes”⁵⁷ are dull, lifeless, “fixed eyes” (*PA* 181) that stare uncomprehendingly and that belong to the ill, drugged, or dead. In “Fovea Centralis II,” which focusses thematically on perceptual singularity and falling, Dewdney in fact draws the analogy between eyes and the sun: “Seen through himself / the eyes of a man / sun on all he’s worth” (*PA* 32). Missing only is the verb “to be,” the likeliest of omissions between “man” and “sun,” so that a man’s eyes are the sun on all that he, as perceived through himself and the glass machinery, ultimately believes himself to be worth. From Dewdney’s perspective, it seems, individuals looking through the Western glass machinery, especially from Kempis’ angle, see themselves as so worthless that, he suggests in “Memory Table I,” “you can pick them up / with a dime” (*PA* 19).

Twice in “Fovea Centralis II” Dewdney mentions “one look indivisible” (*PA* 32), a collectively shared, glassy-eyed way of seeing as impossibly monotheistic as is the “impossible monotheistic language” (*PA* 34) described as such in “In the Critical Half Light.” That “one look indivisible” appears to be the “single crystal of genetic light” (*PA* 61) illuminating and shaping the Western world and its contents, and the unseeing “virtual stare” (*PA* 181) described in *Alter Sublime* as “a rainbow of solipsism stretched between all those encompassed within the illusion” (*PA* 181): the illusion generated in “the late 4th century”

and the “millions...familiar with it”⁵⁸ (*PA* 99). As Robert Lecker says of “Into the Maelstrom,” “[t]here is no multiplicity here, no polyvalence; singularity reigns supreme” (149); and it reigns supreme in *Predators* as in the Western world.

As if unable to believe that for so long so many have adhered to this one outmoded medieval way of “seeing as,” Dewdney asks in “Fovea Centralis II,” “are these animals charmed?” (*PA* 32). Clearly, he believes that they are, as his frequent references to hypnotism, hexes, and trances suggest.⁵⁹ Moreover, as he suggests in “Fovea Centralis II,” Westerners buy this “one look indivisible” “hook and sinker” (*PA* 32), becoming “ghost” and “shadows” that sink to a metaphorical bottom comparable to Dante’s lowest sphere of hell, hence “a vague relief of depth soundings” (*PA* 32). They also lose their ability to see and thus “fall from awareness [which] is the fall itself” (*PA* 60): “And when / the vision is obscured / what goes past? / The tumblers / revolving” (*PA* 32), Christianized fallen beings repeating the one Western Christ idea(l) and “do[ing] this, the same” (*PA* 33) Manichean dance, for 1500 years. Once fallen from awareness, these “tumblers” (the glass pun is obvious) become “[v]irgin bride[s] for gravity” (*PA* 32). Here, Dewdney employs a sexual metaphor to stress “our aestive carnality” (*PA* 56), as well as our fear of love and sex in the Western world, with which the four components of his glass symbolism have traditional associations. While glass and the mirror symbolize virginity (*RSD* 171), glass further symbolizes purity (*RSD* 130), as does crystal (*RSD* 130); ice, which is closely associated with crystal (*RSD* 75), in turn symbolizes chastity (*RSD* 20), frigidity (*RSD* 59), and “stultified potential” (*RSD* 124). Indeed, from Dewdney’s perspective, those who adhere to the Christianized glass machinery become vitrified, fear-frozen, unaware ghosts who, though they are “Ice” “shaped like a bird”

(*PA* 154) or perhaps precisely *because* they are ice shaped like one of the several birds symbolic of Christ, can neither sing like a bird nor joyously “celebrat[e] existence and all its contents” (*SG* 48). Instead, they fall from awareness, perhaps “falling like [Burroughs’] dead birds” (*NL* 212) and “emit[ting] a soft swish-thud” (*PA* 154), perhaps like the “thud of Blake’s wings of excess” (*U* 28) mentioned by Joyce, as they hit bottom where they and their potential remain mired like “crystal caves in hot black tar” (*PA* 65), perhaps the same hot black tar in which Dante mires the barrators in the fifth circle of lower hell (*I* XXI).⁶⁰

Dewdney clearly suggests that we fail to use what centuries of writers refer to as the “mind’s eye” (*SG* 78), likely one of the two required eyes mentioned in the concluding lines of “Fovea Centralis II”: “when the odds / are even / you need / two eyes” (*PA* 32). In a similar vein, Burroughs writes: “Put on two pairs of glasses and maybe you can see something” (*NL* 196). Seeing with only one eye,⁶¹ however, surely also means, from Dewdney’s perspective, seeing through the eyes, or the eye, of the Christian Church, which is in fact symbolized by two eyes: one open and one closed (*RSD* 22). Individuals who see with only one such eye oust the possibility posited in “Radio Symmetry” of “[m]ind imparting a clarity unoptical” (*PA* 157), of mind imparting a knowing and understanding independent of those imparted by the eyesight traditionally symbolized by the window, associated with crystal, and personified by the mirror (*RSD* 145). Moreover, such individuals confine themselves to the West’s dim monotheistic “critical half light” (*PA* 34) which Burroughs, for example, describes as the “nightmare halfflight of random, broken lust” (*NL* 196). In *The Imitation of Christ*, Kempis expresses a traditionally Western desire when in “A Prayer for Mental Light” he asks Christ to “banish all darkness from the sanctuary of my heart” (125);

in stark contrast, Dewdney in the “Spring Trances” section says that “[t]here is a darkness outside of those confined to light” (PA 57), the “light that shines here” (PA 43) in the West which “is not / a function of itself” (PA 43) but, rather, a function of the glass machinery. From Dewdney’s perspective, that light, in rejecting darkness, actually creates darkness, cruelty, ignorance, and fear⁶² rather than light, understanding, love, and balance, for as noted earlier, “[g]enocide incubates in the heart of monotheism” (SG 189). Ultimately, it seems, that light creates individuals “[s]peechless with fear, [and] illiterate with hate” (PA 101).

Left on a table for “a thousand years” (PA 25), then, the glass pane thickened to such a degree that, as Dewdney suggests in “Glass,” it now completely blocks our view as surely as the frozen “glass tears” painfully block the view of Dante’s sinners: “We cannot see around / the way we see through ourselves” (PA 27). Nor do we know what lurks at the bottom of the very glass that we have become: “What is beneath... / is only hinted at” (PA 27). The glass has also “create[d] a large glass sphere” (PA 25) of consciousness, which has become our prison: “We had to construct a prison around us / surer / than any lie” (PA 179). That prison, as Dewdney suggests in *Radiant Inventory*, is “simply / [a] prison of thought” (RI 18). No matter which way we look - up, down, right, left, without, or within - we are always staring into the glass machinery’s thick walls, through and around which we cannot see. In *The Immaculate Perception*’s “Fovea Centralis,” Dewdney further suggests that the glass machinery’s walls have formed “a tunnel around...[our] vision” (77), narrowing our minds (as the pun on tunnel vision suggests) and separating us from ourselves, others, the world, and reality. Thus, he writes, “[w]e are always a step away from ourselves” (PA 65), just one

step that each of us must take: the step of altering our perspective by shattering the glass machinery, as does the poet in *Predators*.

Indeed, all of *Predators* moves towards the poet's shattering of the glass machinery, which remains intact in the first three sections. In "The Cenozoic Asylum" section, however, Dewdney posits the idea of "[f]eeding [a] hairline crack...into the propagation-lee of the glass machinery" (138): into its "procreative" (*IP* 112) side in his mind, where it "lay[s]...[its] eggs" (*IP* 112) of "existential fear" (*SG* 22). *Predators*' concluding section begins with "Alter Sublime" and confirmation that the poet has fed such a crack into the glass machinery, and opened his windows of the soul⁶³ (his eyes) just a crack: "*Once opened a crack / and the stars came pouring through*" (149). In the same poem, Dewdney writes of "a device of ice-crystals" (149), likely also the "Palace of Fear" (*PA* 86) and "ice palace"⁶⁴ deep in [the] autumn forest" (*PA* 144) of the human mind⁶⁵; he also writes of an "image [that] falls crashing to his feet / again and again. / Each time a world reduced to smooth glowing shards" (149). In the following sequence,⁶⁶ a "binary scream" (153) shatters a glass room and prison in which a "human [is] trapped... behind [a] mirror" (153), no doubt the poet trapped in a solipsistic "cartesian living room" (*RI* 23): "The room break[s] into flashing white fragments" as once and for all "[t]he world [is] reduced to smooth glowing shards" (*PA* 153). In "Brain Pan" "[o]ne ray of sun [beams] down on the broken glass floor," which finally "heaves under the vision / of our arbitrators" (164-5). In shattering the glass machinery in his mind, all of it, the poet completely frees himself so that never again can he fall prey to the "predators of the adoration," the J.C. Bilbeaus of the Western world as well as the vision and "sub / stance" towards life that they self-servingly promote. "My roof was once firm," Dewdney finally

writes in “Haiku,” “yet now it cannot even / keep the stars out” (173), which recalls Dante’s emergence from hell “to see once more the stars” (*I*, XXXIV, l.139). Like Joyce’s Stephen Daedalus, the poet too has forever smashed the glass roof⁶⁷ of Christian morality and fear, which kept him in an existential hell. Moreover, as Dewdney says of himself in *Radiant Inventory*, “[n]ow that I have been opened / I can never be closed again” (11).

As Dewdney indicates in “The Dialectic Criminal,” he may have changed his tune, gone like a bat out of hell, and broken the ice, but neither his readers nor the rest of society has: “You’re shitting bricks but I’m sweating blood” (169). In other words, still “shitting” Blake’s “bricks of Religion” (*MHH* 151), which build “Brothels” (*MHH* 151), “we” remain, from Dewdney’s perspective, bloodless creatures too afraid to live, think, grow, and love. The liberated poet, in contrast, will henceforth fully and fearlessly inhabit himself and “the present moment” (*SG* 65), “celebrat[ing] existence and all its contents” (*SG* 48). The “self healer” is also a “healer of selves,” however, concerned with the “people [who] could not move from [the] state of solipsistic error” (*PA* 171). Thus the poet begins “Dialectic Criminal” with the suggestion that, like him, “you could get your eyes peeled”⁶⁸ (*PA* 168). Dewdney is referring to the eye-peeling, glass-shattering, ice-breaking memory formula mentioned earlier in *Predators*’ “Log Entries I”:

with some
the formula
rolled thin leers of
glass
from theyr eyes

they discovered
the agents of memory (39)

For some, like the dialectically criminal poet, this formula - quite simply that of remembering - has been effective, peeling away glass layers (a pun on “leers”) from their eyes and thus from themselves, for in *Predators’ indivisible* world the eyes, as part of the being, are also constitutive of the whole being. Dewdney in “Brain Pan” reveals the purpose of using his memory formula to peel away the glass: to engage “in the process / of becoming that which we are” by taking “[i]ndefatigable delight in persisting / at directing our own extraction” (PA 162) from the glass machinery. As noted, the glass machine in “The Immense Odds” has but two openings; thus, there is but one way to escape the medieval, power-gridded Christian plane of existence and exit the machine, which is to retrace the path by which “we got here” (PA 177) and exit from the entrance.

Although Dewdney in *Predators* obscurely “hint[s] at” (PA 27) the nature of his proposed way out of the glass machinery, he clearly explains it in *The Secular Grail* as “the politic of perception” (SG 43-4), also referred to in his 1990 interview with Lola Lemire-Tostevin as “the politics of the individual” (94) and “genesis of the individual” (87). Synonymous with *Predators’* “directing our own extraction” (162), “[t]he extrication of self” (44), as Dewdney writes in *The Secular Grail*, “is the politic of perception” (SG 44). Not only is it his memory formula for learning to see from angles other than the distortive Western angle, but it also appears to be *the* context in which his work and all its contents must finally be understood. The essential goal of the politic of perception is “to become yourself” (SG 47) or, in *Predators’* terms, “that which we are” (PA 162) potentially but which lies unseen and imprisoned beneath the glass of “Glass.”

Nowhere in Dewdney's work are his spiritual, psychoanalytic, and sociohistorical concerns more clearly and comprehensively expressed than in *The Secular Grail*. It is in "The Extrication of Self," however, that he defines his politic of perception, making it clear that his ultimate concern is a spiritual one:

HUMAN BEINGS are born spiritually incomplete. Our life task is the acquisition of a unique psychic component, which is necessary for our ontological closure. Traditionally, this component is searched for in the domain of religion, psychology and philosophy. However, we will not even be able to recognize it unless we have already achieved individuation. (43)

We will not recognize it, of course, because we cannot see past the glass in our minds that imprisons us in the one Western "look indivisible" with its unbalanced, exclusionary way of experiencing the world. That look, Dewdney further explains in "Extrication of Self," contains "the extraneous material we have incorporated into our psyches from an early age" (43): "Our assimilated assumptions, biases and dispositions [which] are a formative prosthesis...contradictory to intellectual and emotional objectivity and our project of self-fulfillment" (43). Thus, he writes, "our primary goal as humans is to disentangle ourselves from our familial and socio-historical matrices until we are standing clear" (43). As he specifies, this is a "process of self-analysis" (43), of "[p]icking out the threads that have been woven into the fabric of [our] being" (43) and all that "is not proper to ourselves" (43), just as the virtual flame was not proper to the unlit candle. It is, however, not just any process of self-analysis.

According to Dewdney, in order to attain the desired goal of self-fulfillment and spiritual completion, we must first achieve "[s]elf-emancipation" (43), symbolized in *Predators* by the poet's shattering of the glass. "In order to achieve [self-emancipation],"

however, “*we must first re-enact the evolution of our own culture*” (43, my italics). Thus, the first and most critical step in Dewdney’s politic of perception is the extrication of “[o]ur culturally inculcated misperceptions” (43), themselves built up over centuries, which “are so deeply imbedded in the experience of self that to extricate them...is a painful process requiring ceaseless vigilance” (43). Thus, he insists, “[y]ou must be ruthless in the service of your original being” (43) - not in the service of “our arbitrators” and Remote Control - so that ultimately “you” can give birth, so to speak, to your “original being” trapped beneath layer after layer of continually assimilated cultural glass. Indeed, *Predators* contains many prenatal allusions to our yet unborn selves: “Unborn concretions” (22), “weeping babies preparing to be born” (61), and “the never-to-be-born” (113).

In *The Last Flesh*, Dewdney writes of “previous eras” as “metaphors for the layering of our own psyches, the glass-onion effect” (21). Indeed, the type of self-analysis that he advocates in *Predators* and *The Secular Grail* is akin to peeling away the layers of a glass onion. Comparable to the “psycho-archaeology”⁶⁹ (SG 108) later mentioned in Dewdney’s collection of essays on Freud and Jung in *The Secular Grail*, it is a private process, or “intimate theatre” (PA 30), of becoming self-aware by becoming culturally aware. To peel away the glass layers of the mind’s eye, individuals must “discove[r] / the agents of memory” (PA 39) and remember culturally; just as archaeologists dig down through the earth’s geological layers to uncover fossilized records of the evolution and nature of past life forms, so too must those who wish to peel away the psychic layers of the “glass onion” dig through the pages of recorded Western history, the limestone layers of their culture’s memory, which is imbedded in their own memory, thus discovering the now forgotten and unseen fossil-

memories of their culture's evolution - fossil-memories that explain exactly "how we got here" (PA 177) both collectively and individually.

Moreover, it is not enough, from Dewdney's perspective, to skim the pages of Western history; individuals must know and understand, must "see" and "grasp" (PA 150), the "previous eras" well enough to "re-enact" their culture's sociohistorical evolution. In "Brain Pan," Dewdney mockingly says that "I see a hole in your head / you could shine a CN diesel-light through" (PA 161). That hole likely refers to the "areas of ignorance" (PA 109) described in *Predators*' "Remote Control" section: "the dark zones in the mind of western man....which everyone possesses" (109) and which the remote control agent uses as "a starting point" to "slowly erode a...person's concept & perception of the universe" (109), "construct[ing] a meticulous lie around [that] being" (109), and doing it to "enough people" (110) to achieve, like Selwyn Dewdney's J.C. Bilbeau, "absolute [group] control" (110). As Dewdney suggests in *Predators*' "Alter Sublime," our ignorance of the evolution of our culture and collective mind - our "[d]ivine anaesthesia" (150) and unawareness of the glass machinery in our mind - "is / like a hole that runs through everything. / Seen / it is altered. / Grasped / it is broken" (150).

Predators, I believe, represents Dewdney's re-enactment of his culture's evolution from "the late 4th century" to our technological present⁷⁰ as he tirelessly endeavours to free himself from the glass machinery in order to get a new angle on life, become himself, and "achieve [his] potential" (SG 47). In the Fawcett interview, Dewdney explains that *The Immaculate Perception* "is concerned with a transformation of [him]self" (72); *Predators*, as well as all his work, seems equally concerned with his self-transformation. As a re-

enactment of his culture's evolution, then, *Predators* embodies and models the first step in Dewdney's politic of perception, and as the term "log entries" suggests, the text provides a written record of the poet's difficult and painful psycho-archaeological journey through time, from present to distant past, as he reads his culture's memory and discovers the sociohistorical developments in the West, peeling away layer after glass layer from his own mind's eye.

For the most part, Dewdney's re-enactment takes place on the stage of the natural world, and the actors playing our roles and portraying human processes are the inhabitants of that world: moths with "moth wings unfolding into bats" (56), petrified⁷¹ "stone tree[s]" (57), "beetles lying drugged" (66), enraged "wasps" (68), "[n]ighthawks vigilant" with "[f]lashing white bars" (*i.e.*, prison bars) on their wings whose "flight delineate[s] our most habitual routes" (68), a horsetail fern growing out of a concretion, and "scarabs" rolling our Western ball of dung "in slow procession / up the meridian of symmetry" (75).⁷² We as a culture have tended to anthropomorphize nature; now Dewdney naturalizes us. In *The Secular Grail*, he says that "[w]e are subconsciously being conditioned to accept a travesty of perception" and "can no longer perceive naturality when [we] see it" (18). In *Predators*, it seems, he reconditions himself, as well as his readers, to see "naturality," for just as all of *Predators* moves towards the shattering of the glass machinery, so too does it move towards the poet's perception of naturality in "Cenozoic Asylum" where his "music [is] stripped pure of [Christian] association" (144) and where it is "[a]s if paradise renewed a tangible immaculate perception" (144), a secular way of truly seeing "without sin" that is beyond Christian morality or, as Nietzsche says, "beyond good and evil" (this is also "the immaculate

perception” in its “positive” context). While the poet observes “[d]ew drunk cecropia moths aimlessly copulating with flowers, twigs, hypothermic dragonflies & fingers” (145), this new immaculate perception enables him to see and understand that “[w]e have always made love this way” (144), loved and made love naturally and fearlessly, “down through all the ages” (144-5). In the Fawcett interview, Dewdney explains that he spent about “60 percent” of his youth in nature and “learned more than [he] learned anywhere else directly from...nature...about perception and self” (74). Sharing that vision with his readers and showing in great detail how he gradually emerged from the glass machinery, the “self-healer” of *Radiant Inventory* attempts to “heal selves” simply by “show[ing] them where [he] live[s]” (84). At the same time, he puts readers in their place, so to speak, in two ways, reconnecting them to the nature from which they have deviated while humbling them before it, as his epigraph to the original *Spring Trances* suggests: “Job’s sin is that he is pious, the correction for piety is natural history...”⁷³ In *Predators*, symbols of piety,⁷⁴ such as the elm and forehead (*RSD* 121-2), do abound. While the elm appears in *Predators* as the “GRACEFUL white elms” (58), “gigantic elms, Egyptian”⁷⁵ (58), and “blind elms” (103) symbolic of Westerners trapped in the “retinal forest” (62) of “Spring Trances,” the forehead appears as the “foreheads of brooding fetuses, their water-brains filled with grotesque electric thought impulses & thunder” (140) - likely the Judaeo-Christian God’s threatening thunder - and “our foreheads glid[ing] through each other’s symmetry, as far apart & identical as colliding galaxies” (69) because separated and all rendered piously the same by glass.

According to Dewdney, however, it seems that “[w]e...made love this way down through all the ages” (*PA* 144-5) *until* “the late 4th century.” In “This Command,” the first

log entry of *Predators*' concluding "Log Entries III" section, he writes that "we seek the beginning of this command. / Ancient as the light / from distant stars"⁷⁶ (177), thus indicating that his sociopoetic intent has been to find the source of the distant command to give up on life by giving oneself up to this one monotheistic, dualist, life-denying way of seeing and, ultimately, to Remote Control. Just as one finds his "Statement of First Principles" at the end of *The Secular Grail*, so too does one find them at the end of *Predators*. While acknowledging in "Coelacanth" that "[t]his is not the place / of departure" (PA 37), not the beginning of Western history, Dewdney, after having weighed all the facts, evidence, and characters involved in the Western drama, locates the source of "this command" in "the late 4th century" and visually reveals its identity in "The Immense Odds." Thus, the re-enactment of his culture's evolution covers only the past 1500 years. "Kant⁷⁷ hell you how it feels" (PA 34), he says in "In the Critical Half Light"; that is, he "can't tell" us how hellish it feels to inhabit a world that undermines self-fulfillment, a world where an outmoded proto-medieval Christian vision, along with its either-or morality and consequences, enforces life-denying social and moral norms, thus forcing us to continue building "a Hell in Heaven's despite." Thus, Dewdney's psycho-archaeological journey as a "causal archaeologis[t] / seeking an explanation for the rise / of our...civilization" (164) is also a Danteanesque journey through what he views as the hell of Western history since the beginning of the "tragic & human storm" (PA 93) "in the late 4th century."

**The Christ Archetype as Beginning and
End of the Evolution of Western Culture and Self**

*The Vision of Christ that thou does see
Is my Vision's Greatest Enemy....
Thine loves the same world that mine hates,
Thy Heaven doors are my Hell Gates.*

William Blake
"The Everlasting Gospel"

"Transubstantiation" is preceded by "Memory Table I," *Predators'* opening poem, which informs readers that the components of limestone are about to remember: "Lime, calcium, silica, pyrites, / THESE came to remember" (PA 10). As Stan Dragland notes, limestone, which is "rock made of fossils," "is given an attribute of mind, memory..." (PA 194). He also cites Dewdney's statement in *A Palaeozoic Geology's* preface that "THE FOSSIL IS PURE MEMORY" (n.p.). Metaphorically, then, Dewdney's words and poems, his fossils, are also "PURE MEMORY": that of his culture's evolution.

As *Predators'* second poem, "Transubstantiation" lays the collection's symbolic and thematic foundation so that out of it, all subsequent poems grow, expanding and "mutating" its images and themes and repeating its patterns in different contexts, just as Augustine's medieval Christian perspective continually expanded and mutated throughout the development of Western culture, repeating its central images, themes, and patterns in each new sociohistorical context. As *Predators'* first cultural memory, "Transubstantiation" is more saturated with Christian symbolism, theological terminology, and Christ allusions than any other poem in *Predators*. Like "The Immense Odds," it also identifies Christ's image as

the source of "this command" and the "explanation for the rise / of our ontogenetic"⁷⁸ civilization," which suggests that, from the poet's perspective, his culture's evolution and that of the Western self, as we know it today, begins and ends with Christ's archetypal image just as *Predators* textually begins and visually ends with it. While Dewdney's Christ allusions are obvious only in "Transubstantiation" and "The Immense Odds," it must be noted, they run metaphorically throughout *Predators* as, for example, the sun, homonymous with "the Son," and a cold solar wind.⁷⁹ Given the complexity of "Transubstantiation," cited below in full, this chapter is, for the most part, devoted to a detailed discussion of the poem:

Devoid of perception the
 blind form of the fossil
 exists post-factum.
 Its movement planetary, tectonic.
 The flesh of these words
 disintegrates.
 (as the words must be placed together
 in light of theiyr skeletons)
 Or rather the motion ascribed to
 becomes a vehicle (for Paraclete).

What rises.
 From the visible altar
 to the altar sublime. Is
 Is what we wish to inhabit
 just the bread, just the wine.

Erosion unites with process to reveal
 form.

Complies with laws
 independent of vision.
 In formation.
 Mirrors.
 (a photograph of the author photographing themselves)
 At any given moment
 moment is solid.

"Generation" of the Son.
 "Procession" of the Holy Spirit.
 A unicorn
 white from existence in the underworld.
 Gold is sprinkled on a fossil or
 administered intravenously.
 (in the late 4th century
 the Arians released the unicorn in a cavern
 to the thin leathern applause of bats)

"Generation" of Logos.
 "Procession" of the Holy Spirit. (*PA* 20-1)

Dewdney begins the third stanza with "[e]rosion unites with process to reveal / form."

In other words, perhaps, the poet's psycho-archaeological process of peeling the cultural glass layers from his mind, which is comparable to the erosion of rock by wind and water, unites with the creative processes of art and writing to reveal form. In *Radiant Inventory* Dewdney says that "[b]eing begins from forms" (74), and in "Transubstantiation," he seems to identify, in a Platonic sense, the ancient ideal form that, from his perspective, underlies and motivates individuals in the West who thus become the Western ideal form rather than themselves. That ideal form is the "In formation" informing "us" and ideologically forming "us" from within. As Dewdney states in *Predators'* "The Drawing Out of Colour," "[w]e are informed" (75) and, in *The Immaculate Perception's* "Insect Mimicry," "[w]e are in-formed" (37): we internalize the most idealized, imitated, and exploited of Western forms, shaping ourselves according to the Christ archetype like "water assuming the shape of any vessel" (*PA* 22). From Dewdney's perspective, such an "in-formational" process ultimately transforms us into Christlike insects and bats, as "The Immense Odds" suggests, while keeping us rooted in our

collective medieval past. It also keeps us in line, as "In formation" further suggests, and on the one well beaten "autobahn to paradise" (*PA* 81), be it in this life, the next, or both.

Since, as members of the same culture, "we" all receive the same formative "ideal specific" (*IP* 86) "In formation," we all become "Mirrors" of the same ideal form: "tiny distorted lenses of a mirror" (*PA* 23) that is "societally held" (*IP* 108). Also at issue, then, is genericalness and homogeneity of form. It is thus no wonder that Dewdney speaks of "Transubstantiation" as "a photograph of the author photographing themselves" (20), "our" piously identical *inner* selves since the "singularity, [is] within, not out of"⁴⁰ (*PA* 34), or that later in "The Drawing Out of Colour" he speaks of himself as "photographing your obsession" (*PA* 77) with the same cultural ideal. Having written in "Transubstantiation" that "[a]t any given moment / moment is solid" (20), he later associates "photographic" with "freeze action & repeat" (*PA* 97). Indeed, though each moment when experienced is real and eternal, of the sum total only certain moments are "photographed" and chosen to be remembered. According to Dewdney, it seems, in "the late 4th century" and despite "the immense odds," Western culture chose and photographed one memory and image, that of Christ, which became and has remained the ideal Western form and archetypal self-image; it has since been "freeze action & repeat," with generation after generation of individuals born into Western culture assuming Christ's sacrificial form "to the thin leathern applause of bats" (20): all those who, like "our arbitrators," cloak themselves in Christ's Messianic image while exploiting and vampirically feeding on the many who adopt a fearfully pious sub/stance towards life and willingly carry Christ's cross.

The form revealed in the poem, then, is "ours"; we all become "the / blind form of the fossil / [that] exists post-factum," long after the fact of Christ or "the late 4th century." Though the term can refer to anything ancient, a fossil is all that remains of an ancient life form at least 10,000 years (Chambers n.p.) after the fact of its existence. While, as Dewdney says, "THE FOSSIL IS PURE MEMORY," it is also pure form preserved by fossilization, which occurs in two basic ways. The first is an infiltration process during which the "porous parts" of an "original structure, such as a bone" or shell, become "infilled" by minerals "that infiltrate from the local groundwater,"⁴¹ which parallels Dewdney's notion of "In formation" that would infiltrate from the local culture. The second is a slow replacement process during which "an original substance, such as wood...[is] replaced, a molecule at a time, by mineral matter" (Chambers n.p.), which parallels Dewdney's view of the "fossilization" and vitrification of the human mind and thus of the whole human being. When describing in *Predators* how the "remote control personality constructs a meticulous lie around another being" (109), Dewdney says that "[p]article by particle...solid reality...is replaced by fantasies and lies" (109), which he defines as "[f]ossilization" (109), until the individual becomes, like "the / fossil of a lady" in "Glass," a human fossil, pure medieval memory and form.

There are also living fossils, such as the coelacanth, a fish commonly found as a seventy-million-year-old fossil and thought to be extinct until its rediscovery in 1938. In *Predators'* "Coelacanth," Dewdney repeats the image of the "blind form of the fossil / [that] exists post-factum" when he writes of "an extinct species" that continues to exist:

The existence of
an extinct species

is indicative
 not of the circumstances
 engendering its uncanny survival
 but the point at which
 our nets coalesced
 and forced his appearance. (37)

If symbolic of humans beings, the coelacanth can be seen to represent, for example, a medieval species that, though believed to be extinct since 1600, continues to exist in each of "us," the "[f]urious museums" (*PA* 35) referred to in "Phonology of the Coves." Of course, the fish,⁸² among the earliest of Christian symbols, is associated with Christ⁸³ and represents the faithful, as well as the "unity with Christ" (Gibson 40). As Dewdney suggests, the coelacanth's continued existence does not explain why it continues to exist, but does reveal when "we" decided to fish the same waters and net the same fish, thus forcing the coelacanth's appearance and continued existence today. As a cultural event, this occurred "in the late 4th century" when the Christian became the normative Western type and Christ, the normative ideal.

Certainly, the form revealed in "Transubstantiation" is inseparable from the Christ symbolism dominating the poem. To briefly summarize, "flesh of these words" and "'Generation' of the Son" and "of Logos"⁸⁴ allude to the late-fourth-century Logos Christology that figures Christ as the Word of God incarnate (McBrien 311): "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:4). Translated in the Bible as "comforter" and "advocate," "Paraclete" generally refers to the Holy Spirit, but does occur in reference to Christ: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1-2). A medieval theological term,⁸⁵ "transubstantiation" describes the process that

occurs when "the substance of the bread and wine offered at the Eucharist is changed into the substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ" (McBrien 1264), "the bread" and "the wine" alluded to in the poem. Finally, the unicorn, which enters Christian symbolism during the medieval period, symbolizes Christ, described by bishop Ambrose as "this unicorn the only begotten Son of God" (Cooper 238); while its single horn symbolizes "the one true gospel" (Gibson 128) - the word and sword of God (Cirlot 357) - its whiteness symbolizes the "gentleness, chastity, purity, virginity, the good, and strength of mind" (Cooper 238) embodied by both Christ and the Virgin Mary. Thematically, then, the idealized form of Christ, along with all that it symbolizes, dominates the poem just as surely as it has dominated Western perception since the late fourth century.

Dewdney's central concern in *The Immaculate Perception's* "Template Matching" is in fact "[t]he domination of human perception by idealized forms" (107). Speaking of "archetypal semiology," he suggests that, by "consensus of choice," a culture ends up with one "ideal solid," an "ideal type," "of which a separate form exists for all ages, social groupings and classes" (107). A different form of Christ's ideal form can thus be said to exist for every member of Western culture, perhaps one for the Lord and a variety for his flies. As previously noted, "to be safe is to be identified with the ideal type" (107), and to deviate from the norm is to be "viewed as monstrous" (107). Morally compelled by society and the fear of consequences, then, individuals conform, assuming their prescribed form of the one ideal Christ type and thus maintaining their culture's homogeneity of human form or, as Blake calls it, the "Human Abstract."⁸⁶

In *Predators'* "Gas Port I," Dewdney also writes of form: "FORM" (23) that, "intensely faithful to the age it flourished in," "collects in pockets in the limestone and then wells up" with the "[l]imestone beds," "at times coming so close to the surface that the roots of deciduous trees, also symbolic of humans, can draw theiyr sustenance from the rock" (23), and thus from the "FORM." Depending on location, trees draw their nourishment from different types of bedrock, such as limestone or glacial till,⁸⁷ and Dewdney notes that "[w]hen a deciduous tree draws its nourishment from limestone instead of glacial till, its intrinsic form is substantially different from others of the same species" (23). Similarly, the "intrinsic form" of humans nourished by Western history is "substantially different from others" nourished, for example, by Indian or Chinese history, as would also be the case with humans nourished by the ideal form of medieval Christianity as opposed to those nourished by the ideal form of Dewdney's late-twentieth-century existential narcissism, which is each individual's unique "original being" (SG 43). The allusion to medieval European cathedrals suggests that these deciduous trees symbolize human beings who nourish themselves with and thus assume a medieval form: "the vaulting and altar plans for Chartres, Rheims, Orléans, and Amiens can be seen in theiyr branches" (PA 23). Again, the idea of ideologically becoming what we eat appears. Dewdney also notes that "[t]he trees...are living entirely in the age they tap": entirely in the past, the fossil's domain, and specifically in the Middle Ages. Moreover, "[t]hey can exist in this dreamlike state obliviously" (PA 23): oblivious to themselves, the present, and their potential. Unconsciously and somnambulistically, they "go through the motions" (PA 22) of life in "[s]pring trances of [the] control emerald night" (PA 60), remote-controlled by the proto-Augustinian "faith" (in Christianity, the emerald⁸⁸ symbolizes faith

[RSD 50]), and by today's opportunistic arbitrators. As described in the second stanza of "Gas Port I," "FORM" further represents an unseen force that human beings hear, serve, and obey: "Men are powerless but to obey its command and build palaces and cathedrals which to the FORM are tiny distorted lenses of a mirror in which it can satiate its eternal narcissism" (23). Indeed, as Dewdney says in *The Immaculate Perception*, "[o]ur ideals are idols" (110), idols whose song is likely the "Song of Remote Control." Demanding that individuals give themselves up to it, the idolized FORM of forms⁹ "suckles," to recall Augustine's image, powerless, obedient, servile humans eager to comply "with laws / independent of vision" (PA 20). Moreover, in assuming the idol's form, human beings ultimately become their own idols and dark, glassy "sculpted obsidian deities within" (PA 137), hence the mirror symbolism.

While the many allusions to medieval theology in "Transubstantiation" suggest that the age, values, and mentality to which the "blind form of the fossil" remains faithful are indeed those of medieval Christianity, it is also in "Transubstantiation" that the theme of becoming what one ideologically eats first appears. As the poem's title indicates, the primary thematic concern is the Eucharist feast and transubstantiation, the replacement process that occurs when, as Dewdney notes in *Predators'* glossary, the host or "bread & wine is transubstantiated with spirit" (187): that of Christ. He further notes that the term refers to "[a]ny process of material replacement" (PA 187), to changing any substance into another. Thus, transubstantiation is Dewdney's first metaphor for his notion of the fossilization and vitrification of human beings, and the replacement of their "solid reality" (PA 109) "with fiction" (PA 104), "fantasies and lies" (PA 109) or, in other words, with a virtual reality. Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians further hold that, upon receiving Holy Communion,

they are "filled with the essence of Jesus" (Gibson 41) and "become the actual body and blood of Christ" (Cox 403). "[L]ike a specialist in search of a generality" (*PA* 162), Dewdney appropriates the concept of the Eucharist, just as he appropriates many other concepts, and applies it generally to suggest that all who enter Western culture become transubstantiated, not with the spirit of Christ, but with the medieval spirit of the idealized Christ. Thus they become pure Manicheanized Christian spirit, and the "spirit" in "Palace of Fear" that "is but everlasting autumn / crying for August" (*PA* 86), crying for the past.⁹⁰ Thus, too, do they all become hosts to the Christ ideal.⁹¹

Yet when Christ issued the Eucharist command, so to speak, he spoke not of individuals becoming Him, but of their housing each other in what can be likened to a mutual host-parasite relationship: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). In *The Immaculate Perception*, Dewdney in fact defines the cultural ideal as an internalized "psychic parasite"⁹² (56): "A societally held ideal template [a mould or pattern] is a supramodal, symbolic system operating within a biological context" (108). Thus, the ideal *is* a complex symbolic system, such as the "opportunistic conceptual system" (*SG* 22) of medieval Christian ideology, operating within human beings, which is a subject discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. From Dewdney's perspective, therefore, individuals born into Western culture are invariably entered by the medieval Christ ideal; they are also, like "the controlled" (*PA* 112) unknowingly entered by the remote-control agent, "[e]ntranced by theiyr own destruction & his incorporation into the world" (*PA* 112). Indeed, all replacement processes in *Predators* result in the loss of the individual's original

self, which is gradually replaced by the ideal-cum-ideology and its underlying medieval values, mentality, and perceptual paradigm.

Dewdney's heavy emphasis in "Transubstantiation" on the ideal, the spirit, and the divine and an absence of the real, the flesh, and the human suggests the presence of Cartesian dualism while reflecting the basic available Western choice during the past 1500 years, a simple black-and-white choice concisely summarized on a billboard looming outside Kenora, Ontario, in September 1997: "Satan is real. Christ is the path. You cannot be neutral. Choose now." As Dewdney says, "[t]he choice must not be conceived else it is made (*PA* 61). Over and over, he seems to believe, individuals have been making the same choice conceived "in the late 4th century," fearfully choosing the spirit, divine, and ideal over the flesh, the human, and the real. Rather than become themselves, then, they imitatively assume their prescribed form of the socially and morally acceptable ideal Christ type, and thus symbolically become, like Christ, medieval unicorns "white from existence in the underworld" (*PA* 20), the Western world with its "disjunct religion of sub / stance" (*PA* 30). While the unicorn's whiteness is symbolic of purity, moral perfection, and subdued sexuality, white "in the waters of the unconscious" (*SG* 86) is also, according to *The Secular Grail's* "Demon Shadow," "the colour of terror" and "pure voiceless fear" (86): the paralyzing terror of those too afraid to move, much less to celebrate existence, due to a fixation on sin, moral perfection, and retribution.

In the late fourth century BCE,⁹³ in fact, the unicorn enters Western culture; the oldest known version, the Chinese Ky-lin⁹⁴ (Cooper 238), is a two-horned (Cirlot 357) beast with red, yellow, blue, white, and black skin (Cirlot 358). When incorporating the unicorn into

their legends, however, medieval Christian thinkers depict it as a one-horned white creature. In *Predators*, Dewdney speaks of the "drawing out of colour" (75) and, in *Radiant Inventory*, of "the idea of things drained of colour in order to be filled with meaning" (43). Thus, just as medieval Christian thinkers drained the unicorn of its original colour in order to refill it with medieval Christian meaning, so too, Dewdney appears to be saying, do Western perception and culture drain individuals of their human colour and gradually refill them with the same medieval Christian meaning that has maintained the Western status quo for the past 1500 years.⁹⁵

In becoming unicorn-Christ, individuals also become words incarnate so that theirs is "[t]he flesh of these words [that] / disintegrates" in the first stanza of "Transubstantiation": flesh that denied, as in Wayland Young's "Eros Denied," becomes "our transparent flesh" (*PA* 118) and exists as if non-existent, "obvious" yet "unseen" like glass. The image of fleshless "words...placed together / in light of their skeletons," of their own skeletons as well as those of their ancestors, is suggestive of a long line of beings "[i]n formation," stripped of their carnality, and proceeding since "the late 4th century" "in slow procession / up the meridian of symmetry" (*PA* 75), like the scarabs in "The Drawing Out of Colour." In a sense, the image stands as a *memento mori* of our Western death-in-life existence since "the late 4th century" as mere "vehicle[s] (for Paraclete)": for Christ's purified image, for piously holy spirit, and for a monastic fear of carnality.⁹⁶ Ultimately, believes Dewdney, such individuals "become vehicles for simulating miracles that in themselves paradoxically renounce miracle by representing it" (Fawcett 72), and imitating it. Since "we" fear and reject our own bodies and blood, Dewdney in the second stanza's rhetorical question suggests that in fact "we wish

to inhabit / just the bread, just the wine" (20): just Christ's body and blood, just His divine idealized form, just His pure spirit. We thus "wish to inhabit" just His "bodily sacrifice" (Gibson 41) and "sacrificial death" (Cox 403), which are symbolized by the Eucharist, a sacrament that must be repeated often during a Christian's life. Hence, Dewdney implies that, like actual Christians, all individuals born into Western culture repeat Christ's sacrificial death on the cross throughout their lives, generation after generation and century after century, by fearfully following the one path of "Christ, the righteous," sacrificing their carnality, and portraying themselves as perfectly as the ideal Christ. Thus, says Dewdney, "our humming god / suffers from obesity / and tears fingers⁹⁷ from children" (*PA* 45), an act that symbolizes "sublimated castration" (*RSD* 17). In Darwinian terms, the evolution of the Western self has not necessarily entailed "the survival of the fittest," but rather, as Dewdney suggests in *The Immaculate Perception*, the "[s]urvival of the propitious" (111), which alludes to Christ as "the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:2). Since "we wish" nothing more than to comply with and appease the one wrathful god by imitating an idealized, refined medieval version of his "Son," nothing "rises. / From the visible altar / to the alter sublime"⁹⁸ (20): there is nothing transcendent here at this medieval angle.

"'Procession' of the Holy Spirit," the concluding and only twice repeated line in "Transubstantiation," reiterates the image of a long line of fleshless words; its repetition and final emphasis further suggest that it contains the thematic crux of the poem. "'Generation' of the Son" and "of Logos" and "'Procession' of the Holy Spirit" refer to the doctrine of the Trinity, which was itself generated in "the late 4th century" and refined during the Middle Ages to describe the triune nature of God and uphold Christ's divinity⁹⁹; certainly, from

Dewdney's perspective, the doctrine as a "[d]eistic explanatio[n]...diminish[es] reality by confusing it with mythology" (*SG* 189). With the generation of Logos Christology, Dewdney seems to believe, a procession of the Holy Spirit begins in the West, and a never-ending Christ generation (as in the Coke generation) results.

Within trinitarian theology, "Procession" refers specifically to "the origin of one divine person from another" (McBrien 1055), which is suggestive of the individual's origin, or desire to originate, from the divine person of Christ and thus from God. Latin theology holds that there are two processions: the Son from the Father and then the Spirit from both the Father and Son (McBrien 1055). In *Predators*, however, it seems that from the Father and Son only "[t]he metamorphosis of insects proceeds" (*PA* 68). In the original *Fovea Centralis*, it is worth noting, Dewdney reduces the Trinity to a Cartesian dichotomy¹⁰⁰: "The plane of reflection is Holy Ghost while the equally opposite images are the Father & Son" (75). Since the Father and Son belong to the divine realm, the Holy Ghost, as their opposite image, likely belongs to the human realm, that of human "Mirrors" imitatively reflecting Their divine form along the same "plane of reflection" since "the late 4th century." Ultimately, indeed, Dewdney's "'Procession' of the Holy Spirit" refers to a human procession: a 1500-year procession of unconscious, holy, Christlike ghosts proceeding from the idealized medieval form of the crucified Christ, merely portraying and thinking themselves perfect while hubristically becoming their own idolized "obsidian deities within" (*PA* 137) and "[s]ymmetry's ghosts / soundlessly colliding with their own images" (*PA* 76).

In *The Secular Grail*, Dewdney defines ghosts "not [as] the surviving souls of the dead but rather [as] the vestigial souls of the living" (65). They are unconscious beings who, like the deciduous trees in "Gas Port I," are oblivious to their present reality:

...Ghosts consist of all those things you do unthinkingly or despite your present circumstances. Ghosts are the culmination of moments stolen from consciousness.

Because inattention is an absence of conscious investment in the present moment, it represents a withdrawal from the real, which, in turn, arrests spiritual development by diverting energy from the real and investing it in a disincorporate realm. All of these instances, these points when our consciousness is directed elsewhere, gradually conjure a phantom, a shadow-self who shuffles dimly through our lives, rattling its chains of unconsciousness - the chains that bind it to a being who has not learned to inhabit the present moment fully. (SG 65)

Thus, ghosts, like fossils, are remnants of past life: the living dead, which accounts for Dewdney's recurrent vampire theme. In terms of *Predators*, ghosts are those who inhabit their distant collective past rather than their individual present, and the abstract world of ideas, ideals, and ideology rather than the real world. Faithful to the past, they behave mediocrally despite a very different late-twentieth-century existential reality. Simultaneously, they withdraw from the corporate realm of their flesh, a problem further addressed in *The Secular Grail's* "Disowning the Self":

LIKE BATHERS afraid of cool water, most of us are unwilling to explore morally or aesthetically uninhabitable parts of our own psyches. Nearly all of us live our lives without extending into the dark corners of our existences....It is this alienation from ourselves that impairs our ability to fully inhabit ourselves, to take responsibility for our totality. We cannot celebrate that which is only piecemeal... (46)

In rejecting the reality of both their present and their corporeal selves, then, the unconscious Christlike holy ghosts in the Western "Procession" of the Holy Spirit become

stunted ghostly children who neither mature spiritually, which according to Dewdney is "[o]ur life task" (SG 43), nor ever "become that which they are." Instead, they "withdraw from the real" and lead empty lives in what Blake refers to as a "Holy-ghost Vacuum" (MHH 150), a vacuum to which Dewdney often refers in *Predators* as, for example, when he speaks of "[v]acuum-tube larvae" (66) and a "hissing, curling electric glow / around the edge of your vacuum" (81).

In a sense, such individuals commit suicide, and in the fourth stanza of "Transubstantiation" Dewdney alludes to the sacrament of baptism in a suicidally suggestive way when he writes that "[g]old is sprinkled on a fossil or / administered intravenously" (20). As he reveals in *Radiant Inventory*, "[i]njecting liquid gold into your veins"¹⁰¹ (73) is "Geological Suicide" (73), which can be seen metaphorically as suicide on emotional, psychological, and spiritual levels. In the New Testament, baptism is described as a regenerative process involving a death in life. Like Dewdney's remote control agent, the Holy Spirit descends and enters the baptized individual who dies to "the body of sin" (Romans 6:6); as past sins are washed away (Acts 22:16), the individual is "born again" (John 3:7) in a morally and aesthetically *inhabitable* body. The baptism of which Dewdney speaks, administered with gold rather than water, also involves a death in life, but no regeneration.

While Christianity associates gold with heaven (Cirlot 142), which in Dewdney's view is clearly a negative concept, gold also goes hand in hand with purity. In "The Parenthetical," Dewdney associates "pure" with "wretched" (96), "the wretched repose of our elders in latin" (95), and gold with "reasoning" (96), the "reasoning" of "slippery animals that review your sins" (95); these obviously Christian "animals" are likely "slippery," at least in part, due to the

holy oil with which Christians are anointed after baptism (McBrien 308). Interestingly, *Christ* literally means "the anointed one" (McBrien 308) and *Christians*, those who "belong to" (McBrien 309) the anointed or "oiled" one, as do all Westerners, from Dewdney's perspective; the notion of holy oil¹⁰² is of relevance to the next chapter. Administering gold intravenously, then, likely refers to injecting and thereby fossilizing humans with the holy oil of the "latin" religious moral reasoning that has dominated the West since "the late 4th century," the "steel-grey / light of reason, illuminating / the flesh of the world" (*RI* 30). Fuel injection also comes into play, and fossil fuel oil is often referred to as "black gold." In *The Secular Grail*, Dewdney writes of "ethical fuel" (61): of negative "dark-source fuels" as opposed to the positive "cleaner-burning, morally light fuel of maturity" (61-2). From his perspective, it seems, the ethical fuel of medieval Christianity, also the gas referred to in "Gas Port I," is so morally heavy with guilt, shame, and fear and its Augustinian source is so dark that individuals sprinkled or injected with it cannot but sink to, and remain weighed down by, a sub/stance towards life. Though technically alive, the blind fossil forms and "vestigial souls of the living" baptized into Western culture and perception, dominated by the idealized form of Christ, gradually become "dead with Christ" (Rom. 6:8) in spirit and "buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6:4) in this life. Patiently, they go through life awaiting rebirth, life, and joy at some later time, "disowning" themselves and becoming nothing more than holy ghosts and shadow-selves dead to that which is real and meaningful in the here and now; as Blake warns, restrained desire "by degrees becomes passive, till it is only the shadow of desire" (*MHH* 150). Thus, no rebirth accompanies *this* baptism, for as Blake also says in

Milton, "they know not of Regeneration, but only of Generation" (II, 31, l.19): the
 "'Generation' of the Son" and "'Procession' of the Holy Spirit."

Ultimately, as the first stanza in "Transubstantiation" indicates, the Western fossil form's perception and movement are its twofold problem. Dominated by Western perception and the idealized form of Christ, the fossil form is "blind" and "[d]evoid of perception"; it can neither see nor understand, which is why it so easily "[c]omplies with laws / independent of vision." "Devoid of perception" further suggests that it is also, like a real fossil, devoid of feeling¹⁰³ and life. The fossil form's "movement [is] planetary, [and] tectonic" (20), which Dewdney clarifies in part in the following poem, "Power Glen I": "Our form is sacrificial / and there is no movement" (22). That is, our form is the sacrificial form of Christ as depicted in a crucifix-shaped poem in the original *Paleozoic Geology* (n.p.):

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      n
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halig gasttlogos vita
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      d
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From bottom to top, the vertical line spells "suspended animation," meaning "the cessation of vital functions"¹⁰⁴: from Dewdney's perspective, no doubt, the cessation of vital human functions, such as love, thought, and spiritual development. In *Demon Pond's* "Hollow Wind, Empty Stars," he inseparably links the failure to move with a failure to think and love: "we who look on, / who merely regret, / have never loved nor thought / nor moved" (52). The vertical line of the crucifix poem is comprised of *halig*, meaning "holy" in Old English; *gast*, meaning "ghost" in Old English and "host" in German; *logos*, meaning "word" in Latin and both the Father and Son in Logos Christology; and *vita*, meaning "life" or "a way of life" in Latin. The line suggests that the life of human holy ghosts hosting the "Father & Son" is one wherein spiritual development and the most vital of human functions are arrested. It is non-life, anti-life, and "[a]ntimatter"¹⁰⁵ (PA 112).

The crucifix, or Latin cross bearing Christ, is also a symbol and way of life that develops during the Middle Ages. As symbol and icon, the crucifix is used for the first time in 692, for "Paleochristian iconography avoided the depiction of the Crucifixion" (Gibson 39). Precisely because the sacrificial form of Christ dominates, Dewdney appears to believe, "there is no movement." There is certainly no self-propelled movement, as is also the case with the pale grey moths in the epigraph that, once freed, "flutter up like pieces of ash caught in a dust-devil"; were the wind to subside, one assumes, they would fall to the ground, emitting like Ice "a soft swish-thud" (PA 154). Instead, there is but reflexive, habitual movement, like that of the winged creatures in the "Spring Trances" section whose "flight delineates our most habitual routes" (PA 68). There is but movement that results from being acted upon by invisible forces other than one's own, like the movement of the planets caused by gravitation

or that of tectonic plates caused by convection currents: movement caused by "wind justifiably animat[ing] that / from without which cannot from / within" (*PA* 115). Ultimately, there is but non-movement caused by feared¹⁰⁶ invisible forces, such as "an omniscient vengeful god," "Satan," and hell fires. Being "planetary," "our" non-movement is as circular, repetitive, and tautological as that of planets eternally orbiting the same sun, for generation after generation we orbit the same "Son," repeating in ourselves the Christ idea(1); being "tectonic," it is also as slow as that of tectonic plates moving less than 2.5 centimetres per year at their slowest rate and more than 15 centimetres per year at their fastest.¹⁰⁷ At these rates, there is only the illusion of moving, developing, progressing, and ascending. And according to Dewdney, "the illusion of ascending...was maintained by constantly dwindling the apparatus of the soul" (*PA* 92).

Thus, Dewdney concludes the first stanza of "Transubstantiation" with "the motion ascribed to / becomes a vehicle (for Paraclete)." When this occurs, individuals give up all personal power and control over their own lives, becoming not drivers but passengers, observers, and unconscious, ghostly children who, wanting only to be taken care of, refuse to take responsibility for themselves, their lives, and their destinies. Willingly, and as *Predators'* "Song of Remote Control" demands, they "[g]ive up totally" (113) "like...a joyful suicide" (113). Rather than become that which they are, they become that which they are told to be and thus "the never-to-be-born" (113) who, in embracing a sub/stance of "total submission" (113), sacrifice themselves, their existences, and their desires to higher powers, be they human, divine, or abstract.¹⁰⁸ It is this type of human form, this "blind form of the fossil," that is required by the applauding bats in "Transubstantiation," "our arbitrators" who

self-servingly seek to control others by promising, like Remote Control, to "take care of everything" (*PA* 113): servile, passive, fearful human form that unquestioningly and obediently "[c]omplies with laws / independent of vision" and seeks a leader to follow, any leader.

Thus, Dewdney in the last stanza of stanza of "Transubstantiation" concludes the poem with a final sinister image: "in the late 4th century / the Arians released the unicorn in a cavern / to the thin leathern applause of bats" (21) that, one assumes, will feed on the unicorn. Alternatively spelled as "Arian,"¹⁰⁹ "Aryan"¹¹⁰ enters the English language in the nineteenth century as a term for the Indo-European race, and derives from the Sanskrit "arya," meaning "of high rank" and an "aristocrat"¹¹¹ (Nazi ideologists¹¹² used the term in reference to Europeans as the "superior" race of Caucasians of the Nordic type). In "the late 4th century," then, the European "elite" (*PA* 49) and ideologues like Augustine, believing their religion to be the superior religion, release the Manicheanized medieval Christian version of the unicorn - symbolic of the morally and sexually pure human Christ type, the one God, the one true gospel, and the one "catholic" way of seeing and being in the Western world - "in a cavern," a traditional symbol of the unconscious (Cirlot 40), and thus into the Western psyche. In *Radiant Inventory*, Dewdney says that "[a] cave is the limestone's unconscious" (98): it is thus history's unconscious and, in Jungian¹¹³ terms, the collective unconscious, referred to in *Predators* as "co-consciousness" (97). Dewdney adds that "[t]o proceed there [to the cave] is to proceed through our own interior" (*RI* 98). The cavern in "Transubstantiation" recalls others, such as Cohen's "Mary cave" (*BL* 197), Blake's "Caverns of the Grave" and "Caves of Hell"¹¹⁴ (Blake 558), and Dewdney's own infernal "[e]merald

crystal caves in hot black tar" (*PA* 65). Certainly, the cavern in "Transubstantiation" represents a torturous place for the unicorn, and a hellish, imprisoning place in the mind, for as Blake writes, "man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern" (*MHH* 154).

The releasing of the unicorn in a cave can also be seen to have associations with Christ's birth and resurrection. According to one apocryphal story, Mary actually gave birth to Christ in an underground cave lit by the light of God¹¹⁵ (Roberts 374) while Christ is buried in a tomb comparable to a cave that is "hewn out in the rock" and blocked by a "great stone" (Matt. 27:60). Whether, from Dewdney's perspective, the late-fourth-century European elite gave birth to or resurrected the archetype of the Christ-unicorn, his point is likely the same point made by Anne Michaels, a Toronto writer who shares Dewdney's thematic and intellectual concerns, and who, like Christian Bok, appears to have been deeply influenced by Dewdney and his work.¹¹⁶ In *Fugitive Pieces*, Michaels writes that "[i]t's not the unknown past we're doomed to repeat, but the past we know" (161) and, furthermore, that "an idea recorded will become an idea resurrected" (161). From Dewdney's perspective, of course, the Christ idea as recorded, idealized, and refined by medieval Christianity, and as symbolically summarized by the unicorn and crucifix, is the idea that Westerners have been "doomed to repeat"; it is the one archetypal idea resurrected in each individual born into Western culture since its release into the Western psyche "in the late 4th century" when "stained glass windows [began] hunting in the Carboniferous"¹¹⁷ swamps" (*PA* 44); "[i]t was obvious," adds Dewdney, "that the pleasure of the survivors had been short lived" (*PA* 44). Indeed, the image of "stained glass windows hunting" recalls the medieval Christian legend

of the "Holy Hunt or Virgin Capture" (Cooper 237) often depicted in the stained glass windows of medieval cathedrals. According to the legend, the fierce and tireless unicorn can be tamed and captured by only a chaste virgin; thus, hunters release a virgin in a forest which, like the cave, symbolizes the unconscious. Upon seeing her, the unicorn approaches, lays its head upon her lap, and falls asleep, which enables nearby hunters to easily capture the unconscious animal for their king and his reward (Cooper 237-8).¹¹⁸ Clearly, only the pure and chaste can attract Christ and win God's reward. More importantly, Dewdney's hunt no doubt symbolizes the historically real hunt that began in the late fourth century: that of the medieval, persecutorial Augustinian Christian Church that released the archetypal self-image of Christ as chaste unicorn and willing sacrifice into the Western psyche, thus taming and "drugging" human beings, enforcing their "withdrawal from the real," and facilitating the Church's conversionary capture and control of the unconscious masses, upon which it as a power structure and other power-hungry forces have since vampirically fed. Of course the bats applaud.

Dewdney's first cultural memory, then, is a very medieval Christian memory. Gradually, however, Dewdney dechristianizes *Predators*, which moves from an initially Christian context, with an abundance of recognizable Christian allusions, to an increasingly secularized context, thus mirroring the evolution of Western culture. To briefly summarize, the "Palaeozoic Geology" section, as has gradually been discussed, alludes to basic Christian concepts: Christ, the word of God (Logos), the Holy Spirit, the Eucharist, cathedrals and stained glass windows, the Fall (falling and sinking), privileged celibacy (virginity), monotheism (34), hell, and Satan. The subtly sinister "Spring Trances" section then repeats

these themes, but focusses on "the fall" (60), alluding often to the garden, snakes, lost awareness, "garden lusts" (63), cathedrals, and "terror" (68). The "Fovea Centralis" section, however, shifts from the medieval to the modern period, alluding more to nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers, such as T.S. Eliot (76), Karl Marx, William Golding, and Bram Stoker, than to the Bible and Christian theology, and the last two sections continue to move through Western cultural evolution to the present technological age. Nonetheless, the first piece in the third section, a photographic montage entitled "There Shall Be Mutt Natching of Teat" (Fig. 6), which refers back to a log entry in the first section (40), reminds readers that the third section is a continuation and mutation of the first two sections and that, despite any contextual changes in either *Predators* or the West, the proto-Augustinian medieval paradigm as Western perception is firmly in place as the roof over Western culture.

The title of "There Shall Be Mutt Natching" alludes to the biblical promise of anguished remorse when those excluded from the New Jerusalem are "cast...into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:41-3). While Dewdney's use of *teat* recalls Augustine's view of the Christian as suckling baby, the garbled title is suggestive of a speaker drugged,¹¹⁹ perhaps, by the Manicheanized Christian "opium of the people" alluded to in "Opium." In the background of the montage are the glassy ceiling and columns of a Gothic cathedral reminiscent of inverted stems of crystal wine glasses, and indicative that the once firm roof over the poet's head was, indeed, a medieval Christian roof. In the foreground is a pyramid¹²⁰ of male heads with defective and tortured eyes: eyes "seam[ed]" (145) and "wide with fear" (69). When the glass is shattered, "our eyes do not seam" (*PA* 145) and we can see with closed eyes (*PA* 151). While the pyramid is associated

with death, immortality, and power, its apex symbolizes, among other things, "spiritual attainment" (Gibson 31); however, the apex of Dewdney's pyramid, a bodiless head symbolic of pure mind, spirit, and reason with eyes open very wide, surely represents the impossibility of spiritual attainment in a world created, blinded, and dominated by the medieval perceptual paradigm in which it remains rooted. In this context, the montage represents a Western hell of, as the hierarchy of heads suggests, a power-based Western class or "caste" (30) "system



Figure 6 Dewdney's "There Shall Be Mutt Natching of Teat

of descending orders" (42), which is Dewdney's earlier definition of hell, where individuals become controlled, blind children dependent on those above, yet in control of those below - a hell that causes much gnashing of teeth, indeed, but in the here and now.

Thematically, the "Fovea Centralis" section also moves to a world of vampires, flies, and Remote Control, whose song bids "you" to "[g]ive yourselves up to Remote Control" in exchange for its "tak[ing] care of everything" (*PA* 113), like parents and like "our arbitrators." As Dewdney notes in "Remora," the name of a parasitical sucking fish, "[c]ertain parasites rather / like mediums for exchange / attach themselves / to those things which we desire" (*PA* 164). Given his belief that we must never give up in our "indefatigable" attempt to extricate and become ourselves (*PA* 162), and that we "must be ruthless in the service of [our] original being" (*SG* 43), the song of Remote Control can be seen as a siren-like song tempting listeners to "theiyr own destruction" (*PA* 112) and to "prolonged childhood" (*IP* 100) which, as Dewdney says in *The Immaculate Perception*, "renders the human... vulnerable to disorders of perception & cognition" (100): to "seeing as" from the distortive angle. In "'I Am the Lord and These Are My Flies,'" Dewdney unites the themes of flies, vampires, and Remote Control. As Stan Dragland notes, John Koegler, a friend to whom Dewdney dedicates the poem, committed suicide (*PA* 203); thus, "'I Am the Lord'" is as linked to death and suicide as it is to flies, vampires, "madness" (76), the "throttle[d]...soul" (76), and unnatural copulation (77).¹²¹ Dewdney concludes the poem with an image of the "flies, behavioural and / copulating in synthetic harmonies" (77), not *natural* harmonies. These flies, I believe, are, as "behavioural" suggests, perceptually and culturally determined human death-flies who "see as" and behave according to the distortive proto-medieval glass machinery; as

a result, from the poet's perspective, they engage in loveless, artificial sex, and are also capable of the "(fucking) unnatural acts" (*PA* 98) associated in "The Parenthetical," a hostile section of *Predators*, with "England" (98) and "Germany 1941" (98). In the same section, while evoking the idea of perversity, Dewdney also suggests that "the (reverse [of] England) [is] natural" (98). Though "[c]athedrals are kept burning at intervals / along the exacting trail" (*PA* 80) of both *Predators* and Western culture's evolution, Dewdney leaves behind his focus on medieval European Christianity in the first two sections to focus in the third section on its nineteenth-century Puritanical English mutation, which many consider still operative today. Indeed, during the course of Western culture's evolution, the glass machinery has continually mutated, adapting itself to each new sociohistorical context, moving further and further away from Christianity, and becoming more and more secular as does Western culture. In its late-twentieth-century form, the dominant Western perceptual paradigm thus appears free of its proto-Manichean Augustinian influence, but such is not the case, argues the poet, for the underlying medieval source and moral cause remain intact and thus continue, "unseen" (*PA* 138), to produce the same virtual, distorted existential reality, hence the need to shatter glass.

Over and over throughout *Predators*, Dewdney replays the same themes in different contexts, finally bringing the collection full circle with the Christ figure in "The Immense Odds." The insect, bat, and Remote Control themes in "I Am the Lord" and throughout *Predators* suggest that the Christ figure in "The Immense Odds" symbolizes not Christ, but would-be human Christs: the "predators the adoration." Some are deceitful human vampire bats playing the role of the good saviour in order to attain power, which is the same as

"Attaining Remote Control" (103); many others are powerless, self-deluded human flies who attach themselves to and assume Christ's sacrificial form "in order to cope with reality" (*IP* 106) and who thus "give up" on love and joy in this life, as well as on themselves. Both, however, are predators of the adoration,¹²² which from Dewdney's perspective is surely the same adoration defined by Blake in *The Book of Los* as love and joy: "O Times remote! / When Love & Joy were adoration, / And none impure were deem'd" (256). While often symbolic in the West of idolatry, evil, sin, and Satan, bats also symbolize desolation and desecration (Cooper 26). Indeed, Dewdney suggests that these human bats and insects, together as the two basic complicitous parts of the power-based social "pattern that regenerates itself with its own repetitive logic" (*PA* 56), self-servingly desecrate and desolate this world.

In his 1985 interview with Peter O'Brien, Dewdney states that "overall my work can be perceived as Christian but there are certainly very dark areas" (96). It is precisely those "dark areas" in Christianity that I have explored in my close and necessarily lengthy analysis of "Transubstantiation," a poem that exemplifies the highly complex, obscure, symbolic, metaphoric, fragmentary, and allusive nature of Dewdney's early poetry, and in my concluding comments. As previously noted, I view *Predators* as Dewdney's poeticized record of his own re-enactment of Western culture's evolution "since the late 4th century"; as such, *Predators* identifies "the exact source & cause" (*PA* 178) of the evolution of Dewdney's culture and the Western self, and it also models the first step in his "politic of perception," his memory-formula for individually shattering and thus exiting the glass machinery. While didactically indicating "the way out," so to speak, the poet nevertheless provides neither easy nor obvious

answers. After all, as Dewdney specifies in *The Secular Grail's* "Extrication of Self," removing from one's self all "deeply imbedded," "culturally inculcated misconceptions" is a necessarily long, difficult, painful process (SG 43). Indeed, he assembles his poems and visual art in such a way that, in order to see the "path...here" (PA 57) in *Predators*, and especially in order to explain it, readers are forced to consult dictionaries and encyclopaedias, to research sociohistorical references, to follow literary allusions, and thus to become culturally aware. In other words, Dewdney's poetry forces his readers to engage in the very act which, he believes, liberatingly peels the oppressive glass layers of "previous eras" from individual minds.

**The Concretion as Remote Control
Mechanism and the Workings of the Glass Machinery**

*Give yourselves up to Remote Control
There is no choice, either you come knowing
or not knowing. You come.*

Christopher Dewdney
"Song of Remote Control"

While "Transubstantiation" reveals the identity of the glass that evolves as the glass machinery and identifies the cause of the evolutionary course taken by Western culture, *Predators'* fifth poem, "Power Glen II," reveals both the glass machinery's purpose and workings. The central metaphor in "Power Glen II" is the concretion which, as *Predators'* "Photograph of Remote Control Mechanism Imbedded in Stone Outcrop" (Fig. 7) indicates, is essentially a remote control mechanism. A discussion of Remote Control and the human remote control agent thus precedes my discussion of "Power Glen II" and the concretion.

It is in *Predators'* "Remote Control" section that Dewdney discusses power and control in a contemporary, human context, revealing much about the remote control agent but less about the more mysterious Remote Control.¹²³ In the earlier "Spring Trances" section, Dewdney states that "everything is working by remote control" (65). The seductively sinister lyrics of Remote Control's song then clearly indicate its only desire and purpose: "Give yourselves over to Remote Control. / We will take care of everything" (113). Indeed, Remote Control is about having power over and control of human beings in the same way that humans remote control their own televisions, for example, *from a distance*. Since Remote Control's "intangible song hummed softly at times in his brain" (107), the remote

control agent appears to have given himself up to Remote Control; he thus obeys, serves, and sends messages to Remote Control. Yet as Dewdney humourously notes while hinting at the agent's self-delusion, "[r]emote control never asked for the messages nor replied in any manner" (107):

Rather the messages were *demanded* by remote control in the sympathetic vibration of a crystal deep within the agent that intuited remote control's insistent and urgent demands. And although the agent could never put his finger exactly on what remote control required, his trial and error approach to each day, each week, led to a secret and undeniable conviction that yes, this is what remote control wishes, what had been expected. (107)

Thus, like the glass imbedded in individual minds and the concretion imbedded in limestone (see Fig. 5), a crystal imbedded in the agent and operating like a radio crystal receives Remote Control's "coded" (107) "demands" and transmits them to the agent. The

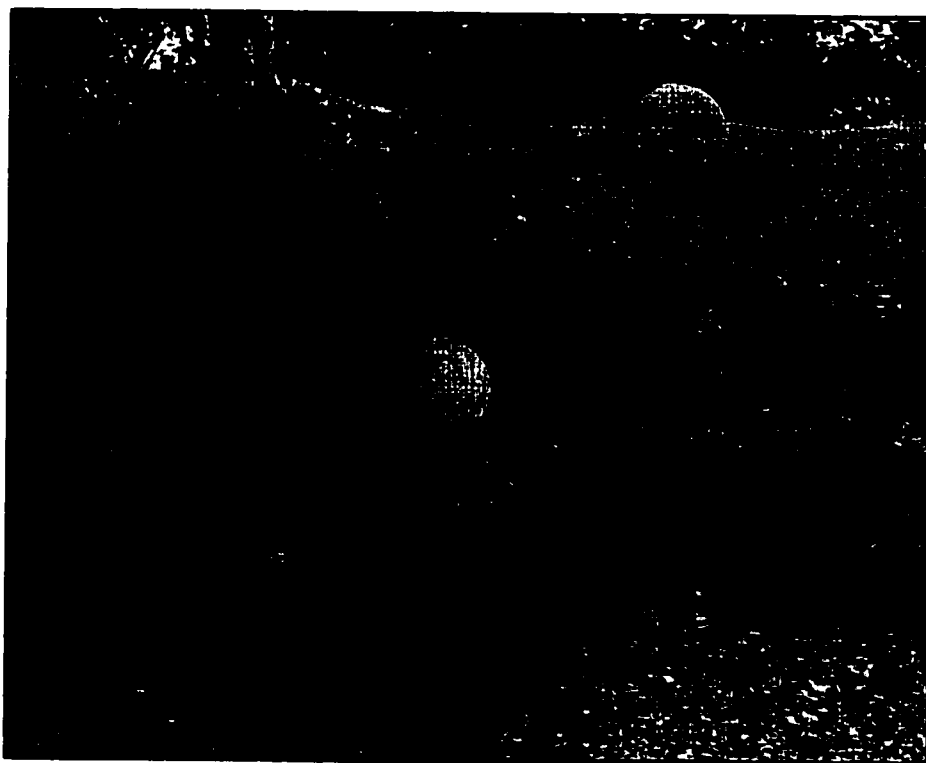


Figure 7 Dewdney's "Photograph of Remote Control Mechanism Imbedded in Rock Outcrop"

poet, however, stresses the impossibility of the agent's ever knowing for certain the "exact" nature of these demands. Though the identity of Remote Control, the "We" (113) holding the remote control box and promising to take care of everything, is never divulged, Dewdney in the late seventies explains Remote Control to David McFadden as follows:

Remote Control started out as a purely mechanistic concept, i.e., you control a machine from a distance with a box by radio waves....[and] became a very evil religious secret society. I still hold onto it as being an alien group of inhuman superintelligent people who control other unwitting victims *as we all are* and which is extant right now. (91-2, my italics)

Dewdney, then, views "us" all as unknowingly remote-controlled "machines." Thus, in the first stanza of "Song of Remote Control," the speaker assures readers that "[t]here is no choice, either you come knowing / or not knowing," but "[y]ou come" (113) to Remote Control, surrendering to and serving it rather than "ruthlessly" serving "your" "original being" (SG 43). Moreover, Dewdney views us as remote-controlled by a fundamentally "evil" elite group of "inhuman" and likely "inhumane"¹²⁴ people, probably "the military junta of the Vampire" (PA 149) against which the poet of "Alter Sublime" rebels. It is a powerful group comparable to a religious secret society of which "regular" (PA 26) individuals are so unaware that they are not even "paranoid"; as the poet says in "On Attaining Remote Control," "I am surrounded by...silence conspiring, / conspiring. / Not paranoia" (PA 103), which he equates with an awareness of Remote Control: "People who catch on [to the agent's 'piecemeal replacement of truth with lies'], and there are few in society who do, are hopeless 'paranoids' of course" (110). In 1990, Dewdney reveals more about Remote Control to Lola Lemire-Tostevin: "remote control is on the level of an entity created by social institutions, secret

society, shadow governments, a communal mind and the way it works" (87), which will later be discussed in light of the concretion.

In the David Heinimann interview, Dewdney further explains that "[s]omeone who is very powerful and out of control is also dominant" (50); thus, to be under control¹²⁵ is to be powerless and dominated, like the "blind form of the fossil." In *Predators'* third section, before having shattered the glass machinery, the poet describes himself as both "under - / out of - / remote-control" (119) and "not wholly a forest dweller" (86), neither unconscious nor completely conscious, as the forest symbolism suggests. In the fourth section, he speaks of "that which is most completely out of control" (138), which is the state attained by the poet after shattering the glass. Dewdney thus suggests that there are varying degrees of being remote controlled, and the observer in the *Alter Sublime* illustration perceiving through glass imbedded in his mind at the distortive 90° angle is likely completely under remote control: powerless, dominated, and dependent.

Like the poet, the remote control agent is also "not wholly a forest dweller." He knows that he is working for Remote Control and consciously attempts to meet its demands, but he does not know for whom he actually works; though "always aware, in a perfect memory, of all his previous actions & utterances" (112), he appears to be unaware of the "crystal deep within" (107) him. Like the poet, he is also both under and out of remote control. While the agent is unknowingly "in-formed" and remote controlled by the crystal remote control mechanism, his purpose, as "Scenario" and the fragments "From a Handbook of Remote Control" indicate, is to in-form and remote control others: to "subliminal[ly] manipul[at]e...large groups of people" by altering and replacing their "concept & perception

of the universe" (109) in order to attain "absolute control of these groups" (110). At this point, it is worth noting Dewdney's delightfully Burroughesque sense of humour: deadpan, slapstick, and often black. This humour abounds in the description of the remote control agent and his function, as well as throughout Dewdney's work. Indeed, on one level, the remote control agent hilariously parodies "our arbitrators," those who control others in order to self-servingly please Remote Control.

There are only two levels of remote control: "Individual to Individual" (109) and "Group Control" (110). As part of his "trial and error approach," the novice agent begins at the individual-to-individual level. Using the "areas of ignorance" "which everyone possesses" as his "[p]oint of [e]ntry," he infiltrates "a particular person's" mind and "slowly erode[s his or her] concept & perception of the universe" (109). This he does by inserting his image and words into the individual's mind, as Christ can be said to have "inserted" His image and God's Word into the minds of his followers and, ultimately, into the Western psyche; very subtly, as well, Dewdney repeats the theme of humans imitating the Christ idea(l). As Dewdney explains in "Scenario,"

the remote control agent wend[s] his way through the crowd in a store.....paus[ing] in alcoves or behind doors in order to avoid people he knows. When they pass him he follows them at a discreet distance always a few people behind, keeping out of sight. He ascertains when his image is reflected into their visual range by oblique store windows and makes grotesque and threatening gestures knowing full well that his friend will register his image only unconsciously and never consciously. He hates to kill the sweet and beautiful angels that love him. (106)

While the reflection of the agent's image in glass recalls the virtual image in the *Alter Sublime* pane of glass, the "threatening gestures" humourously recall the image of a

threatening "vengeful god" (SG 23). Doing unto others¹²⁶ as Remote Control has likely done unto him, the agent, once certain that the individual has seen and *unconsciously* registered his image, adds fear and threat to the equation so that hitherto "[u]nthought-of possibilities [e.g., hell], suddenly hostile and chaotic, appear in the once peaceful universe of the attacked mind" (109). "Fear Is the Medium of Knowledge" (n.p.), says Dewdney in the title of an original *Palaeozoic Geology* poem, and, as he says in *Predators*, "[k]nowledge is membership" (111) into Remote Control. To see and know the agent's threatening image is to henceforth unknowingly and fearfully *belong* to and submit to Remote Control, and to be metaphorically "killed" (106) by the agent. The same applies to any word similarly inserted by the agent into the individual's mind. As Dewdney explains, in a room full of people, the agent speaks "[o]ne word...softly behind a person in the room speaking" (110); the word "will fester in the speaker's unconscious until it produces a physical manifestation in that person's conversation later on that evening" (110). The agent then "watches as his statement...disappears into the mind of another person"¹²⁷ (112); "having travelled through the minds of two or three people," adds Dewdney, "it re-surfaces in a state of strange mutation" (112), as has occurred during the 2000 years of transmitting and translating Christ's original orally transmitted first-century words. The agent can even

implant an ego-flattering construct of minor proportions in the mind of another...and see it emerge from a friend of that individual a week later having been related to him as part of the original individual's personal mythology. (112)

Thus, the agent can also implant an entire conceptual system, which, like glass, becomes part of the infiltrated person, a "psychic parasite" operating within. Clearly,

Dewdney's Remote Control and remote control agent are about the attainment of power *through mind control*, and Dewdney appears to view such power as very easily attained. When the agent has mastered the art of individual-to-individual remote mind control, he graduates to the level of group control, his true goal, and begins to implant his image, word, statements, and conceptual system in many people: "Many such 'plants' placed properly & with enough people, lead to an absolute control of these groups" (110), and thus "the vision of an entire social grouping of humans [is] distorted" (110). Having attained this level of control, the agent "ceases to exist in the ordinary sense" (110), perhaps meaning that he begins to exist as a cultural elite or an arbitrator, "and is free to choose & design the flow of events around him" (110): he is dominant, powerful, out of control, and free. This is wonderful for the power-seeking agent, but Dewdney ends the "Handbook of Remote Control" by stressing the destruction of those controlled by the agent, especially the loss of their souls and humanity:

The self-perpetuating remote control group blends softly into the brocade of humanity. With each soul of the controlled the agent realizes another heatshield to cushion his re-entry. The host surrounding, entranced by their own destruction & his incorporation into the world. (112)

Much like Bram Stoker's "living dead"¹²⁸ who are remote controlled by Dracula, the individuals remote controlled by the agent unnoticeably blend in with the living, imitating the dominant agent and converting others as the agent has converted them. The dominant agent thus endlessly spreads his ever-mutating image and words. The agent, however, is as unconcerned about those whom he controls as are "our arbitrators" who "have no sense of humour" and "merely measure out our portions / of pain & gladness, as one would...strike a

flint to start a locomotive"¹²⁹ (*PA* 163). Indeed, from the agent's "inhuman" perspective, each controlled individual is but a tool and "heatshield," a protective covering or "cover," that guarantees his easy re-entry into other individuals just as a heatshield prevents a spacecraft from burning up during re-entry into the earth's atmosphere; the more human heatshields he owns (individuals disown themselves in giving themselves up to Remote Control), the easier it is for the agent to enter and convert others, for "familiarity...breeds contentment" (*SG* 58) and passive acceptance. The agent thus expands his zone of control and power in the same way that, according to Dewdney, the glass machinery and "opportunistic conceptual system" of medieval Christian ideology, as well as "our arbitrators," parasitically expand their own.

Of course, Dewdney's Remote Control and remote control agent are far more complex than this. In fact, the agent can be seen, on one level, to represent the remote controlled and remote controlling poet *halfway* through his psycho-archaeological journey, for the "Remote Control" section does occur halfway through *Predators*; still not completely aware and free of all the cultural influences "impinging on [his] original self" (*SG* 43) and causing his own power-obsessed behaviour, the poet imitatively goes "through the motions" of dominating others just as he is unwittingly dominated from within by Remote Control. On a higher level, however, the agent can further be seen as the self-emancipated poet who has regained power and control over himself, his mind, and his destiny; as Dewdney informs Peter O'Brien, "[t]he remote control section was a metaphor for my own personal ability to lead a double life"¹³⁰ and enjoy "moral freedom" (101), no doubt as one who is "most completely out of control" (*PA* 138). In contrast to "our arbitrators" and their life-denying vision, Dewdney as self-emancipated agent "consciously choose[s] & design[s] the flow of events around him" (110),

creating his own "cosmically-aligned" "lie"¹³¹ (O'Brien 104) and life-affirming conceptual system that, in *Predators*, he attempts to insert, at the symbolic, unconsciously registered "primary, apprehended level of the text" (O'Brien 105), into the minds of his readers. The poet, his mind, and his work are, like the glass machinery, a "DEVIOUS PARASITE" (*PA* 80) but, in contrast, one with a sense of humour and social responsibility. As Dewdney says in "Extrication of Self," "[t]he vantage gained by achieving self-individuation carries with it a responsibility to other humans, whose lives are illuminated by this portentous objectivity" (*SG* 44).¹³²

In "Power Glen II," the concretion is to individual minds as the crystal remote control implant is to the remote control agent: "Crystals configured directly in the minds of these" (*PA* 177) that, like radio crystals, receive and transmit Remote Control's "demands." In the O'Brien interview, Dewdney in fact describes concretions as "pulsed crystal layers" (108), which, he says, "I don't...see...as eyes so much as beings" (107), autonomous remote controlling beings. It is in *Predators*' "The Parenthetical," however, that he defines his concretion as metaphor: "Perception...defines...a sphere (ical concretion) of consciousness. (co-consciousness)" (97). Dewdney uses parentheses, first, to separate a general "sphere...of consciousness" from a much narrower sphere of "co-consciousness" and, secondly, to associate and equate the "concretion" with "co-consciousness": collective consciousness in the Jungian sense, which Dewdney refers to in other works as "the communal mind" (*IP* 121) and "Collective Mind" (*IP* 102). Thus, the concretion symbolizes what Dewdney refers to, when explaining "remote control" in the Lemire-Tostevin interview, as "the communal mind and the way it works" (87). According to "The Parenthetical," a sphere of collective

consciousness is defined and limited by perception, the "vision of our arbitrators" (*PA* 163): those who control reality because theirs is the vision imposed upon and imbedded in all group members. While "our arbitrators" can be seen as a culture's controlling elite, then, they can also be seen as a culture's controlling moral majority. Moreover, in defining collective consciousness, the perceptual paradigm simultaneously defines collective identity, or a generic self, for as Dewdney states in *The Immaculate Perception*, "[c]onsciousness is a neuronally imbedded associative identity" (25), as is the concretion that, like collective consciousness, contains the archetypal self-images (*i.e.*, the ideal Christ type) unconsciously adopted by individuals.

Containing *Predators'* first allusion to clear glass, "Power Glen II" is a five-stanza prose poem thematically organized around processes of expansion, formation, and genesis. While the term "power glen" indicates that the poem's thematic concern is the very source and generator of *power*, much of the poem's logic depends upon the logic of actual concretion formation and growth. In nature, concretions generally occur in rock masses composed of fine-grained sediments, such as chalk and limestone. Concretions form around a nucleus such as a fossil, grain of quartz, or shell; the body of groundwater constantly circulating through the rock dissolves the mineral materials in the surrounding rock, which adhere to the nucleus, slowly accreting it layer after crystallized layer and expanding it into a "rounded" concretion, ranging in size anywhere between a few centimetres to several metres in diameter. Over time, concretions become buried in the sediments, as shown in *Predators'* illustrations of concretions imbedded in limestone (24) and in a rock outcrop (109). In the original *Palaeozoic Geology*, however, Dewdney specifies that he alludes to only "perfectly spherical"

concretions, no doubt because of "our" cultural obsession with perfection, as represented in a *Palaeozoic Geology* illustration (Fig. 8), which introduces the "Forgeries" section, of the logo of a company whose motto "We handle the world" is clearly synonymous with Remote Control's "We will take care of everything":

The concretions in reference here are characterized by the examples found at Kettle Point on Lake Huron. Described as "large, dense and perfectly spherical masses" that "grew in the limestone." (n.p.)

In the first stanza of "Power Glen II," Dewdney immediately associates the concretion with glass and projects the process of actual concretion expansion onto glass, thus revealing the workings of the glass machinery:

Between the memory jacket and the concretion is a lens of thin red oil. The concretion slowly expands, as over thousands of years its peripheral material assimilates the surrounding limestone. The property of assimilation by association invested in a glass on a table would, over a thousand years, create a large glass sphere. The air and wood the glass contacted would gradually give up their inherent molecular structure for that of glass. Fission in slow motion. The glass convinces surrounding substances that they are glass in a continuous SOLID movement of spherical expansion. The lens of oil allows the concretion to roll smoothly. (25)

Quickly moving the poem's content from reality, that of actual concretions, to analogy, Dewdney, like the remote control agent, replaces his reader's "solid reality" with fantasy, fiction, and lies about glass - but lies that in *Predators* become the poet's truth. In the third line, Dewdney hypothesizes that, if he as poet were to "invest" a glass with the concretion's "property of assimilation by association," the glass would behave and expand as does a concretion. Analogously, just as a tiny nucleus eventually becomes a large round concretion, so too would a glass left on a table for a thousand years eventually "create a large glass sphere." Likewise, just as the actual mineral materials surrounding the nucleus dissolve,

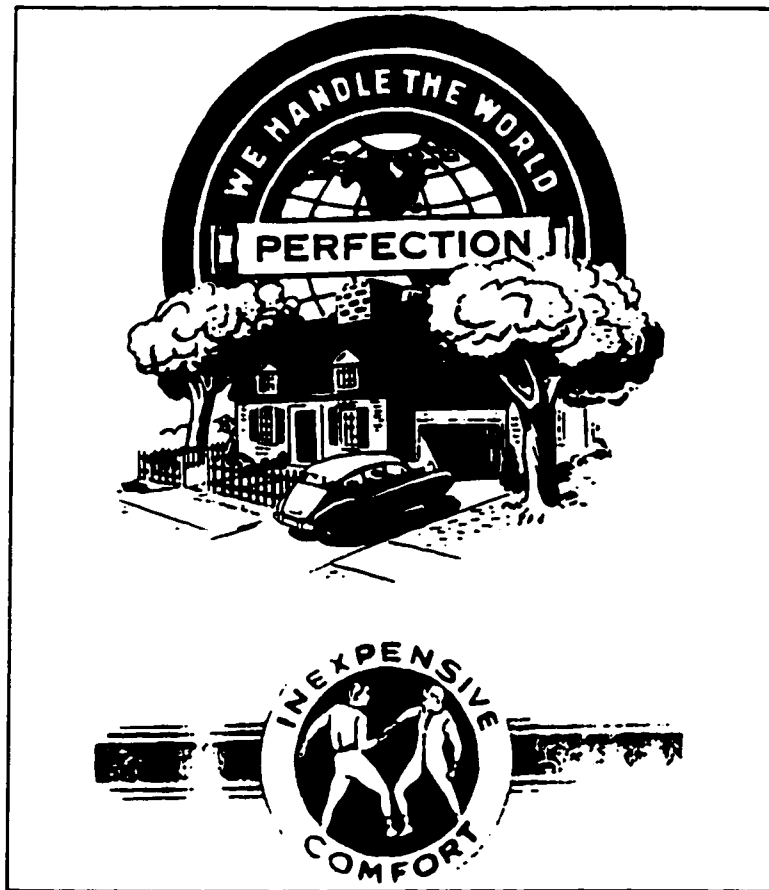


Figure 8 Dewdney's Illustration Introducing the "Forgeries" Section of *A Palaeozoic Geology*

accrete, and expand the concretion, so too would the air and wood surrounding the glass dissolve and "gradually give up their inherent molecular structure for that of glass," accreting and expanding the glass sphere while becoming part of it and the same as it, as well as becoming, one could say, its accomplice. Unlike the concretion and co-consciousness, which Dewdney equates, glass and the concretion, though associated, remain distinct and unequated. Glass merely functions *like* the concretion, which means that perception and collective consciousness also function in the same associative, assimilative, expansionary way.

Throughout *Predators*, it must be noted, Dewdney's writing imitates this process of assimilation by association, which ultimately represents the workings of the human mind; thus,

his work can be seen as "art imitating mind."¹³³ For example, by bringing the concretion and glass into contact in the first stanza's second and third lines, Dewdney associates, juxtaposes, and parallels the two ideas, causing the idea of glass to assimilate, in the reader's mind, the concretion's "property of assimilation by association." Throughout the remainder of *Predators*, Dewdney's hypothetical idea of glass continues to assimilate other associated ideas while "the poems are eaten / line by line" (*PA* 22) by the reader. Thus, what begins in "Power Glen II" as the image of a glass on a table does indeed gradually expand in both the text and the reader's mind into a "large glass sphere" of the glass machinery.

Thus, *process*, that of assimilation by association, accounts for the glass machinery's, the concretion's, and Remote Control's attainment, expansion, and maintenance of power and control in the Western world. Successful assimilation appears to hinge upon two lies, one concerning identity and the other, purpose. First, glass, which is an artificial, human-made substance, can metaphorically "convince" natural, organic substances such as air and wood, which are symbolic of individual human spirit and flesh, "that they are glass." In doing so, glass actually "convinces" the air and wood of a lie about themselves and their identity, for *they are neither originally nor essentially glass*. Since inanimate objects do not "convince" or "give up," the human parallels are obvious. Convincing the air and wood of this lie is apparently easy since mere exposure to, or association with, glass suffices to begin the process of their assimilation, which suggests that the air and wood, like the children that Dewdney suggests "we" have remained, are extremely vulnerable to suggestion, manipulation, mind control, and "disorders of perception & cognition" (*IP* 100). If the air and wood truly thought and truly knew themselves, they would never believe someone else's lie about

themselves. Believing in it as they do, however, they unquestioningly "give up" their inherent identity "for that of glass," dissolving into and gradually becoming glass, hence "[f]ission in slow motion." In this way, too, the glass layers slowly build up in the unresisting individual's mind. Much like a gifted orator¹³⁴ or preacher, then, glass possesses the ability and power to convince and convert. In "Power Glen II," however, conversion into glass means the complete replacement of one substance by another: that of air and wood by glass, of the natural and organic by the unnatural and artificial, and of the individual by the collective. Thus, concretization is the same as the transubstantiation, fossilization, and vitrification of the individual. By no means a "balancing act," that of the air¹³⁵ and wood is "a disappearing act" "in the negative of creation" (*PA* 63), for they self-effacingly sacrifice their identity and being to the glass machinery, becoming one with it while nourishing its growth *rather than their own*.

Glass further convinces the air and wood that they are "in a continuous SOLID movement of spherical expansion": that collectively as one, for the sphere symbolizes "the All" (Cirlot 48), they are progressing towards the perfection also symbolized by the sphere, and that they *must* continue to do so, progressing as unconscious holy ghosts "in slow procession / up the meridian of symmetry" (*PA* 75). This, too, is a lie, for in uniting with and becoming glass, wood actually loses its "solid reality" (*PA* 109). Indeed, glass, though it resembles a solid, is in fact a "supercooled liquid" lacking the crystalline structure of a true solid, such as quartz or ice; in a sense, it is a fake solid, as "fake" (*PA* 43) as are "Satan" (*PA* 43) and the human beings who, like the substance called Ice (analogous with glass), merely "emit the sound of whichever [ideal they are] molded into a likeness of" (*PA* 154). Moreover,

as is clear in the "Remote Control" section, a person's solid reality is replaced by fantasies and lies (109) when he or she is remote controlled by the agent, or by a remote control agent such as glass. Therefore, there is no "SOLID movement": collective progress towards anything is as illusory as the "I" who, believing lies about his or her identity and purpose in this life and thus adhering to glass, surrenders to, disappears into, and is destroyed by the glass machinery. In becoming transparent glass, it is also worth noting, individuals lose their "opaque logos" (PA 146), their reason and ability to reason and learn. Thus, writes Dewdney in the second stanza of "Power Glen II," "[a]t night in a concretion field you can hear them rolling, fitfully, or sometimes *en masse*, like stationary bowling balls beneath the rock, emitting only the sound of rolling" (PA 25) without actually rolling; like the human beings they control, then, glass and the concretion as collective consciousness (or communal mind) only *seems* to move, develop, and progress.

Dewdney begins and ends the first stanza of "Power Glen II" with references to a red oil lens, noting that "[b]etween the memory jacket [individual consciousness and memory] and the concretion [collective consciousness] is a lens of thin red oil," which "allows the concretion to roll smoothly." Since collective consciousness does not develop or progress, it rolls in another sense, rolling like a Juggernaut through the centuries and flattening everything into what Dewdney views as an existential "two-dimensionality" (PA 181). Perceptually assimilated by the glass machinery into the communal mind's virtual reality, individuals - the totality of their beings - keep this ball rolling, so to speak. Each individual baptized into and anointed with the holy oil of Western culture thus becomes a "lens of thin red oil" that, like mere machine oil, greases and perpetuates the communal mind's "wheel

unseen" (*PA* 124), which is the glass machinery. That the oil lens is red is not surprising given that remote control devices respond to infrared rays.¹³⁶

"Once a concretion has been removed from its memory jacket," writes Dewdney in the second stanza of "Power Glen II," "you or it cannot learn" (25). From this point on, he discusses the concretion in terms of memory, learning, and dreams. In the third stanza, as well, the poem moves from the theme of growth to that of formation, thus accounting for the formation of today's communal mind:

Concretions are sacraments of the memory table, which like any body of water has waves and tides. In these oceans certain teeth and bits of bony armour were chosen to become solid memories, encased in a lens of thin red oil. Erosional consciousness is infatuated with these unknowns which, however perfectly dissected, never yield their identity. (25)

Here, the metaphorical relationship between the concretion and human mind becomes more evident. In *Predators'* opening poem, "The Memory Table I," Dewdney says that "[a]s there is / a water table / there is also / a memory table" (19). Just as glass assimilates the properties of an actual concretion, so too does Dewdney's memory table assimilate the properties of an actual water table. Continually rising and falling in response to replenishment, the water table is the uppermost level of a body of groundwater, which is the water that continually seeps down from above ground; this groundwater accumulates in spaces and cracks beneath the earth's surface, forming the groundwater reservoir. In "Power Glen II," then, "the memory table" and "these oceans" appear to represent the uppermost, conscious level of "the experiential reservoir of the mind" (*IP* 38), down into which "seep" the "every-day events of consciousness" (*SG* 80). "In these oceans," just as only some of billions of quartz grains or fossils become actual concretions, so too are only certain culturally

or individually experienced events "chosen to become solid memories" protected and "encased by a lens of thin red oil." Thus, the metaphor can be applied to both the individual and communal minds. All other memories¹³⁷ are continually dissolved by the memory table's circulating memory-water, for "like any body of water [it also] has waves and tides"; the dissolved memories then accrete and become like the chosen "solid memories." Thus over time, and like a concretion, one chosen, idealized idea gradually expands into a culture's collective consciousness, becoming, like the "crystal deep within the agent," "neuronally imbedded" (*IP* 25) and "configured" (*PA* 177) in each individual's psyche. Dewdney concludes the third stanza by noting that "[e]rosional consciousness," psychoanalysis, "is infatuated with these unknowns"; however, because the majority of an individual's and a culture's memories are dissolved in the accretion of the communal "solid memory," "these unknowns...never yield their identity."

If the third stanza of "Power Glen II" is interpreted in light of "the relentless funnel of [Western] history" (*RI* 18) symbolized by the limestone in which Dewdney's concretion is imbedded in "Concretion Imbedded in Limestone," which introduces "Power Glen II," then Dewdney may be saying that from the sum total of Western experiential memories only *one* basic nucleus was chosen in the late fourth century to become the accreted, ever-expanding nucleus of the Western communal mind: all else dissolves into it and becomes like it, and is thus forgotten. Therefore, Dewdney in the third stanza of "Power Glen II" describes the concretion and communal mind as a "sacramen[t] of the water table" (25), a ritually repeated and thus remembered action, as "sacrament" suggests. The repeated action, it seems likely, is that of individuals sacrificing themselves to "slave labour" (*PA* 171) ideologies and to

idealized ideas, and thus imitatively "abstract[ing] in the sun" (*PA* 124) as the destroyed individual disappears. Apparently sharing Dewdney's sentiments, Anne Micheals, incidentally, says in her thematically Dewdneyesque novel, *Fugitive Pieces*, that "[h]istory is the poisoned well, seeping into the groundwater" (161), no doubt seeping into and poisoning collective consciousness which in turn seeps into and poisons individual minds. According to *Predators*, once the nucleus was chosen, the Western communal mind expanded alongside the ever-expanding glass machinery of Western perception, assimilating everything exposed to it until it reached the size depicted in "Concretion Imbedded in Limestone" or, in other words, until it stopped developing, growing, and, metaphorically, learning. If the communal mind stopped learning, then it was, as Dewdney suggests in the second stanza, removed from its "memory jacket" and thus from its ability to remember. Since then, neither it nor the Western individuals in whose minds it is configured can learn, for they are unable to remember anything other than that which has been communally chosen to be remembered.

Thematically, then, "Power Glen II" begins with growth and moves to formation prior to growth; the fourth stanza moves to genesis prior to formation:

...The transitional nature of the memory jackets allows them [us] to become imprinted with the dreams of isolated individuals even hundreds of miles away....The concretion moves slowly, aligning itself, and begins arbitrarily to transmit previously recorded dreams mutated over the years by stellar and meteoric interference. One dream thus created attained an independent consciousness and began to feed from the sleeping minds of human beings. It could telepathically transmit hallucinations and was protected by a field of déjà vu. (26)

In the beginning, the communal mind, "moves slowly, aligning itself" with one of many existing dreams (visions and ways of seeing) belonging to "isolated individuals" either

"hundreds of miles [or hundred of years] away." "The Immense Odds Against a Fossil's Occurrence" leaves little doubt that the "[o]ne dream" referred to in "Power Glen II" is, in fact, the medieval Augustinian version of the Christian "dream" with which the Western communal mind aligned itself in the late fourth century. Once the communal mind, which is likely represented in "The Immense Odds" by the concretion to the right of the Christ figure, aligned itself with the medieval Christian perceptual paradigm, likely symbolized by the Christ figure, the communal mind's only purpose, according to "Power Glen II," became that of "arbitrarily" and endlessly transmitting the dream as "previously recorded" to human beings, who are likely represented in the "Immense Odds" by the horsetail growing out of a concretion and thus out of the communal mind (collective consciousness) imbedded in the "sleeping minds of human beings." With the passage of time and the continual accretion of new ideas and images, the perceptual paradigm and glass machinery mutates, constantly but only superficially updating itself and thus remaining fundamentally unaltered so that, even today, the original, increasingly outmoded, ancient vision and its original ideal are still, according to "Power Glen II," being "imprinted" upon individuals' "memory jackets."

In both "Power Glen II" and "The Immense Odds," alignment with the medieval Christian vision and Christ's archetypal image appears to account for the genesis and perpetuation of the dominant Western perceptual paradigm, the glass machinery, which "thus created attained an independent consciousness and began to feed from the sleeping minds of human beings," all those who fall from awareness. Like the vampire bat wrapped around the Christ figure and the vampire that converts rather than kills its victim, the glass machinery, which should be a perceptual tool for humans, puts human minds to sleep and then, like the

remote control agent, uses their minds as a tool for its own "incorporation into the world" (*PA* 112) and self-perpetuation. In *Predators*, Dewdney says that "[u]sing a tool to alter another tool is the beginning of artificial intelligence" (155), and that "[h]uman beings are a catalyst...unknowingly perpetuating higher forms of intelligence" (167). In allowing the glass machinery to continue operating (*PA* 56), human beings, as Dewdney describes them, allow themselves to be controlled by the glass machinery, serving it as mere tools and machine oil, and thus perpetuating an artificial "form of intelligence" higher than their own.

Functioning "telepathically," then, the glass machinery as perceptual paradigm transmits its demands from mind to mind: from the communal mind to individual minds, from collective to individual consciousness.¹³⁸ The glass machinery's "field of déjà vu" after 1500 tautological years guarantees its continued acceptance: again, "familiarity breeds contentment" (*SG* 58). Within this equation, the communal mind as collective consciousness functions like the "chemitrode" defined in *Predators'* glossary as both a radio transmitter and brain implant that "stimulates targetted areas of the brain" (185). In the "Alter Sublime" section, Dewdney says that "[b]efore remora chemitrodes...consciousness was a function of the brain, now the brain...is a function of consciousness" (*PA* 155): collective consciousness. Since the remora is a parasitic fish known to symbolize Christ (*RSD* 84), Dewdney may be saying that, prior to the development of the late-fourth-century communal mind, which formed around a nucleus of a medieval version of Christ, human beings were conscious; ever since, however, the "sleeping minds of individuals" have been functioning in the service of the communal mind, which ultimately serves the glass machinery. Like the "fissures" in the final stanza of "Power Glen II," individual minds "perform this function mindlessly" (26):

The joints or cracks in limestone are sometimes at right angles to themselves and extend for miles straight down. An expansion or contraction of the rock due to temperature changes often draws the lake water into the crack forcibly. With the water come small living creatures which, when trapped by the closing fissure, instantly become fossils. These fossils are generally never found because their axial plane is against that of the "regular" fossils. The fissures perform this function mindlessly, like breathing. (26)

Against the "regular" or normalized ideal Christ type, all that individuals are and potentially could be is, like the water and living creatures in "Power Glen II," drawn "forcibly" by the communal mind within individuals into itself, becoming trapped and dissolved within the individual's mind, merely accreting the one chosen ideal solid, or "ideal type," and thus disappearing "generally never [to be] found" again. The notion of liquid being forcibly "drawn into" first appears in the second stanza of "Power Glen II" in the context of the oil and an inability to learn:

When a concretion is removed from its memory jacket the oil is drawn into the centre with such a force that it leaves the rock striated, giving the appearance of long crystals radiating from the core. (25)

The poet's message is clear in "Power Glen II": once the individual's "original self" is assimilated by collective consciousness, and as long as human brains mindlessly function in the service of the communal mind, which serves the perceptual paradigm, individuals can neither learn, mature, nor become "that which they are." They remain the "[u]nborn concretions" (*PA* 22) of "Power Glen I" and the glassy beings described in "Gas Port II" as "obvious," "unseen," and "slipping into itself. / As one devours the other" (*PA* 30); in other words, "we" become glass as our minds disappear into and are devoured by the collective consciousness transmitting the glass machinery's "insistent & urgent demands" that we give ourselves up to and become like it, that we become its "[m]irrors" (*PA* 20).

During the glass machinery's endless telepathic transmission of its demands, the communal mind gradually and completely replaces the individual's mind, which appears to be Dewdney's greatest concern: the loss of the individual to the collective. The collective consciousness' replacement of the individual, as well as Dewdney's "dialectic criminal," can further be understood in light of the "communolect" (AS 80), which Dewdney refers to in both the original *Alter Sublime* and *The Immaculate Perception* and defines as "governed by dialectic evolution" (AS 80). The well known dialectic formula is as follows: thesis + antithesis = synthesis. Throughout *Predators*, the thesis can clearly be seen as the collective consciousness and communal mind, and the antithesis as individual consciousness and mind. As thesis and antithesis, the collective and individual minds are, like the "two worlds" (PA 56) mentioned in the "Spring Trances" section in the context of the glass machinery, opposites¹³⁹ within the individual vying for control over that individual. Indeed, the glass machinery promotes the "divided mind" (PA 81) mentioned in "Opium." It is the function of the communal mind (which is a totalizing, synthesizing force like medieval Augustinian Christianity) to win this power struggle by slowly "devouring" and assimilating-by-association the individual's mind and thus all that is unique to the individual (*i.e.*, difference); implicit in that transubstantiation process, then, is the disappearance of the unresisting individual who is gradually replaced by the communal mind, its socially and morally acceptable ideal type, and, ultimately, the status quo. Thus, says Dewdney in "Opium," "THE MIND IS A DEVIOUS PARASITE / feeding specifically on humans" (80). In fact, this "divided mind" is the ultimate "predator of the adoration," which Dewdney in "Alter Sublime" defines in a cannibalistic way:

Strange herald,
 predator of the adoration,
 it is the mind
 eating itself. (*PA* 150)

All individuals born into Western culture and operating out of the dominant perceptual paradigm and conceptual system represented by the glass machinery are thus "predators of the adoration."

The glass wall of our self-constructed perceptual prison and the limestone wall in Dewdney's "Concretion Imbedded in Limestone" are also the "wall of (remote control)" (95) in *Predators*' "The Parenthetical." They all represent the wall within the poet's mind, a wall that separates him from himself, others, and reality while functioning as a remote control mechanism, and a wall that the poet wants "you" to shatter as if "sticking...your arm...through (glass)" (*PA* 95). In *Predators*' "Remote Control" section, Dewdney describes the "remote control personality" as one "attuned to the desires & causal networks operative in all humans" (110); in other words, certain "superintelligent" (McFadden 92), power-seeking people, such as our economic and cultural elite and arbitrators who understand the workings of the human being and who align themselves with and exploit the dominant perceptual paradigm by sending their demands to individuals, subliminal demands (in the form of images and words) which are received and unconsciously registered by "the crystal deep within" individuals, and which the crystal then transmits to the unaware individuals who invariably meet those demands, as does the remote controlled remote control agent.

Representing a "new" paradigm of self and perception, Dewdney near the end of *Predators* reveals himself to be a "Dialectic Criminal" (168), a revolutionary of sorts engaged

in a private, non-violent revolution who sees himself as working towards "[a] bloodless coup / in the military junta of the Vampire" (PA 149). Clearly, Dewdney believes that all individuals must become dialectic criminals working *for* the individual and *against* the communelect and Remote Control, and that the glass machinery must be shattered completely and globally. Before it can be shattered on a collective basis, however, the glass machinery must be shattered on an individual basis. Of course, the first step to shattering the glass machinery is the re-enactment of our culture's evolution. Such a re-enactment is metaphorically the same as the dialectically criminal poet's "reconstruction" of the music in order to become "deaf" to Remote Control's song and thus be able to "change [his] tune" (PA 168):

...I had to construct the music using a new instrument whose range & tone I'd never heard. Its insidiously orchestrated solos were in a number of locations within the symphony. I knew my deafness was essential, for if I could mentally reconstruct the symphony [that of Remote Control] I too would hear the universal theme & from that point be incapable of constructing the orchestration. (PA 179)

Once he had reconstructed and become familiar with Remote Control's "universal theme," which is that we give ourselves up to it, the poet "was then rendered deaf" (PA 179) to its song. As a result, he can no longer repeat, or replay, the past, nor is he capable of either remote controlling others or allowing himself to be remote controlled by others. Thus, in a positive rather than a negative sense, he "[s]teps down from the control tower" (PA 113).

Just as all of *Predators* moves towards the shattering of the glass machinery, so too does it move towards two photographic montages centred on nuclear bombs exploding at the surface of water, which can be said to represent the dialectically criminal poet's bombing the

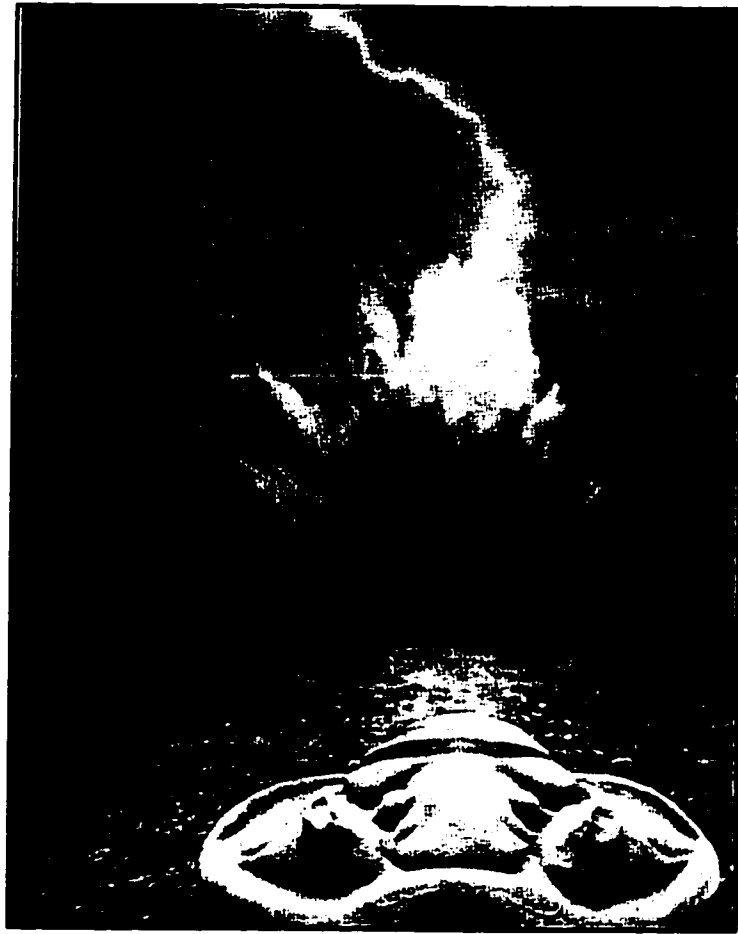


Figure 9 Dewdney's "Hypostasis"

hell, so to speak, out of the glass machinery in his mind. In the foreground of the first illustration, entitled "Hypostasis" (149, Fig. 9), is an unidentified object resembling both a fossil and a spacecraft, and floating on the surface of a body of water; the object faces and, indeed, seems pointed at the exact point where a bomb explodes at the surface of the water. While the lightning bolt that rises from the nuclear explosion into the sky recalls Dewdney's "Atomic Jehovah" (23), associated with nuclear weaponry in *The Secular Grail*, "hypostasis" refers to a substructure, substance, or foundation that upholds and underlies something else just as, for example, the glass machinery metaphorically underlies the poet; as well, hypostasis in Christianity refers to Christ's dual nature, to the union of divine and human nature in His

one person (McBrien 647), which can be seen to parallel our divided, dual nature. Ultimately, the illustration appears to suggest that the poet, likely symbolized by the unidentified object, destroys the Western, monotheistic conceptual system and perceptual paradigm in his mind. Comparable to yet slightly different from "Hypostasis," "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" (170, Fig. 10), which includes land and an observatory, suggests that, having destroyed the glass machinery in his mind as a young man, the now firmly grounded poet can no longer



Figure 10 Dewdney's "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man"

"keep the stars out" (PA 173); free of the past, he can move on to new stages in his private goal of self-transformation (Fawcett 72) and individuation.

In *The Skin of Culture*,¹⁴⁰ Derrick de Kerckhove speaks of "volcanic art" (169):

My volcanic metaphor of art is based on the - admittedly Jungian - idea that art, as a product of collective unconsciousness, erupts at the surface of consciousness when the crust of reality is too weak to support the status quo. (169)

Certainly, as the nuclear explosion illustrations suggest, not only are Dewdney's poetry and art volcanically explosive, but they also seek to shatter the very foundations of Western culture, foundations that Dewdney likely views as "too weak to support the status quo." Indeed, as depicted in "Concretion Imbedded in Limestone" (Fig. 5), the wall supporting the concretion, a wall as representative of Western reality as of history, is actually very weak. The wall's brick-like components¹⁴¹ represent rock units that in actual rock walls are, according to Kenneth Hewitt, divided from each other by horizontal and vertical breaks, or "partings," in the rock; in order to withstand erosional forces, says Hewitt, rock walls "must have either few partings or none" (30). The overwhelming number of partings in the wall depicted by Dewdney indicate that, in reality, the wall can very easily be shattered if, like the poet, individuals engage in the psycho-archaeological politic of perception, taking the first step of re-enacting their culture's evolution in order to "peel away" from their minds the "previous eras" of history and thus free themselves from the tyranny of their culture's past and dominant perceptual paradigm. As Dewdney writes in an "Alter Sublime" fragment, "[y]our life will [then] become an act of faith secured by a single act of faithlessness..." (PA 154).

Conclusion

No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings.

William Blake
The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

As the argument in this thesis demonstrates, the glass machinery in *Predators* represents the Western perceptual paradigm that has dominated the Western world since the late fourth century. That perceptual paradigm can be seen as a medieval proto-Manichean, Agustinianized Christian paradigm, a mutation of early Christianity, that assumed a life and evolution of its own as a complex, ever-mutating, all-assimilating, symbolic conceptual system and ideology that triumphed in the West as the dominant perceptual paradigm, and that is now "configured directly in the minds of" (PA 177) Western individuals. Such a system operates as a "psychic parasite," one that facilitates the "remote control" of human beings. Thus, believes Dewdney, individuals must become "dialectic criminals" who take responsibility for becoming self-aware, "directing [their] own extraction" (PA 162), shattering the glass machinery in their minds, and becoming all that which they have the potential to be; if they do not, they will remain imprisoned by the glass machinery and, as a result, will remain enslaved by the communal mind and "our arbitrators." The method that Dewdney proposes for shattering the glass and liberating oneself is the "politic of perception," his memory "formula" (PA 39), which is ultimately "the politic of the individual" concerned with "the genesis of the individual," the "original self."

While each of Dewdney's books likely represents a different step in the politic of perception, *Predators* represents and provides a poeticized written record of the first step as taken and experienced by the poet. As the poet's re-enactment of his culture's evolution moves from the first poem to the last log entry, all of *Predators* moves from intact glass to the shattering of glass. It is a movement repeated, paralleled, and compounded by others, for *Predators* also moves from the Palaeozoic to the Cenozoic era, from "the late 4th century" to the technological present, from an abundance of medieval Christian allusions to their removal, from a distortive, artificial perceptual paradigm to the perception of "naturalness," from "moth wings unfolding into bats" (56) to moth wings simply unfolding (141), from the orchestrated "Song of Remote Control" to "[t]he orchestra suddenly quiet" (145), and from the blind fossil form to the poet's ability to see the stars.

Though the collection visually climaxes with the two photographic montages centred on nuclear explosions, it ends with "The Immense Odds" centred on the Christ figure. Indeed, the poet may have shattered the glass machinery within, but the glass machinery *without* remains intact, and will remain intact until the vast majority of individuals in the West become aware of their perceptual repression and take the necessary steps to free themselves *on an individual basis* from the tyranny of the glass machinery. Were this to occur, one can assume that the vision of a new moral majority would eventually replace that of "our arbitrators" and thus become the "new" dominant perceptual paradigm with which collective consciousness, or the communal mind, would realign itself. A world conducive to individual self-fulfillment in the here and now *could*, one assumes, thus be created and realized. Some may see this as being *Romantically* idealistic; others may see it as being *ordinarily* realistic.

Believing that Western culture has greatly progressed - that it has broken away from the tyranny of the past and is thus continually becoming more and more secular, open-minded, and free - believing that cultural "evolution" necessarily entails individual "evolution" in a Darwinian sense, and believing that individuals can effortlessly be freed by the "[r]ecent theoretical concretions" (*PA* 172) and advancements of others, many readers at the end of the millennium may consider Dewdney's harsh critique of medieval Christianity and Western culture, and his proposed psycho-archeological project to be annoyingly outmoded, unnecessary, or cliché. Certainly, much of what Dewdney is saying and proposing has been said and proposed, though differently, many times before, especially since the Industrial Revolution. What has not become cliché, however, is the type of individual existence for which he and many others long. If such an individual existence has indeed become cliché, it seems to me that contemporary critics of modern culture would not still be producing works such as, for example, John Ralston Saul's *The Unconscious Civilization*.

In *The Secular Grail's* "Extrication of Self," Dewdney is adamant: removing the "deeply imbedded," "culturally inculcated misconceptions" from ourselves is a *long*, "difficult," "painful process requiring ceaseless vigilance" (43) that must privately be undergone by each individual, who can be freed by no one other than him- or herself. Dewdney metaphorically expresses this belief in *Predators'* epigraph wherein the unidentified "you" breaks open a rock and frees the pale, grey moths trapped within its limestone layers; however, the lifeless moths, unable to fly of their own volition, merely "flutter up like pieces of ash caught in a dust-devil." Indeed, since they have neither freed themselves nor, as a result, learned to fly with their own wings, they remain trapped by the limestone layers of

history, despite the efforts of "you" (*i.e.*, Dewdney), despite the removal of their *actual* prison, and despite their apparent emancipation. In other words, individuals who *themselves* have not done the arduous self-analytical work required for real self-emancipation but who think themselves beyond the dominant glass machinery simply because they believe humanity and culture have "progressed," or simply because they align themselves with "recent theoretical concretions" (*e.g.*, feminism, political correctness, or environmentalism), are, from Dewdney's perspective, merely deluding themselves.¹⁴² Like his pale grey moths, such individuals unknowingly remain trapped within the layers of the glass machinery in their invisible "prison of thought" (*RI* 18).

Some, especially those approaching Dewdney's work *without* a sense of humour, may find some of his sociopoetic strategies for provoking a "realization" of our "operational terms" (Fawcett 82), as well as his "indignant" attitude towards Western human beings and civilization, offensive. Certainly, there is no denying that he does his devious best to insult, mock, taunt, and humiliate his readers in order to provoke a "jolt of reality" (Fawcett 82) and deeper awareness. According to Northrop Frye in *The Modern Century*, however, offending readers is part of the heavy artillery, so to speak, of "subversive" writers and artists seeking to provoke thought, awareness, "active-mindedness," individual rehumanization, and genuine concern for "the other" in our increasingly deadening, self-centred, dehumanizing Modern world, from whose lifelong negative influence no "unconscious" individual escapes. As Stan Dragland says, "[t]o *put it mildly*, [Dewdney] is not enchanted with the way the human race has managed the planet, so he pulls the rug out from under its 'victory' over the inarticulate ones" (201, my italics). Indeed, Dewdney, the "appalled" (32) poet of "Fovea Centralis II,"

declares himself in *Predators'* preface to be "a scribe" (8) for "the voice of the land," "the plants and animals" (8); that is, as he informed Peter O'Brien, he is speaking for "all those things which have been trampled or destroyed perhaps by West European industrial nations, or East European too" and "that cannot speak for themselves" (92): for trampled nature, as well as for trampled human beings and trampled love, joy, sensuality, curiosity, awe, and wonder in the Western world.

Of course, it is easier, cosier, and more flattering to think of ourselves as having trampled on nothing or on no one, and to unquestioningly see ourselves as does one very offended critic of Dewdney's most recent work, *Last Flesh*, Sven Birkerts: as "warm-blooded entit[ies] that [consciousness] serves and ennobles" (D14). As Dewdney once told David McFadden, "I'm getting all the right people mad..." (94). Birkerts takes particular offence at the following statement in *Last Flesh*, which he cites in full, and which leads him to insinuate a link between Dewdney's thought and, of all things, Nazi ideology:

It is not out of the question that the unique individual human being is a transitional evolutionary stage, an ultimately expendable aberration that is now poised at the brink of a precipitous slide into collective consciousness. (*LF* 183)

Taking Dewdney's statement out of context, Birkerts erroneously assumes that Dewdney misanthropically sees the human being "an 'ultimately expendable aberration'" worth annihilating. However, Dewdney is talking about each of us as a unique, creative individual human being, a being that a stultifying, homogenizing, dehumanizing collective consciousness seeks to assimilate, replace, and thus eliminate. Moreover, the warning seems to be that, if humans do not soon start using their unique *human* qualities, there is a real

biological danger that those qualities might disappear - that they might, for example, be erased from the human genetic code. Such a warning further highlights the notion that *each* individual is actually responsible for determining the evolutionary direction taken by humanity, and by his or her culture. There is nothing particularly offensive, heartless, or unrealistic in what Dewdney is saying. Much misunderstood by critics such as Birkerts, Dewdney has been and continues to be marginalized by the Canadian literary establishment, which is discussed in some detail in David McFadden article. As Dewdney informed Lemire-Tostevin, he understands this type of reaction to "avant-garde," "language-centred writing" - which is deemed "weird" and "stupid" by those opposed to it who, as Lemire-Tostevin notes, "would like to stamp out" - as a typical "fear of the new" (88):

It's such a reactionary and resistant position which absolutely proscribes any knowledge of what this kind of writing means. That's...the big problem with this country. Fear of intelligence and it's a fear of intelligence based on the notion of a dichotomy between the heart and the head as if intelligence had no heart, therefore to have heart you have to be dumb. A strange equation which is of course a completely bankrupt notion....[and which] hobbles a number of people who think that in order to have heart you have to be inarticulate. Which is the absolute opposite of what writing is all about. (88)

As for Dewdney's critique of medieval Christianity and Christian ideology in *Predators*, it is an inevitable and necessary part of engaging in the West in the first step of his politic of perception, given the tremendous formative influence exerted by Christianity on Western culture. As the title of the photographic montage "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" suggests, however, Dewdney's irreverent and often angry critique of Christianity belongs to an early stage in his "self-transformation" and intellectual maturation. Having dealt with this part of his culture's sociohistorical evolution, and no doubt with his outrage

at the cruelty and violence involved, the post-*Predators* Dewdney leaves behind his critique of Christianity to move on to other issues and subsequent steps in the continual "process of becoming that which [he is]." Thus, in later works, one finds, rather than a critique of Christianity, an increasingly dispassionate, matter-of-fact acceptance of the nature and role of religion in the West as in, for example, his unemotional analogy between medieval Christianity and "Ant Trap" in *The Secular Grail* and the following assertion in *Last Flesh*:

Most Western political ideologies, from secular liberalism to socialism, are the political grandchildren of Judaeo-Christianity, specifically its notion of "equality before God." Liberal social democracy is a holy egalitarianism in which individual variation is subordinate to equality. (62-3)

Given Dewdney's view of Westerners and the Western world as self-absorbed, unconscious, and spiritually deadened, and given his reasons for viewing them as such, his poetic means in *Predators* intelligently and skilfully justify his intellectual and ultimately spiritual sociopoetic ends. Believing that Westerners have fallen from awareness and curiosity rather than from grace and that they, as a result, passively expect everything from food to knowledge and self-fulfillment to be handed to them on a McDonald's platter, Dewdney employs every possible poetic means - from the difficult, obscure, and puzzling to the offensive, sensually seductive, and humourous - to rouse his readers' curiosity and desire to understand *Predators*. Enticed readers have no choice but to be researchers who become aware of their own culture's sociohistorical evolution, of their scientific and technological reality "in the here and now," and of the natural world. Thus, Dewdney's "alien" poetic strategies, above all, force readers to engage in the first step of the politic of perception while gradually coming to understand his world view, see from his perspective, and perhaps alter

their own perspectives. Thus, Dewdney's poetic means justify his social, psychoanalytic, and spiritual ends. Moreover, I believe, *Predators*' failure to rouse a reader's curiosity ultimately indicates, rather than a failure on the part of the poet, a failure on the part of *Western culture*.

Although this thesis has focussed on negative contexts in *Predators*, I do not want the the positive contexts - the direction "in the [positive] of creation" - to be lost to the negative, for as previously noted, there are "always the two directions" (103). Indeed, all of *Predators* also moves from a focus on the life-denying towards a focus on the poet's life-embracing, celebratory vision and sensual experience of existence: towards the "sexual forests" (142) of the "Cenozoic Asylum" section where "[t]he sky no longer enclos[es] us" (132), where "[t]he forest is alive with itself" (142) in "pure sensual detail" (141), and where "the frozen forest [begins to] stagge[r] omnidirectional" (143), "awakening" (143) rather than remaining frozen still like the "GRACEFUL white elms" (58) and "stone tree" (57) of the "retinal forest" (62) in the "Spring Trances" section, or rather than continuing to plod "in slow procession / up the meridian of symmetry" (75). As Dewdney suggests in *Radiant Inventory*, he views "[l]ust [as] the natural conductor / of our joy, that portion / grounded in substance" (80), grounded in the real rather than the ideal and abstract. Thus, *Predators* also moves towards tender love poems by a poet who begs "you" to "[g]ive me / the slightest fragment of yourself /it holy / it more" (33), and who is willing to "wait centuries to hold you, / [and] carve through aeons of rock to gaze / at last upon your fossil" (159) - a poet so "in tune" with and enamoured by the miracle that he can hear even "[t]he music your hair makes" (118). As he writes in the "Cenozoic Asylum" section, "[t]here is a second order of darkness rarely witnessed" (146) - darkness that is light,¹⁴³ darkness that illumines - just as there is a second positive order of

everything in Dewdney's work, and it is a second order witnessed more and more in *Predators* after the "Remote Control" section.

More than just a poet, Dewdney is a philosopher and visionary poet whose unique vision is, of course, peculiar to his own era, culture, and personal background. It is a vision that Stan Dragland describes as "a new and independent vision of 'the secret harmony of all things' that humans have been seeking ever since the fall" (*PA* 191). *Predators* embodies Dewdney's complex yet simple vision, which is ultimately concerned, as is all his work, with love and "the unique individual human being's" re-attainment of a lost sense of curiosity, "[a]we, wonder, and religious grace" (*SG* 189); it is equally concerned with individual's learning to "celebrat[e] existence and all its contents" (*SG* 48) in the here and now, and to achieve a sense of spiritual completion and an awareness of the simultaneous oneness, multiplicity, and interconnectedness of all things in a resacralized world.

Dewdney's work no doubt rivals that of the most celebrated of poets and visionaries in world literature, all taught to Canadian students. I thus consider it truly unfortunate - especially while Dewdney is alive, writing, and accessible to scholars - that, like the glass machinery, the Canadian literary establishment, in all but ignoring his work, marginalizes and thus represses it. In 1978, David McFadden opined that Dewdney¹⁴⁴ is "producing a body of work unique in the world, a body of work that will be of lasting interest once the fear subsides as it will in time" (96); twenty years later, and many works more accessible than *Predators* later, the "fear" has still not subsided. What is difficult to understand, however, is why the Canadian literary world is unable to afford Dewdney's work the same kind of curiosity, wonder, and time fearlessly afforded difficult but tried, tested, and true work, such as that

of Blake or Joyce, and novel but equally difficult work, such as that of Jacques Derrida or Jacques Lacan. Could it be that our eyes are indeed so idolatrously fixed on past or non-Canadian literary icons that, like the "blind form of the fossil," we cannot see around or through the glass to our own talent in the present? Is it also possible that we Canadians still need other nations and future generations to tell us what of our own is valuable and worth study? Ah, but a tiny voice now hums at the back of my crypto-colonial brain asking why we should treat Christopher Dewdney any better than we have treated Leonard Cohen as a poet and novelist. Indeed, let us continue dancing to what Cohen calls the same old tune that is history (*BF* 205), leaving the recognition of our talent to the world beyond Canadian borders. It's safer that way.

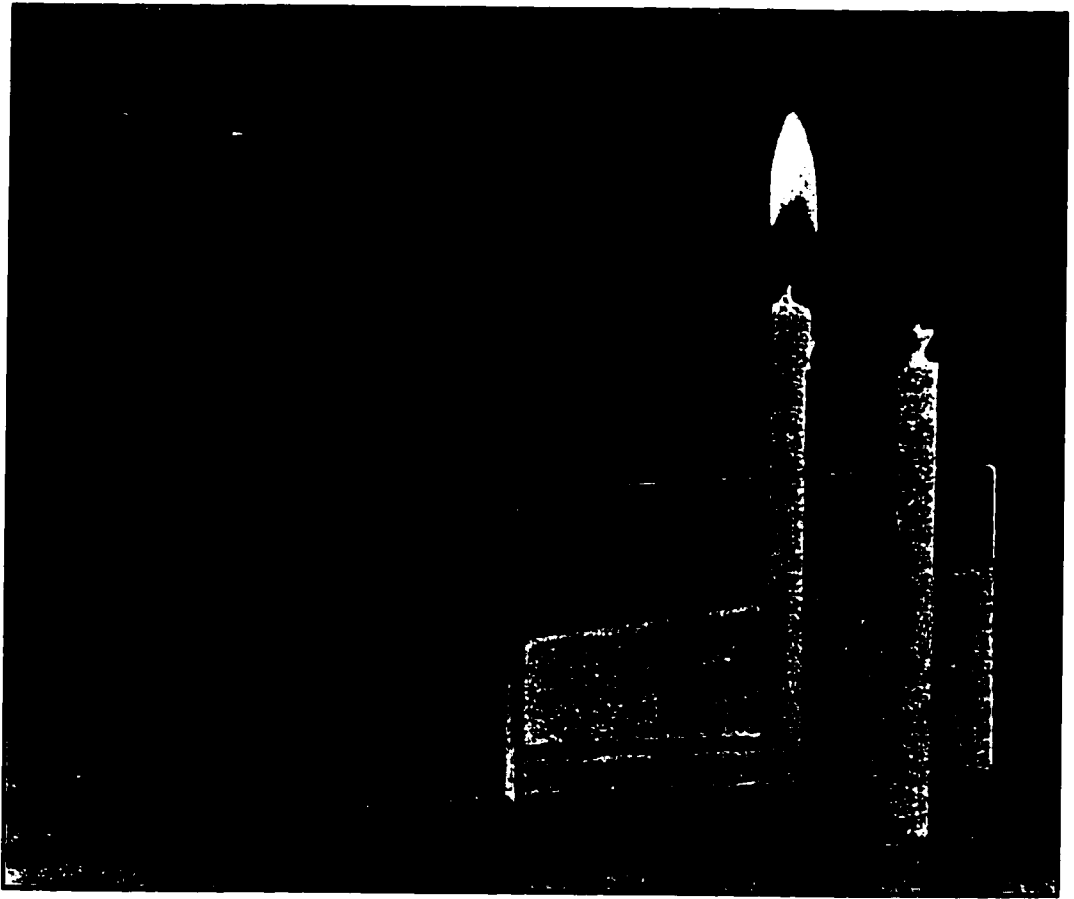


Figure 11 Photograph from Dewdney's *Alter Sublime*

Endnotes

¹ Most of this information is provided in *Last Flesh*.

² In "Manifold Destinies: Metaphysics in the Poetry of Christopher Dewdney," Alistair Highet suggests that Dewdney is "a far more traditional poet than some of his existentialist, reductionist contemporaries" (3), and points to the "affinity between Dewdney and Blake, to the extent that Dewdney has created his own mythology..." (3). Indeed, like Blake, and Dante before him, Dewdney couples a profound and amazingly all-encompassing vision of the sacred with a poetic world that is profoundly unique.

³ The actual number of publications is sixteen, for in 1982 The Figures published *Spring Trances in the Control Emerald Night* and *The Cenozoic Asylum* together as Books I and II of *A Natural History of Southwestern Ontario* which, according to David McFadden is "Dewdney's projected life-long opus" (85). *Permugenes: A Recombinant Text* is Book III.

⁴ A collection of five poems commissioned by McGill University Libraries.

⁵ *The Immaculate Perception*, *Radiant Inventory*, and *The Secular Grail* have been nominated for the Governor General's Award for Poetry.

⁶ Also available are several published interviews. To date, I have found only six, but they have been invaluable, and far more instrumental in my analysis of Dewdney's work than the available scholarly articles. Of those six interviews, the only one not listed in my Works Cited is Darren Wershler-Henry's "Missing Mass: Christopher Dewdney on Science Fiction" in *Prairie Fire* 15.2 (Summer 1994): 220-8.

⁷ In the nineties, only two new articles and a revised version of Stan Dragland's afterword to *Predators* have been published.

⁸ While I admire Fawcett's enthusiasm for Dewdney's work, I suspect that Leonard Cohen is considered by many to be "our first world-class poet."

⁹ Four months before publishing "Dewdney's Science," a detached, cautious, and ambiguous essay full of tacit criticism and unanswered questions, Keith Garebian published (in *Books in Canada* 13.2 [Feb. 1984]: 23) an enthusiastic review of *Predators*. The review was full of praise, calling Dewdney "a brilliant original" and *Predators* a "new form of poetry that makes organic use of scientific diction" (23). Whether or not Garebian is simply playing the devil's advocate in the ambiguously written "Dewdney's Science" in an effort to engender more critical work is impossible to say.

¹⁰ In fact, while interviewing Dewdney, Brian Fawcett notes that Dewdney's "first book, which [he] wrote at the age of nine...has the same concerns as what [he is] writing now" (71), and Dewdney agrees.

¹¹ As drawn in "Concretion Imbedded in Limestone" (Fig. 5, *PA*, 25), the concretion closely resembles the spheres in "The Immense Odds."

¹² I am indebted to my advisor, Mike Brian, for identifying this plant.

¹³ From *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

¹⁴ Literary theorist James Kavanagh defines ideology as a complex "system of representations, perceptions, and images" (310). While it can be seen as "a set of ideas," Kavanagh prefers to view ideology, as I also believe Dewdney does, as a way of seeing that "precedes and underlies any ways in which social subjects think about social reality" (310); its purpose, says Kavanagh, is to transform individuals into beings who "'freely' internalize an appropriate 'picture' of their social world and their place in it" (310), a picture or "mental image" (*PA* 183) of self and society "appropriate," above all, for the well-being and perpetuation of the particular system that it promotes.

¹⁵ Of course, the allusion to William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* signals the predominant theme of the absolute evil of which human beings bent on power and control are capable.

¹⁶ A study of Dewdney's work and thought in light of his father's writings and career would be particularly interesting and fruitful, for the two share an uncannily similar vision. Although each is an important Canadian personage in his own right, Selwyn Dewdney clearly exerted a significant influence on his son, Christopher. Best known as an ethno-archeologist, Selwyn Dewdney was also a student missionary, high school teacher, textbook illustrator, visual artist, and novelist; he and his wife, Irene Donner, pioneered art therapy in Canada, working in London hospitals with psychiatric patients (*WWR* vi, *CB*, Garebian 23). Early on, however, Selwyn Dewdney turned away from religion and teaching, devoting most of his life to art therapy and the study of Native pictographs. In *Wind Without Rain*, a semi-autobiographical first novel published in 1946, Selwyn Dewdney describes his reaction to the false and hollow form of Christianity that links spiritual development to personal success and cultural progress, which he saw reflected in the educational system of the period. Having left behind Christianity, he turned instead to the Native values and way of being in the world, pioneering the study of Indian rock art in North America (*CB* 369); "[m]y father," says Dewdney in the O'Brien interview, "I realize now, had actually converted from Anglicanism to Amerindianism" (91). From an early age, as he also informs O'Brien, Dewdney was involved in his father's work and research: "...when I was six or seven or eight years old, he dragged me around every summer on these expeditions and he'd introduce me to shamans and we'd be documenting Indian rock paintings. So I was steeped in Amerindian lore....And this became my matrix" (91).

If Dewdney's Western perspective seems alien, it is likely in part because it so naturally comprehends the Native perspective. Until his father's death in 1979, Dewdney remained involved in Selwyn Dewdney's work, contributing most of the illustrations to his 1975 book, *The Sacred Scrolls of the Southern Ojibway* (*SS* viii). Clearly, lifelong

participation in his father's work and early exposure to the Native world view and tradition, as well as to its obliteration by colonial Christian evangelism, are important considerations when attempting to understand Christopher Dewdney's perspective and work.

¹⁷ Palaeo-Christian refers to the period of early Christianity. I use the term to highlight the parallel with the Palaeozoic era.

¹⁸ He dates them just as his father dated Native rock art. See, for example, Selwyn Dewdney's *Dating Rock Art in the Canadian Shield*.

¹⁹ This information is taken from the "Historical Time Line" from the inside front covers of Mary Jo Weaver's *Introduction to Christianity*.

²⁰ It should be noted, however, that Augustine merely found in Christianity the life-negating attitude he brought with him, for a denigration of the flesh and secularity were already part and parcel of Christianity.

²¹ In "Radiant Inventories," Christian Bok also associates the religious perspective criticized by Dewdney with "manichean spirituality" (24).

²² Young in fact states that "[i]t was not Christ who triumphed in the Albigensian Crusade, it was Mani himself" (168).

²³ Indeed, Johnson deems Augustine "the fabricator of the medieval mentality" (112).

²⁴ My thanks to Mike Brian for making me aware of the existence of this book.

²⁵ In using *The Imitation of Christ* as an example and removing excerpts from their context, I in no way intend to demean the book and its religious beliefs. While historically invaluable, *The Imitation*, even from a non-adherent's perspective, contains some good practical advice and a particularly beautiful passage on love (see 97-9).

²⁶ Writers such as Blake, Nietzsche, Joyce, Marx, and Burroughs suggest the same, and in their Romantic and equally "indignant" critiques of Christianity one finds many parallels with Dewdney's work and thought.

²⁷ Cf. pages 16 and 20 in *The Immaculate Perception*.

²⁸ Dewdney informed me in a telephone conversation that he considers Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* a particularly influential text; the parallels between Dewdney's and Nietzsche's perspectives are, indeed, overwhelming. At one point in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche asks, "Who will ever relate the whole history of the narcotics? - It is almost the history of 'culture,' our so-called higher culture" (142). In the early twentieth century, James Joyce, who was also very influenced by Nietzsche, attempted to do just that in *Ulysses*, especially in the chapter entitled "Lotus-eaters." In the later half of the twentieth century, Dewdney, it

appears, has taken his own crack at Nietzsche's challenge.

²⁹ As Dewdney says in "Coelacanth," "This is not the place / of departure. / The event is invariably / prehistoric" (PA 37) *i.e.*, prior to the invention of writing in 3000 BCE.

³⁰ This recalls Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers* and the main character's description of "the beautiful knowledge of unity," an awareness of cosmic unity that he attains either after orgasm or before falling asleep (20-1).

³¹ The distinction is important, and also accounts for my glossing over the language theme as I focus on perception. In the Bruce Whiteman interview, as in other interviews, Dewdney discusses language as an autonomous structure: "language isn't just...a tool of communication;...[it] has actually diverged in terms of its evolution from our species and has become something independent, a logic structure that overlayed the human race....this is an abiogenetic theory of language, in that it breeds itself and simply is spawned in our minds and in our language, our needs, but...a bit more complex than that" (18).

Language, however, is similar to identity, writing, art, culture, ideologies, religions, philosophies, or psychologies in that all are products of consciousness which, according to Dewdney, is itself a product of perception. Thus, his view of language parallels his view of anything spawned by consciousness, which becomes clear in *The Immaculate Perception*.

³² In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche explains that "we have lost sight of [the slave ethics (170-3) dominating us] simply because it has triumphed so completely" (168); thus, from Nietzsche's perspective, the exact source and nature of our morality has now become invisible.

³³ In *Predators*, Dewdney's photographic montage entitled "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" (170) alludes to Joyce's novel and suggests its interpretive relevance.

³⁴ Interestingly, wind is also related to Selwyn Dewdney's J.C. Bilbeau, described throughout *Wind Without Rain* as "nothing but a big bag of wind" (20), and his hollow wind of practical (*i.e.*, utilitarian), progressive change.

³⁵ Given its appropriateness, I borrow the term from William Burroughs, who writes in *Naked Lunch* of "fear-frozen flesh" (202).

³⁶ A relevant parallel exists with the tune that Leonard Cohen speaks of in *Beautiful Losers*: "A huge jukebox played a sleepy tune. The tune was a couple of thousand years old and we danced to it with our eyes closed. The tune was called History and we loved it...everybody...because we made it up...History made us feel good so we played it over and over, deep into the night" (205). Throughout *Predators*, Dewdney develops his own theme of music from "the MUSIC, magnetic symphonies [that] dissolved and solidified rhythmically in the central" (45) to "[t]he orchestra suddenly silent" (145).

³⁷ According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, there are only nine uses of "glass" in the Bible; seven of those occur in the New Testament and in the contexts that I discuss. The two that appear in the Old Testament are unrelated to the New Testament uses of "glass."

³⁸ Cf. *Wind Without Rain* wherein Selwyn Dewdney says that John, the central character who is often likened to a child, "saw, through a glass, darkly..." (153); indeed, for some time John cannot see through J.C. Bilbeau's false facade as other characters can.

³⁹ From Blake's "The CLOD & the PEBBLE."

⁴⁰ Bok's book no doubt represents his homage to Dewdney. Bok has published two scholarly articles on Dewdney's work, and it seems likely to me that much of the information which he imparts in *Crystallography: Book I of Information Theory* represents his research and interpretive thoughts on Dewdney's work.

⁴¹ Given my metaphorical, symbolic, and religious focus, I do not technically discuss perception and consciousness, as does Hepburn, and thus rarely cite his essay, "The Dream of Self: Perception and Consciousness in Dewdney's Poetry." Nonetheless, I wish to note that, of the existing articles on Dewdney's work, Hepburn's article provides one of the best discussions of perception and consciousness in Dewdney's work.

⁴² In *The Immaculate Perception*, Dewdney says that "Print validates...reality" (*IP* 75).

⁴³ In *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Thomas Laqueur provides an excellent discussion of "seeing as." While historically discussing the medical study of the female reproductive organs, Laqueur shows that, throughout history, intelligent men consistently and literally represented these organs as an inverted penis, despite overwhelming anatomical evidence to the contrary. Laqueur concludes that cultural biases, the most fundamental being a belief in woman's inferiority to man, obscured their vision, causing them to distort the evidence, and to see and represent the female reproductive organs as something that they clearly were not.

⁴⁴ Dewdney defines the occipital lobe as "[t]he section of the brain...concerned with vision" (*PA* 186).

⁴⁵ Interestingly, in Selwyn Dewdney's *Christopher Breton*, Christopher, a character similar to Christopher Dewdney in many ways, makes the following sceptical comments on science and scientific instruments, such as the microscope, in relation to perception and reality: "How can I believe what I can't touch or taste or smell and can only see with the aid of a complicated machine? How do I know these gadgets don't distort what they're supposed to reveal? Maybe they're just elaborate devices for self-deception. Are we any closer to the truth in *that* world than we are in the world we experience first-hand? And don't try to tell me...that your beloved science is doing anything to improve the world we live in. We save lives and get a population explosion. We communicate more than ever and create more

misunderstanding. We pollute the earth and air and water with a million new compounds" (204). Dewdney perhaps shares this character's perspective, for John Thurston, in his review of *The Immaculate Perception*, notes "the book's apparently neutral acceptance of the science it accepts" (188).

⁴⁶ In fact, a study of Dewdney's non-Christian symbolism in light of his critique of Christianized Western perception and Christian symbolism would be fascinating. For example, Dewdney, who believes that religious grace is innate to the human spirit, clearly disapproves of the childlike Christian dependence on God and His grace. In the "Spring Trances" section, there are "[g]ecko's sheltering cave salamanders from the noon sun" (*PA* 66), perhaps "arbitrators" protecting them from the wrathful eye of God, symbolized by the sun (*RSD* 63). Moreover, within Christian symbolism, the salamander symbolizes "the Christian who resists temptation through grace" (*RSD* 63). It seems to me that Dewdney so carefully and ingeniously chooses his apparently non-Christian symbolism that it warrants further study.

⁴⁷ As I later discuss, glass is actually a "supercooled liquid." It is, as Christian Bok says in "Glass," "the most viscous / fluid," "a virtual liquid / thick / enough to seem / rigid" (n.p.). Like the substance called Ice, heated glass can also "be molded into any form" (*PA* 154). I should also note that the theme of things heated, likely by a fear of hell, recurs throughout *Predators* as, for example, when Dewdney writes in "Opium" of "a smell of / of burnt toast in the air" (81), burnt bread symbolic of flesh, which likely puns on Christ as "the bread of life" (John 6:35).

⁴⁸ In *The Secular Grail's* "Disowning the Self," Dewdney in fact writes that "our propensity as humans for self-delusion, for being able to accept hackneyed, provisional models of mental phenomena (which include most contemporary psychological notions) is almost infinite" (46).

⁴⁹ After speaking of halos and "the individual bands of the spectrum in the halos" (*PA* 41) in "Log Entries I," Dewdney adds that "[t]he colours of course, were faithfully" (41).

⁵⁰ Several critics have questioned Dewdney about his use of "theiyr." He tells O'Brien that he pronounces it as "their" and that "[t]he device is optical only" (97). He informs Heinemann that "[i]t first cropped up in *Palaeozoic Geology of London, Ontario*" (52); in fact, "theiyr" appears alone as, it seems, *Palaeozoic Geology's* epigraph. "I didn't know what to think of it at first," he adds, but "it seemed appropriate...so I kept it in" (Heinemann 52). Dragland in his afterword notes that Dewdney has also explained "theiyr" as "a typo that kept appearing until he just accepted it" and as "a diphthong word, because of the double or sliding vowel" (195). Although I do not discuss the gender issues in Dewdney's work, it is worth noting that the "y" chromosome is the male chromosome; since Dewdney is clearly critiquing what some refer to as "phallogocentrism," a male- and reason-dominated mode of thought, the "y" in "theiyr" may refer to individuals dominated by phallogocentric thought, which is ultimately the same mode of thought that I discuss as the glass machinery and proto-

Manichean Augustinianized Christian mode of thought. In terms of my own argument, Dewdney clearly believes that everything - self, social order, and reality - hinges upon the perceptual paradigm that individuals possess, which may also account in part for the spelling of "theyr." Combining the personal and possessive forms of the third person pronoun, "theyr" suggests that "they," individuals, are what they own; if they possess or, more accurately, are possessed by the dominant Western perceptual paradigm, then they become the paradigm and its ideal type. Finally, I would like to note that throughout *Predators* "theyr" appears to be used in reference to human beings and the human world whereas "their" appears to be used in reference to the natural world and its inhabitants.

⁵¹ While *aestive* generally describes something pertaining to summer and heat (either hot or burning), in zoology *aestivate* refers to passing "the summer in a state of torpor or suspended animation" (a theme I discuss in Chapter 2); and *aestivation*, to "the act of remaining dormant or torpid during the dry season, or extreme heat of summer; summer-sleep" (*OED*). Since the themes of "sleeping minds," unconsciousness, and a lack of movement recur in *Predators* in relation to summer, which can be seen to parallel the Middle Ages (see endnote 90), and heat related to a fear of hell, I interpret "aestive carnality" to mean carnality put to sleep during the Middle Ages and dormant ever since.

⁵² It is interesting to note that, in *Wind Without Rain*, Selwyn Dewdney also discusses "processing" (156), which is "not creation" (156), in terms of education: "You take a normal intelligent child at the age of six, coop him up in a room ten months of the year for ten or fifteen years....What do you create? A perfect factory or office employee, with habits of industry, punctuality and docility. That's not creation. If anything, it's a sort of paring-off process; at the end of fifteen years you have *less* than you started with. You begin with a potential man and end up with a sort of mechanized mouse" (156).

⁵³ Although the term "immaculate perception" never appears in *Predators*, Dewdney in *Predators*' "Fish Machine" does write of "immaculate knowledge" (*PA* 79) and the "reduc[tion of] all desire & the manifold directions of philosophy into one pure and simple religion" (*PA* 79), likely monotheism and, specifically, the medieval Christian version of monotheism. Given the thematic contents of "The Fish Machine" and the prominence of the fish within Christian symbolism, it further seems likely that the "fish machine" is another version of the medieval Christian glass machinery, which is itself but an earlier version of Dewdney's later "immaculate perception," and likely a television version, as "silver-screens" (78) suggests.

⁵⁴ Formulated and gradually developed during the Middle Ages, the doctrine expresses a belief in the Virgin Mary's freedom "from all stain of original sin" "from the first moment of her conception" and "throughout her entire life" (McBrien 655). It also embodies the medieval idealization and worship of the type of Christlike perfection and purity attributed to the Virgin Mary while reinforcing the depreciation of all that is human and "fallen."

⁵⁵ Dewdney's use of "*apparition*," a term that refers to the inexplicable appearance of...someone deceased," may allude to the Catholic Church's use of *apparition*, which refers to recorded appearances of the Virgin Mary, saints, and even Christ (McBrien 79).

⁵⁶ This term, which I have been unable to find in a dictionary, appears to be a combination of "comprehensible" and "prehensile," meaning "adapted for seizing, grasping, or taking hold of something" *i.e.*, made comprehensible enough to take hold of and remote control us.

⁵⁷ While indicative of "suffering" (*WWR* 248), "glassy eyes" (68) in Selwyn Dewdney's *Wind Without Rain* "preten[d] not to see" (68).

⁵⁸ After what appears to be a discussion on his own work in "The Parenthetical," Dewdney writes: "Its (righteous) meaning...only...lies (cautiously) in context...of the...millions...familiar with it" (99) which, from my perspective, points to Christianity, especially given the allusions to "sins" (95) and "the wretched repose of our elders in latin" (95) in the second sequence.

⁵⁹ Throughout *Predators* Dewdney plays on the notion of the trance. For example, those mind-controlled by the remote control agent - ultimately those trapped in the "retinal forest" (62) of "Spring *Trances* in the Control Emerald Night" - are "entranced by theiyr own destruction" (112): entered by the agent, mesmerized (hipgnotized), and destroyed. As noted, Dewdney refers to popular wisdom as "Hipgnosis" (164), and there are many references to somnambulism, such as "Baudelaire's / somnambulistic chairs" (10) that are "the children / of the memory table" (10): us. "Hex" is implied in the "hexagonal fire / in the insect's eye" (26), which Dewdney makes clear in the original *Fovea Centralis*: "Hex effect hexagonal" (32).

⁶⁰ My thanks to Mike Brian for noting this possible allusion to the boiling "sticky tar" "heated by God's art, not fire" (*I*, XXI, 16-7) into which fraudulent sinners are flung; if the sinners show themselves "above the pitch," they are "pricked" and tortured by black devils (XXI 51-7).

⁶¹ As well, the eye of God is symbolized by the sun (*RSD* 63), which is certainly an important recurrent image throughout *Predators*.

⁶² In his essay, David McFadden cites Dewdney's view of civilization when Dewdney was writing the early work that appears in *Predators*: "I really hate civilization for what they've done to the animals and what they've done to nature.... [and] have a profound hatred of mankind. I think that's one of my dominant themes" (92). Indeed, as Dewdney writes in *Predators* while perhaps referring to his fossils, concretions, and other symbols ultimately representative of us, "[t]hese figures exist in arenas of time / centred on extreme violence" (93). Later in his 1985 interview with Peter O'Brien, Dewdney clarifies his earlier statement about his "hatred of mankind": "that's an emphatic statement for all those things which have

been trampled or destroyed perhaps by West European industrial nations, or East European too....That's a sense of rage that comes from seeing some junior forest rangers trample a red squirrel to death, or who stone it from a tree and then kill it. Seeing incredible cruelty by people against living things....It's not a blanket statement against humanity, but against a kind of violence and ignorance..." (92-3).

⁶³ The eyes, of course, are often called the "windows of the soul," and a window, writes Dewdney in *The Secular Grail* while etymologically discussing the term, "is the experience of glass and transparency" (SG 159). Sharing his son's thematic concerns, Selwyn Dewdney in *Christopher Breton*, his second novel, refers on several occasions to the eyes as "windows of the soul" (e.g., 139, 219).

⁶⁴ As my advisor Mike Brian observed, "ice palace" likely alludes to Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*. In this fairy tale, the Ice Queen, who owns an ice palace in a forest, captures a little boy and turns his heart to ice.

⁶⁵ While Dewdney in the O'Brien interview specifies that "[f]all is the human age" (115), the forest is a traditional symbol of the unconscious (Cirlot 112).

⁶⁶ Referring back to the room, mirror, glass wall, and divided "Dutch boy" in "The Parenthetical," this sequence is far more complex than I suggest here. Although it is also very relevant to my discussion, I have had to omit it for brevity's sake.

⁶⁷ He has also smashed within himself the "place of idolatry" (RSD 75), which is symbolized by the roof.

⁶⁸ Getting your eyes peeled puns on "keep your eyes peeled": be vigilant and careful. Indeed, from Dewdney's perspective, we are far too cautious and thus fail to enjoy life.

⁶⁹ Dewdney's psycho-archaeological project in many respects can be said to parallel aspects of Derrida's deconstructionist project, although Dewdney certainly does not share Derrida's fixation with a rationalistic relativism. Dewdney in contrast appears to believe that there are indeed ultimate truths, as he suggests in "Brain Pan": "Ha, what did / I know. An infatuation with / deceit would lead me to the truth" (PA 162).

⁷⁰ The three major geological periods listed in his table of Geological Period - the Palaeozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic eras (PA 189), can be seen to parallel the three major periods of Western cultural history since the invention of writing in 3000 BCE: the ancient, medieval, and Modern periods (Matthews xx-xxii).

⁷¹ While petrification refers to the process of converting one substance into stone or a stony substance (a replacement process that parallels fossilization and vitrification, which I later discuss), it also refers to the act of paralyzing someone with fear or horror. Dewdney no doubt uses "petrified" to mean both.

⁷² While Joyce plays on "symmetry and "cemetery" (*U* 154), Cohen might say that these scarabs rolling our dung are symbolic of human beings who have been "baptized with fire, shit, history, love, and loss" (*BL* 188).

⁷³ A paraphrase from Gregory Bateson's *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, as Bok notes (20), Dewdney's allusion to Bateson, a naturalist and cognitive psychologist who believed that nature mirrors mind (as is the case in Dewdney's work), further indicates Dewdney's commitment to the individual's attainment of a balanced mind by using a formula involving various steps. Bateson actually writes that "[c]ontact between man and the animals and between man and the natural world breeds, perhaps - sometimes - wisdom" (447) and that "Job's narrow piety, his purposiveness, his common sense, and his worldly success are finally stigmatized...by the Voice out of the Whirlwind: '*Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without understanding... Dost thou know when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? / Or canst thou tell when the hinds do calve?*'" (447)

⁷⁴ According to Olderr (*RSD* 121-2), the skull, which is the "Brain Pan," is also a symbol of piety, as is the lamp that appears, for example, in "Brain Pan" as the "head-lamp buried in your eyes" (163) and in the "Spring Trances" section as the "garden lamps" at the foot of which lay drugged beetles (66).

⁷⁵ The relevance of "Egyptian" is explained by Dewdney when he discusses his interest in entomology in the Fawcett interview: "I'm particularly interested in beetles - in scarabaeidae, which are the scarab beetles, the dung beetles....As a child, I think I got it mythologically through the Egyptians, because they worshipped scarabs....There's something about the scarabs that for me is close to a personal archetype" (79).

⁷⁶ Cf. Nietzsche's madman who in *The Gay Science* says, "The deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars - *and yet they have done it themselves*" (182).

⁷⁷ The eighteenth-century philosopher Immanuel Kant argued, among many other things, that the rightness or wrongness of things should be "independent of metaphysical and religious beliefs" (McBrien 732).

⁷⁸ In biology, *ontogeny* refers to "the development or course of development of an individual organism." Thus, Dewdney is seeking a "causal explanation" for the development of "our civilization" as a single organism, or entity, wherein all individuals share the same "one look indivisible" and move towards the same one goal.

⁷⁹ In *Wind Without Rain*, J.C. Bilbeau is described as "nothing but a big bag of wind" (20); indeed, he represents the hollow wind of practical progress that offends Selwyn Dewdney.

⁸⁰ Of course, Dewdney writes this in the context of "a word" (*PA* 34); however, in "Transubstantiation," he likens us to words as imitations of the Word made flesh.

⁸¹ This information is taken both from Kenneth Chambers' entry on fossils in *Encarta* and from *The New American Desk Encyclopedia*.

⁸² It is perhaps worth noting that, in *Wind Without Rain*, Selwyn Dewdney says that "when [J.C.] Bilbeau is impersonal like a fish that's when he's really poisonous" (210).

⁸³ In Greek, the initials of "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior (*Iesous Christos, Theou Huios, Soter*) are used as an acrostic to spell out the Greek word for fish, *ichthus*" (Gibson 40), hence the association with Christ. As well, in the first century, persecuted Christians used the fish as an "ideogram" (Gibson 40) to identify themselves to one another.

⁸⁴ In Greek, *Logos* means "word," "speech," and "reason" (McBrien 792). While I focus on Logos as Christ, the word incarnate, the Bible as the word of God is certainly an important aspect of Dewdney's critique. As well, there is also in *Predators* a critique of reason, but a certain kind of religious reasoning; unlike his deconstructionist contemporaries, Dewdney does not attack reason in a way that seeks to throw out the baby with the bathwater. In fact, he says in *Predators*' "The Parenthetical" that "[a]...fossil is (reason) merely...to...be (again) believed" (101).

⁸⁵ The term *transubstantiation* first appears in the twelfth century (McBrien 1264), and can be seen as a mutation of the earlier term *transmutation*.

⁸⁶ Blake's poem, "The Human Abstract," appears in *Songs of Experience*, as does "A Poison Tree." Given the thematic parallels between the two poems, both refer to the same tree, which is the "Human Abstract": a poisonous tree of mystery involving "mutual fear," "Cruelty," "holy fears," "Humility," and "Deceit" that "grows in the Human Brain." It seems likely that Dewdney's "crooked & crystalline branches" (*PA* 87) in "Memory Table II" and "slow organic branchings of the glass machinery" held captive by "limestone caverns religious" (*PA* 57) allude to Blake's "Poison Tree."

⁸⁷ Limestone and glacial till refer to the two types of bedrock. Limestone, an "aquifer," hastens the flow groundwater, guaranteeing an adequate water supply, whereas glacial till, an "aquitard," slows down groundwater flow, providing an inadequate water supply.

⁸⁸ In discussing the symbolism of the Grail, J.E. Cirlot notes that there is a legend that the cup "was fashioned by angels from an emerald that dropped from Lucifer's forehead when he was hurled into the abyss (121). Of course, Lucifer's fall is comparable to the Fall.

⁸⁹ Throughout *Ulysses*, Joyce refers to the soul as the "form of forms" (55).

⁹⁰ In *Predators*' preface, Dewdney indicates that the summer months of June, July, and August belong to the Mesozoic age of reptiles while the autumn months of September, October, and November belong to the Cenozoic age of mammals (7); later he informs Peter O'Brien that fall is the human age (115). Thus, spirit, it seems, is the human spirit eternally

longing for the idealized past but, from Dewdney's perspective, a reptilian, Augustinian past. It is human spirit in the fallen world, perhaps so obsessed with past perfection that it attempts to embody it.

⁹¹ Or as Joyce says in *Ulysses*, they become "Florry Christ, Stephen Christ, Zoe Christ, Bloom Christ..." (625).

⁹² In *The Immaculate Perception*, Dewdney defines "[t]he living language" (57) as "a psychic parasite" (59) that "exists symbiotically with the human 'host'" (57). He says that "[o]nce conceived, language became self-replicating, a lexical organism imbedded in the species. The evolution of language, inextricably bound with the evolution of our consciousness as a species, has diverged from its parallel status and taken on a life of its own. Language is virtually an independent intelligence utilizing humans a neural components in a vast and inconceivable sentience" (57).

Although language is "the standardized description of a constantly variable world" (56) and "the opposite of identity" (56), "whichever language a child is born into" (59) nonetheless determines his or her identity. In Dewdney's work, the same parasite paradigm applies to perception, which defines the consciousness that determines language. Also see endnote 31.

⁹³ The earliest known Western reference to the unicorn is made by Ctesias, a Greek historian who, after having travelled to Persia, returned to Greece in approximately 398 BCE and wrote a book about "the marvels of the Far East" (*Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia* 1995). He describes the unicorn as a large wild ass with a white body and a "dark red" head (Farson 159).

⁹⁴ Ciriot spells it as "Ch'i-ling" (357), and notes that some refute its connection to the unicorn. He also notes that "[i]n legend, it is reputed to live for a thousand years" (357). The parallels between Dewdney's "late 4th century" and the glass left on a table for a thousand years," and the unicorn's appearance in the late fourth century BCE and thousand-year life span are, at the very least, interesting.

⁹⁵ Burroughs in *Naked Lunch* makes a similar observation about draining Christ's image of his colour and humanity: "dead leeches in a rusty tin can latch onto that live wound, suck out the body and blood and bones of Jeeeeesus, leave him paralyzed from the waist down" (114); the "rusty tin can" alludes back to "[t]he God [that] screams through you three thousand year rusty load" (*NL* 197). In "The Immense Odds," the bat is indeed wrapped around Dewdney's Christ figure from about the waist and wound down.

⁹⁶ Monkishness is a strong theme throughout Leonard Cohen's work, and an important theme in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Interestingly, "the Paraclete" refers to a medieval monastery of nuns (McBrien 957).

⁹⁷ In *Naked Lunch*, Burroughs says that the "[t]he Word...will cut off fingers and toes like an opportunist land crab..." (NL 208).

⁹⁸ Dewdney defines "altar sublime" in *Predators'* glossary: "During the feast of the Eucharist, the invisible altar behind the actual one said to mediate the process of *transubstantiation*" (185).

⁹⁹ Though the Bible contains its "essential elements" (EC 1270), the doctrine of the Trinity was actually generated or "formulated in the late fourth century" (EC 1271) in response to the Arian refutation of Christ's divinity, which was seen to contradict monotheism (EC 92), and was gradually "refined by medieval theologians" (EC 1271) of the opposing view (e.g., Augustine) to maintain their belief in Christ's divinity and their vision of salvation. Thus, the doctrine exemplifies, again, the way in which an idea is refilled with medieval meaning. It also exemplifies the way in which reasoning human beings generate theories, or stories, to uphold their beliefs, which may be the intended meaning behind Dewdney's title "Crinoid Generates a Maze to Startle a Coelacanth" (PA 36), a "fictional labyrinth of vision" (PA 62) used to frighten and control others.

¹⁰⁰ Indeed, throughout his work Dewdney plays with Cartesian dichotomies, which early on I suggest that his perspective rejects. When in her interview Lemire-Tostevin states that Dewdney "seem[s] to create opposition instead of difference" (86), which "bothers" her, Dewdney responds as follows: "Out of perverse pleasure, I've taken that position of dichotomies, but ultimately my work is about a unified field. The way I came into it was from a position of not making any distinctions but then I like to step back, an atavistic, perverse stepping back, to create dichotomies which I use as malevolent fireworks out of which I can create...So I sort of see dichotomies as synthetic, artificial creations which one can use to create. I know how you could be bothered by that but if you look at yourself as a co-conspirator you would find it much more friendly" (86). Ultimately, I believe, Dewdney uses dichotomies to creatively subvert the Cartesian mode of thought.

As for contradictions, such as this one, in Dewdney's work, even Dewdney admits to Lemire-Tostevin that he's "a bundle of contradictions" (94). More recently in *Last Flesh*, he addresses the issue again: "Who can truthfully say that he doesn't hold contrary beliefs? We claim not to be superstitious, and yet privately throw salt over our shoulders...; we dislike a certain tune, and yet find ourselves mindlessly humming it. Rather than being evidence of the breakdown of logic, or of low-grade hypocrisy, our ability to hold contrary opinions, to be of 'two minds,' is really a practical solution to the difficulties of dealing with complex environments. It is a mark of our flexibility and evidence of our multiplicity that we accept new ideas without evicting our old 'tenants'" (159-60). Thus, Dewdney embraces contradictions and, in contrast, mistrusts that which makes perfect sense, as he suggests in *Predators'* "Opium": "It made sense any way you looked at it / that's how we knew it was dangerous" (82). In other words, that's how Dewdney knows "it" is, ultimately, a system and an ideology and a "logic trap" (Lemire-Tostevin 94).

¹⁰¹ As my advisor Mike Brian has noted, gold is also injected into the veins of arthritis sufferers.

¹⁰² In *Wind Without Rain*, Selwyn Dewdney associates oil with "stale age" (19).

¹⁰³ As Burroughs says of the "Latah" in *Naked Lunch*, "[t]hey have no feelings...[j]ust reflexes" (128). The Latah appear to be a human type that, while dominated, imitates the other dominating him or her: "The Latah imitates all his expressions and mannerisms and simply sucks all the persona right out of him like a sinister ventriloquist's dummy" (*NL* 128). Cf. endnote 95.

¹⁰⁴ From *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*.

¹⁰⁵ Indeed, it is in "Antimatter" that Dewdney writes the remote control agent's entry and takeover of individuals: "With each soul of the controlled the agent realizes another [protective] heat shield to cushion his re-entry. The host surrounding [the agent, are] entranced by their own destruction & his incorporation into the world" (*PA* 112).

¹⁰⁶ In the O'Brien interview, Dewdney discusses our fear of invisible forces, stating that "[o]ur generation has been brought up with a fear of [an] invisible enemy" (111).

¹⁰⁷ These are the slowest and fastest recorded rates of tectonic plate movement. From the Website "Understanding Plate Motions": <http://pubs.usgs.gov/html/anchor4665685>.

¹⁰⁸ The most common example these days is that of politicians slashing social programs and assuring us that "we" *must* make sacrifices in order to save the economy and pay off the deficit.

¹⁰⁹ Although the late-fourth-century acceptance of the Trinity as doctrine marks the triumph of Augustinian Christianity over Arianism (McBrien 1271), I find no evidence to suggest that Dewdney is referring to fourth-century Arians.

¹¹⁰ In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche uses "Aryan" when discussing the two myths that merge in Christianity: "The legend of Prometheus is indigenous to the entire community of Aryan races and attests to their prevailing talent for profound and tragic vision. In fact, it is not improbable that this myth has the same characteristic for the Aryan mind as the myth of the Fall has for the Semitic and that the two myths are related as brother and sister" (63).

Since Dewdney told me that he considered Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* a significant influence, I suspect that, perhaps, he uses "Arian" to refer to the Europeans, as does Nietzsche.

¹¹¹ From *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*.

¹¹² The parallel with Nazi ideologists seems relevant given Dewdney's mention of "Germany 1941" (98) and "the second world war" (110) in *Predators'* "Remote Control"

section. Of course, a primary Nazi goal was to "Aryanize" society, to make it Aryan by removing all non-Aryans from public life, thereby disempowering them, giving absolute power to the "Aryans," and "purifying" society. It is a goal comparable in terms of the notions of purity and purification to that of the persecution or "Punic" (Johnson 114) Christianity generated by Augustine in the late fourth century, which sought to purge individuals of pagan beliefs, to purge society of all religious opposition, and, ultimately, to universalize Christianity and religiously totalize society by obtaining "total submission" from all societal members. As noted, this mutation of Christianity justified the use of fear and violence to force conversion, or the transubstantiation of each human being with Christian spirit, which led to the medieval Inquisitions just as the Nazi plan to Aryanize the world led to "the final solution." As Dewdney says in *The Secular Grail*, "[g]enocide incubates in the heart of monotheism" (189). Thus, his use of "Arian" in "Transubstantiation" perhaps refers to the late-fourth-century Roman elite, the Christian elite who joined forces with the emperor and used state-imposed torture to Christianize Rome in an "Aryanizing" Nazi way. From Dewdney's perspective, it seems, this is part of the overall destructive cultural "pattern" "in the negative of creation" that, since "the late 4th century," "regenerates itself with its own repetitive logic" (PA 56).

It is also interesting to note that in *Wind Without Rain*, Selwyn Dewdney parallels J.C. Bilbeau and Hitler (e.g., 269, 292).

¹¹³ In *The Secular Grail's* collection of essays that discuss Freud and Jung, Dewdney indicates his affinity with Jungian psychology, especially in "The Wet Master and the Dry Master" wherein he praises Jung's accomplishments (110-1). Apparently, dry masters are those like Freud and Newton who, according to Dewdney, personally considered "sexual abstinence" (100) necessary for "self-transcendence" (100).

¹¹⁴ Indeed, the cave, often an image of Hades (Cirlot 40), is also associated both symbolically and etymologically with hell, for the German word for cave, *hohle*, and for hell, *holle*, are related (Cirlot 40).

¹¹⁵ I am indebted to Mike Brian for noting this. The story appears in *The Anti-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*. An angel appears to Mary and Joseph as they travel towards Bethlehem. The angel "commanded the blessed Mary to...go into a recess under a cavern, in which there never was light, but always darkness, because the light of day could not reach it. And when the blessed Mary had gone into it, it began to shine with as much brightness as if it were the sixth hour of the day. The light from God so shone in the cave, that neither by day nor night was light wanting as long as the blessed Mary was there. And there she brought forth a son, and the angels surrounded Him when He was being born" (374).

¹¹⁶ According to a *Globe & Mail* article by Val Ross on *Fugitive Pieces*, Michaels and Dewdney are also friends (C11, Jun. 15, 1996).

¹¹⁷ This refers to swamps belonging to the Carboniferous era, which is the second last sub-era of the Palaeozoic era, as shown in Dewdney's table, *Geological Periods* (PA 189).

If, as I suggest in previous footnotes, the three major geological eras can be seen as analogous with the three major periods in Western history, then the Carboniferous era can be seen to coincide with the fourth century; and the Permian era (the last of the Palaeozoic sub-eras), with the fifth century. Analogous with the Mesozoic era and its three sub-eras, the Middle Ages and its three sub-periods (Early, High, and Late Middle Ages) date from the sixth to the sixteenth century.

¹¹⁸ In other versions wherein castration symbolism is more evident, the virgin lulls the unicorn to sleep by stroking his horn, a phallic symbol, which she cuts off before giving him over to the hunters (Farson 161).

¹¹⁹ I am indebted to Mike Brian for noting a likely allusion to Christopher Frye's play, *The Lady's Not for Burning*. Indeed, near the end of the play, which shares Dewdney's religious concerns and critical attitude, a drunken character named Skipps utters the following garbled words: "Baptized I blaming was, and I says to youse, baptized I am, and I says to youse, baptized I will be, wiv holy weeping and washing of teeth. And immersion upon us miserable offenders" (92-3).

¹²⁰ In *Naked Lunch*, Burroughs says of a doctor charged with "brain rape" (95) that "[h]e it is...who has reduced whole provinces of our fair land to a state bordering on the far side of idiocy....He it is who has filled great warehouses with row on row, tier on tier of helpless creatures who must have their every want attended..." (96).

¹²¹ The title further links the poem thematically to evil by evoking Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and its central theme of the cruelty and evil of which power-crazed humans, even Christian children, are capable. When Dewdney in the fifth stanza of "I Am the Lord" says that "[y]ou ate the insect under instructions" (PA 77), he alludes, it seems, to Renfield, a character in Stoker's *Dracula* who eats flies and is thus considered mad. In Dewdney's you-are-what-you-eat world, of course, to eat flies is to become a fly, and likely a fly like Selwyn Dewdney's J.C. who "seems to be the only fly in an otherwise perfect ointment" (WWR 27). In Dewdney's terms, Renfield is also remote controlled, for he hears and eagerly obeys commands issued by Dracula from far away. Interestingly, Renfield is the only character in the novel who willingly gives himself up to Dracula and who, in fact, desperately wants to do so for the *rewards* which he expects to reap: "I am here to do Your bidding, Master. I am your slave, and You will reward me, for I shall be faithful. I have worshipped You long and afar off. Now that You are near, I await Your commands, and You will not pass me...in Your distribution of good things" (108).

While Stoker's Christian parallels are obvious, Renfield's speech could very well be the refrain to "Song of Remote Control," sung by those who have "give[n] themselves up to Remote Control," promising faithful worship, service, and obedience in return for security and reward. From Dewdney's perspective, however, those who do get only what Renfield got, which was not eternal vampire life. Indeed, Dracula eventually kills Renfield, completely draining and feeding on his life blood just as, Dewdney seems to believe, "our arbitrators" drain and feed on the insect-like Renfields of the world while, in contrast, killing them

spiritually in this life. It must be noted that, while Dracula can be blamed for Renfield's death, Renfield is ultimately responsible: in self-servingly and parasitically attaching himself to Dracula, his lord, for *only* the rewards, he actually commits suicide.

¹²² The Roman Catholic use of the term is no doubt very much in play as well. In Catholicism, adoration refers to "one of the highest attitudes of prayer," "a religious act performed by the whole person, body, mind, and soul, wherein God alone is praised as the supreme source and object of all that exists." It applies mainly to eucharistic devotion: "the gazing in reverence upon the exposed or elevated eucharist bread or wine." During the Middle Ages, an influential theology of eucharistic devotion evolved wherein "[r]eligious piety centered on the practices of 'ocular communion,' receiving Christ through the eyes, if not upon the tongue" (McBrien 17).

¹²³ In "Of Parasites and Governors: Christopher Dewdney's Poetry," David Lecker explores Remote Control as an extension of the Parasite and Governor in *Alter Sublime's* "Parasite Maintenance." Focussing on Cartesian dualism and language, Lecker discusses the "fundamentally conventional yet 'complex battle' between Governor and Parasite that lies at the heart of [Dewdney's] work" (139), a battle ultimately "between perceptual repression and perceptual freedom" (136) that takes place within the poet's mind. Lecker argues that the Governor represents the dominant forces repressing the Parasite, the poetic forces of language and the poet.

¹²⁴ Indeed, Dewdney follows this explanation with a discussion of his "hatred of mankind," using as examples mankind's cruelty to animals and disrespect of nature (McFadden 92). He later clarifies this statement in the O'Brien interview (see endnote 62).

¹²⁵ In *Naked Lunch*, which is equally concerned with "remote control" (55), Burroughs speaks of one who "has sacrificed all control" as "dependent as an unborn child" (62), as also seems to be the case with Dewdney's "[u]nborn concretions" and "the never-to-be-born" (113) who give themselves up to Remote Control.

¹²⁶ In the original *Fovea Centralis*, Dewdney says that "[w]e do unto Headquarters as Headquarters does unto us" (32).

¹²⁷ I unite information from "Group Control" and "Tracing" since the two pieces describe different aspects of the same verbal situation.

¹²⁸ The comparison is warranted given the many allusions to *Dracula* and, in particular, to Renfield throughout the "Remote Control" section. Renfield knows that "the Master is at hand" (106) and "is coming - coming - coming!" (109) just as Dewdney's "agent knew that remote control was coming closer and closer" (107). Earlier and much more obviously in "'I Am the Lord and These Are My Flies,'" Dewdney alludes to Renfield (see endnote 120). It seems likely that, like Renfield, Dewdney's remote control agent, in eagerly attempting to please Remote Control by doing what it "wishes" and "expects," actually seeks

to please only himself, his "obsidian deit[y] within."

¹²⁹ Interestingly, Joyce, while speaking in *Ulysses* of "[a] few wellchosen words" and a "[m]essenger [who] took out his matchbox thoughtfully and lit his cigar," says that "I have often thought...that it was that small act, trivial in itself, that striking of that match, that determined the whole aftercourse of all our lives" (177).

Dewdney's choice of the word *locomotive* is also interesting. In Spanish, *loco* means "crazy"; thus, locomotive can be seen as the arbitrators' crazy motive of power, or as, from Dewdney's perspective, the absurd motive of an afterlife ruling this life.

¹³⁰ Dewdney defines this "double life" as his ability "not only to morally span the dichotomy involved, but to excel and enjoy the vigilance and paranoid critical structures (tantamount to espionage activity) which are concomitants of double lives" (O'Brien 101).

¹³¹ Dewdney discusses his "ultimate lie" with O'Brien, saying that "it's a cosmically-aligned personal indulgence" (104). With this statement, Dewdney appears to acknowledge that his personal perceptual paradigm is no less a "lie," "fantasy," or "fiction" than, for example, the Christian perceptual paradigm. As he says in *Predators'* "On Attaining Remote Control," "I had to build an enclosure surer / than any prison about me" (103) - surer, that is, than the "prison of thought" (*RI* 18) that we have "construct[ed]...around us / surer / than any lie" (*PA* 179).

¹³² Certainly, it would be interesting to look at the poet as Christ in Dewdney's work, which can be seen to parallel the "Sir Galahad role" discussed by Dewdney in David McFadden's "The Twilight of Self-Consciousness" (94-5).

¹³³ In "Scenario," Dewdney says of the remote control agent that "[h]e is constantly writing his observations in notes on a pad in his right pocket" (106) and describes "[t]hese notes" as "greatly advantageous in revealing the nature of his own mind" (106). Thus Dewdney's poetry, his "notes" from his psycho-archaeological journey, can also be seen as revelatory of the poet's mind.

¹³⁴ In "Group Control," the "attainment of remote control during the second world war" (110) surely refers to, and thus links Remote Control to, Hitler, a master orator, and his evil, power-obsessed, propagandistic remote control group. Although I do not deal with propaganda and advertising in this study, they are certainly at issue throughout Dewdney's work, but come to the fore in *Last Flesh*.

¹³⁵ Like spirit, the air is already invisible, so this really applies to only the wood symbolic of the flesh, which disappears like the "flesh of these words" in "Transubstantiation." Indeed, Dewdney's original themes continually repeat themselves.

¹³⁶ Moreover, if Dewdney views individuals as would-be saints dead to this life, which is virtually the same as being holy ghosts, then perhaps also of relevance to the red oil is Cohen's description of St. Catherine's corpse in *Beautiful Losers*: "the body that was white

as snow turned slowly red and exuded an oily liquid..." (268).

¹³⁷ The rejected experiences can also be said to disappear into the unconscious, which would parallel the permanent water table (the groundwater's lowest level), where they are forgotten; interestingly, Dewdney's nuclei of "teeth" and "bony armour" suggest that the chosen idealized memories are, ultimately, defence mechanisms that, perhaps, protect against that which is rejected and forgotten, but which, Dewdney believes, must be remembered.

¹³⁸ In Jungian terms, the glass machinery transmits its demands from the individual's collective consciousness to his or her unconscious; if unaware of the contents of his or her unconscious, the individual will be controlled by his or her unconscious.

¹³⁹ Like the concretion and horsetail fern both aligned with the Christ figure in "The Immense Odds," and like the observer and unlit candle in the *Alter Sublime* illustration, the communal and individual minds can be said to be at right angles to each other; as such, they are thus opposites going in two different lines of direction that will never meet. In other words, collective consciousness as it stands and has stood for the past 1500 years is, and will always be, antithetical to the individual and his or her self-fulfillment.

¹⁴⁰ Dewdney edited and compiled de Kerckhove's *Skin of Culture*, and provides the introduction to it.

¹⁴¹ In *Fugitive Pieces*, Anne Michaels perhaps refers to Dewdney's bricks when she writes of the known past "we're doomed to repeat" that "[e]very recorded event is a brick of potential, of precedent, thrown into the future" (161). While reading her novel, in fact, I could not help but relate two characters, the older Athos and the younger Jakob, to Dewdney.

The older Athos, a geologist and university professor, "is like his beloved limestone" (78). In his office at the university, he read "by the window. The books and articles piled on the sill! English poetry. How to preserve leaf skeletons. The meaning of pole carvings" (57). As if describing *Predators*, the narrator speaks of "[t]he invisible paths in Athos's stories" and describes them as "rivers following the inconsistencies of land like tears following the imperfections on the skin. Wind and currents that stir up underwater creatures, bioluminescent gardens that guide birds to shore" (51).

The younger Jakob is a poet and "the layman [who] talk[s] about physics" (210) at a party. He has written *Dilemma Poems*, and the narrator describes his opening image: "one man staring at an impossibly high wall, another man staring at the same wall from the other side" (210). The narrator then recalls a particle/wave duality discussion at the party: "After a while Jakob said: 'Perhaps it's just that when light is up against the wall it's forced to choose,'" adding, "But I knew what Jakob meant. The particle is secular man; the wave, deist. And whether you live by a lie or live by a truth makes no difference, as long as you get past the wall. And while some are motivated by love (those who choose), most are motivated by fear (those who choose by not choosing)" (210-11).

¹⁴² In his 1990 interview with Lola Lemire-Tostevin, Dewdney explained that “[a] lot of people would like to characterize themselves as having transcended certain modes of thought but I like to remind people that they haven’t transcended modes of thought at all, au contraire, they are still thinking very firmly within Darwinian and Cartesian modes. You can transform yourself past that, but you have to know it. It’s like a knowledge that has to be psychoanalytically manifest” (93).

Moreover, as he explained to Brian Fawcett in terms of *The Immaculate Perception*, his work “is arguing for individual realization of what our operational terms are. I see this process as a real jolt of reality...[which is] really what I want to produce. If I can help anybody get to a realization of their operational terms, then I feel it has succeeded” (82).

¹⁴³ In his preface to *Predators*, Dewdney says the following of his childhood “night forays” into forests: “the night was a kind of haven for me. All things magical and wondrous came out then; the nocturnal animals became my favourites, the bat and barn owl, with their sophisticated audio-guidance systems, the giant Saturniidae moths with their beautiful eyespots and huge wings, the cats and all the other muscular, graceful and sexual mammals of the night” (8).

¹⁴⁴ McFadden actually says this of the body of work being produced by both Dewdney and Bob Fones.

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