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## **Paroles gelées**

### **Title**

Publication Abstracts

### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3t07f302>

### **Journal**

Paroles gelées, 11(1)

### **ISSN**

1094-7264

### **Author**

UCLA French and Francophone Studies Graduate Student Association

### **Publication Date**

1993

### **DOI**

10.5070/PG7111003009

Peer reviewed

## PUBLICATION ABSTRACT

Eric Gans

*Originary Thinking*

Stanford University Press, 1993

*Originary Thinking* is the fourth in a series of works I have devoted to "generative anthropology," which may be defined as the minimalist construction of the human from a hypothetical communal event in which intraspecific violence is deferred by the production of a linguistic sign. The expression "originary thinking," emphasizing process rather than results, also serves to pose this new discipline as a rival to philosophy as the traditional form of "pure thought." *Originary Thinking* pursues in the area of religion, ethics, philosophy of language, theory of discourse, and esthetics the exploration begun in *The Origin of Language* (1981), *The End of Culture* (1985), and *Science and Faith* (1990). It adds two significant new elements:

1. "originary analysis," a methodology for rethinking the fundamental categories of the human as elements of the originary scene, and
2. a "historical esthetics" that reflects the esthetic's privileged status in the historicization of the originary, as exemplified in Western (art-) history from the classical through the postmodern era.

## PUBLICATION ABSTRACT

Peter Haidu

*The Subject of Violence. The Song of Roland and the Birth of the State*  
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993

Violences eurogenic and nomadic in origin, fuse in the institution of knighthood, which bequeaths violence to modernity. Medieval civilization, reaching toward the stability of economic productivity, attempts to limit or export the violent destructiveness of knighthood in the Peace/Truce of God movements and the Crusades. It also functionalizes feudal violence within its class structure, by attaching its mounted bearers to the economic structure of

the banal *seigneurie*, organized to benefit the dominant aristocracy. The function of knighthood is to extort surplus value from the peasantry, by enacted or threatened violence. The constitutive aporia of medieval civilization is dependency on a violence which impedes its economic development.

*The Song of Roland* stages feudal knighthood's self-destruction, in full recognition its heroic claim to honor, and by its own violence. It then stages its substitution by troops created as subordinates of an ultimate power, that of Charlemagne, to whom attaches a repeated theme of culpability. The same issue is staged by the Saracens, a mirror image of the Christian armies, doubling and confirming the problematization of the lord-vassal relation.

Ganelon's trial for treason at the end of the poem specifies the nomothetic issue, establishing a principle of subordination to the monarch which was a political invention in relation to the historical co-text. Feudal vengeance, permissible under the rules in effect at the beginning of the poem, becomes illegitimate under the new rule formulated by Thierry de Chartres. The cruel vengeance upon the traitor, drawn and quartered, typologically anticipates the public torture of Damiens in 1757: the same corporeal sign of subjugation functions to establish the royal prerogative which announces the nation-state, as will re-activate royal power after attempted regicide. It signals the creation of a new subjectivity required by the nascent nation-state.

While *The Song of Roland* ends with the indeterminacy of an open text, it produces specifiable meanings whose encodings are inextricably inmixed with the political and economic evolution of the period. It performs an essential moment of this evolution, and it does so as a performative. Proud warrior violence is subjected to the demand of the nascent state, producing a split subjectivity constitutive of modern subjectivity as well. The complex negotiations of the text are decoded by historicized narrative models, as dealing with the issue of fundamental human violence, still instinct in the modern nation-state, in its violences and disintegrations.

## PUBLICATION ABSTRACT

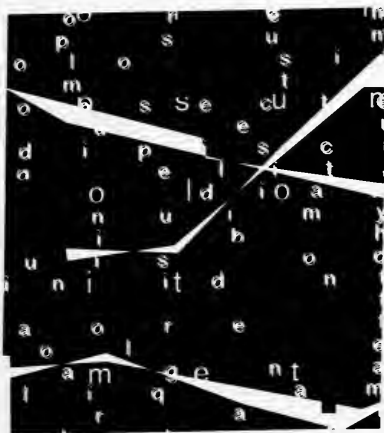
Stephen Werner

*Blueprint: A Study of Diderot and the Encyclopédie Plates*

Birmingham: Summa, 1993

The 2,569 engraved plates of the *Encyclopédie* are as central to its meaning as the articles or cross-references themselves. Most plates depict work scenes or tools and dramatize key Baconian ideas about the dignity of the mechanical arts. Plates change the discourse of "encyclopédisme" through a novel collaborative effort of written texts and pictures. With vignettes of Paris as their backdrop, they endorse an aesthetic of urban *merveilleux*. Ultimately, they rewrite the encyclopedia genre. The *Encyclopédie* is far more than a traditional "illustrated" reference work: it is a modern pictorial encyclopedia. Its visionary or "blueprint" qualities are unique and were conceived by Diderot, the chief sponsor and architect of the plates. Illustrated with reproductions of the original plates.

UCLA FRENCH STUDIES



*Ce serait le moment de philosopher et de rechercher si, par hasard, se trouvait ici  
l'endroit où de telles paroles dégèlent.*

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PAROLES  

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GELÉES

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# PAROLES GELEES

UCLA French Studies

Volume 11 ❧ 1993

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*Paroles Gelées* was established in 1983 by its founding editor, Kathryn Bailey. The journal is managed and edited by the French Graduate Students' Association and published annually under the auspices of the Department of French at UCLA. Funds for this project are generously provided by the UCLA Graduate Students' Association.

Information regarding the submission of articles and subscriptions is available from the journal office:

*Paroles Gelées*  
Department of French  
UCLA  
405 Hilgard Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1550  
(310) 825-1145

Subscription price: \$8 for individuals, \$10 for institutions  
\$12 for international subscribers.

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