Performing the Past
IHUM22a, Winter Quarter 2000, Lecture II

A) Logistics
   1) Announcement to come about when streaming available
   2) Movies will also be available in the Green Media library

B) Transition
   1) Origins
      a) Skepticism (Hermeneutics of Suspicion)
      b) Library at Alexandria, destroyed 3rd century A.D.
         Septuagint
   2) Izumo no Okuni, founder of kabuki
      a) Okuni/Dietrich/Madonna/Shulamith
      b) storytelling, dance, song
A) The Song of Songs
   1) Date of Composition
      a) Solomon, circa 970-931 BCE
      b) Collations of Text, Septuagint ca. 250-100 BCE
         cf. I:5

   2) Audience, Context, and Function
      a) Allegorical Interpretation: St. Bernard of Clairvaux, etc.
      b) Near Eastern Fertility Cult/Wedding Rite
      c) Dramatic Interpretation
      d) Love Poem

   3) Coherence and Indeterminacy of Work
      a) Plot, Temporality (Beginning, Middle, and End)
      b) Structure of Repeated Phrases
         a “foot” of verse
Song of Songs, cont.
1) Exposition: Female Speaker, Jerusalem Girls, King/Shepherd city & country
   "darkness" (I:6); "My own vineyard I have not kept" (I:12)
2) Development of Imagery (Fruits, Perfumes, Animals)
   "Do not stir or awaken love until it is ready" (II:7); foxes (II:15)
3) 1st Dream: sentinels (III:3), lover (III:4), Solomon (III:11)
4) Male speaker, Development of Imagery
5) 2nd Dream, V:2; Sentinels & Veil, V:7
6) Development; Prince (VI:12); "O Shulammite!" (VI:13)
7) Development; Time/Season (VII:12)
8) Multiple Conclusions
   VIII:4, a repeat of II:7 re: readiness of love
   "Love is strong as death" (VIII:6-7)
   the little sister (VIII:8)
   "My vineyard, my very own, is for myself" (VIII:12)
B) Paul Celan, “Death Fugue”

1) Biography

Paul Celan (né Paul Antschel, 1920-1970)
German-speaking Jews; Czernowitz, Romania (Ukraine)
Mother’s interest in literature
Muttersprache/Vaterland
Early influence of Surrealism, Romanian folk songs
27 June 1942: mother and father deported
1948: Paris
20 April 1970: apparent suicide
2) “Todesfuge”/“Death Fugue” [also, “Tango of Death”] (~1945)
“Black milk of daybreak”: literal, death/life, imagistic, threshold

a) Opening stanza
   the master, the prisoners, the female figures
   amazing consonances
   “in the breezes there one lies unconfined”

b) 2nd: ritual, repetition; first mention of Shulamith

c) 3rd: new theme, escalation: “jab deeper”

d) 4th: fugue-like return of theme A

e) 5th: theme B, escalation: “more sweetly play,” “more darkly”

f) 6th: A, rhyme of “blue” and “true”
   coda
Orchestra playing “Death Tango” in Janowska Road Camp, from John Felstiner, *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*, p. 30

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For next time:

*Iliad*, Bks. 1, 2, 6, 22
Backstory of House of Atreus

Things to look for:

Read a bit aloud; get a sense of the Homeric line
long dactylic hexameter
Anthropological signs: body and work

Seminars start next Tuesday
Questions