

As Mental As the Gods

*from the intuitive
to the abstract*

- James Yorke

1

As mental as the gods,
ideas or purposes
but with any luck
more predictable

space a function of time
time a species of motion
light corpuscular
as well as undulant

the forces of nature its structure
the symmetry expressed
in ungeometric figures
non-linear equations

for infinite lines
in finite receptacles
each particle
liable to appear

in any number of ways
the very act of looking
skewing the results
regardless what instruments

brought into play the object
in question (the thing itself
so called) here and there
at one and the same time

2

Clouds are not spheres says one.
*Sensitive dependence
on initial conditions*
says another. How

*nonlinear nature is
in its soul* says one.

*Period three implies
chaos says another*

calling to mind the nun
who centuries ago
said *One becomes two,
two three, and of the third*

*the one as the fourth
(every human truth
the last truth but one)*
recalling the brothers withdrawn

centuries earlier yet
into their understanding
that one will get you two,
two three, and three

eternity for those
scaling the pyramid
with due diligence
and humility.

3

Claiming insight beyond
the conventional
it was incumbent on them
to prove up their claim

explain themselves in terms
descriptive of the substance
being unearthed, specific
to the undertaking

and at the same time
understandable to
if not the man in the street
a reasonable woman.

The prospective body
so newly discovered
yielding little data,
the old vocabulary

inadequate, the few

words newly coined
theatrical often as not:
no wonder they resorted

to myth and fantasy
figures of speech backed up
with matinee idols
reciting hard numbers.

4

*One learns to hope
says another that nature
possesses an order one may
aspire to comprehend.*