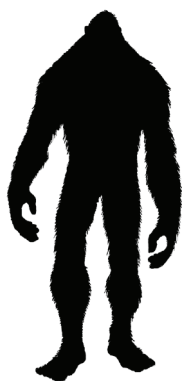


**PRIMORDIAL**



# PRIMORDIAL

AN ABSTRACTION



D. HARLAN WILSON

ANTI  
OEDIPUS

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

## PRAISE FOR THE WORK OF D. HARLAN WILSON

“Provocative entertainment.”

—*Booklist*

“A bludgeoning celluloid rush of language and ideas served from an action-painter’s bucket of fluorescent spatter.”

—Alan Moore

“New bursts of stream-of-cyberconsciousness prose.”

—*Library Journal*

“Wilson writes with the crazed precision of a futuristic war machine gone rogue.”

—Lavie Tidhar

“Wacky experimental fiction.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Fast, smart, funny.”

—Kim Stanley Robinson

“Pomo cybertheory never tasted so good!”

—*American Book Review*

“Utterly original.”

—Barry N. Malzberg

“If reality is a crutch, Wilson has thrown it away.”

—*Rain Taxi*

*Primordial: An Abstraction*

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Chapter 47 is based on the real-life experience of Dr. Bonnie Mathies, who used to work with a pathological librarian.

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## ALSO BY D. HARLAN WILSON

### BIOGRAPHIES

*Hitler: The Termianl Biography*  
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### NOVELS

*The Kyoto Man*  
*Codename Prague*  
*Dr. Identity, or, Farewell to Plaquedemia*  
*Peckinpah: An Ultraviolent Romance*  
*Blankety Blank: A Memoir of Vulgaria*

### FICTION COLLECTIONS

*Diegeses*  
*They Had Goat Heads*

### CRITICISM

*Technologized Desire: Selfhood & the Body in Postcapitalist  
Science Fiction*

*For the Ramparts.*

“It wasn’t an ischemic attack. It wasn’t a seizure. You saw the x-rays . . . There was clearly something anterior to the larynx that looked like a laryngeal sack. That’s strictly simian. I obviously regressed! To some quasi-simian creature.”

—Dr. Edward Jessup, *Altered States*









They revoke my Ph.D.

I had been practicing a questionable mode of pedagogy.  
I had been writing a toxic strain of theory.

Now I have to return the University so that I can get my  
degree back and salvage my identity.

Primordial.

## 2

Somebody attacks me at the front gate.

He reminds me of my dissertation advisor.

He is old and gray and sallow. And undeniably strong.

His bones converge into sharp angles and he looks more like an insect than an academic.

Upended on the grass, he hurls a large brick at my car and I swerve out of the way. He hurls another brick and I dodge it. He hurls one more brick and it lands on my windshield, splintering the glass like a broken equation.

I drive onto the grass and run over the old man.

### 3

I go to the Bursar's office to report the incident.

Nobody's in the office.

I leave a detailed note on the receptionist's desk and go to the Department.

Everything looks the same.

Somebody tells me what I have to do to reclaim my Ph.D. and they assign me a dormitory and a room and eighteen roommates.

I get my things from the car and move in.



Some of my roommates are academics, researchers and critics with revoked Ph.D.s. Others are regular college students. Primarily freshmen.

The freshmen are afraid of their peers. They aren't afraid of the former Ph.D.s and attempt to bully us. For the most part they succeed.

The freshmen think they can drink. The ex-Ph.D.s think they can drink.

They can't drink like me.

Drunk, I slam a bottle of Grey Goose into somebody's elapsed face.

It isn't an attempt to assert power. Somebody merely inflected their essence.

Nobody touches me after that. And when they speak to me, they never eyeball me. This may be a result of my artless aggression, social fallout from the extinction of culture, or a combination thereof. More and more, we lose the ability to interact with each other in person. Idle pleasantries become titanic hurdles.

It doesn't matter. I snap.

And I adapt.

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From this point onwards, I incite fear and trembling in my roommates with the flair and enmity of a dystopian overlord.

There can be no other way.

As I often inform my students at the beginning of dense lectures: “The only things that move are the cold, wary eyes of the train.”

## 5

The University's Continental Op pays us a visit. The geometry of his collar and lapel speaks to the algebra of his jaw.

He tells us that we have been put in the same room because the University is essentially bankrupt.

He tells us they can barely afford to squeeze eighteen of us in here even though we all have to pay for it.

Also, he notes, we are the lowest of the low: aborted Ph.D.s and inadequate standardized testers.

Finally he shouts, "Watch out!" Then he slams his fist into the wall. The blow leaves a mark.

When the Continental Op leaves, he closes the door gently, with a delicate click.

Nobody ever sees him again.



## 6

There are still two days before classes begin.

Bored and lonely, I go to a fraternity party.

They're shooting a pornographic film in the cafeteria.

They have sophisticated camera equipment. Flashbulbs pop like pillow-soft gunfire.

I was a member of this fraternity and I ate in this cafeteria and it has the same hybrid scent of stale beer and body odor and fried chicken.

I don't understand the porno.

"What is this?" I exclaim. "When I belonged to this fraternity we just got drunk, pulled down our pants and spanked each other with wooden paddles until our bottoms turned purple. For the love of God, I can see inside that young lady's pudendum. This is so . . . adult."

Everybody glares at me.

And I am reassured that the Universe does not want us to know what lurks beneath its skirt.

## 7

The Student Union is full of writers.

They all graduated from the University with B.A.s in creative writing, and M.A.s in creative writing, and M.F.A.s in creative writing, and some of them procured Ph.D.s in creative writing, despite the fact that an M.F.A. in creative writing is a terminal degree.

The writers come in all shapes and sizes and types. They are old and young. They are wise and naïve. They are grizzled and smooth. They are expectant and skeptical. They are rotund and withered. They possess countless varieties of crooked, yellow teeth.

Nobody will hire them. Nobody will represent them. Nobody will publish or buy their books.

Security tries to relegate them to the basement and the old wing. Technically they aren't allowed inside the Union. But they get inside no matter what anybody does.

One of the writers brushes up against me as I collect my mail.

Usually I don't care if people touch me. Students always liked to touch me, as if, somehow, it gave them access to my traumatic kernels.

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In this instance, I get mad.

The writer senses it. He tries to run away.

I grab him by the neck with my strong hand.

I take a deep breath.

Pounding his face into the aluminum grid of mailboxes, I say, "Don't fucking touch me! Don't fucking touch me! Don't fucking touch me! Don't fucking touch me! Don't fucking touch me! Don't fucking touch me! Don't fucking touch me! Don't fucking touch me! Don't fucking touch me! Do not fucking touch me! Don't fucking touch me!"

The writer squirms and thrashes and blubbers and cries out for an administrator.

Nobody comes to his aid.

When I can't hear the writer anymore, and when he stops moving and wilts like an exorcised flower, I let him go.



It's the day before classes.

I've been sleeping well. My roommates are terrified of me and I insist on absolute silence when I'm in the room, day or night.

The storm sirens go off.

There's no storm. The President is about to give his welcome speech.

All of the students flow out of the dorms into the grassy hollow that the dorms and the halls and the observatories and the theaters and the athletic and teaching facilities surround like the stalagmites of a medieval crown.

They've set up a stage near the chapel. Slowly we congregate around it.

Onstage the Provost and the President of the University wait patiently for everybody to settle down. They're making smalltalk and then the President says, "God I love coitus. I just love it."

He doesn't know the microphone is on.

The Provost informs him about the microphone.

Immediately the President retracts the statement, but casually, as if he still doesn't know the microphone is on,

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ensuring everybody that, no matter what, he aspires to be the sort of patriarch and authority figure who lives and dies by the goodness of his Word. To the Provost he adds, “Who doesn’t love coitus?”

Only the merit scholars hear him.

A lot of the students have dropped acid or eaten psychedelic mushrooms and are either petrified with fear or gibbering like chimps.

I’m somewhere between sobriety and drunkenness and I’m listening to a Walkman. Already I have reverted to my natural primitive state.